# News Articles Batch 2

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In the future, during an identity check, you may no longer be asked for your passport (however biometric it may be), but for your Facebook identity card. This is the provocative bet made by Berlin artist Tobias Leingruber by putting into circulation the first copies of these papers likely to replace official administrative documents in the near future. His FB Bureau, in the test phase, will issue on demand, starting this week, a card bearing your identification number (ID) on the social network, with your name in civilian life, your user name, gender, date of entry on the network, and a QR code, a barcode that allows access to your account. The project is inspired by a personal anecdote. As he was crossing the Canadian border into the United States last summer, an agent asked Tobias Leingruber jokingly: "So, what's your name on Facebook?" Much less funny when the request comes from a Syrian soldier. "When you cross the Lebanese border into Syria, you can be stopped by a soldier working for the secret police who asks to see your passport and if you have a Facebook account," reports the Foundland collective, which has looked into the role of the social network in the uprising (Libération, February 25). There are now nearly 900,000 Facebook citizens in the world, all of whom have an ID. This makes the leader in social networks the dominant identity system on the Web. Since its creation eight years ago, it has brought order to the mess that was the Web, gradually eradicating the anonymity that reigned in the World Wild Web. As the artist points out, when you sign up for new services today, it is common to use Facebook Connect, instead of creating a new account. "People have stopped ranting on blogs because they only allow comments with your 'real name', which is your Facebook identity." While controversies continue to follow one another regarding new biometric cards that are supposed to prevent identity theft and, above all, facilitate online shopping, Leingruber believes that these technologies are already obsolete, compared to Facebook's existing structure. "By controlling our [online] identities and coupling them with our social data, it is not very difficult to imagine establishing an ID that is valid throughout the world." A project that raises the question of the stakes of an identity that would be controlled by a company and no longer by a government. FB Bureau will be presented as part of the Unlike Us event, organized by the Institute of Networked Culture, in Amsterdam from March 8 to 10. Academics, artists, activists and programmers will reflect on possible alternatives in the field of social media, monopolized by large corporations that get rich by commodifying social relations. Several projects for decentralized and open source platforms aimed at giving back autonomy to users (including Crabgrass, Secushare, Freedombox, etc.) will be presented. An exhibition also brings together a series of critical and playful experiments and prototypes, such as the Poking Machine, a prosthesis made up of a mechanical finger that physically taps you each time you receive a notification from your virtual friends. There are also various extensions such as Faceleaks, which allows you to "leak" your friends off Facebook and make their photos public anonymously on the FaceLeaks site. Or the John Smith add-on for Chrome transforms each Facebook or Google + user into John Smith, the most common name on these social media. http://fbbureau.com http://networkcultures.org/unlikeart networkcultures.org/wpmu/unlikeus

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Senegal is among the leading countries in West Africa for telecom infrastructure. But with an Internet penetration rate of just 16%, can online information and social media make a difference in the presidential election? The fixed line penetration rate is less than 3%. It is 80% for mobile. A little over half of Internet connections are on the 3G network. Six hundred and fifty thousand Senegalese are on Facebook, the tenth highest in Africa with almost 5% of the total population, but more than 70% of the online population, with an increase of 85,000 people in the last six months. These figures come from Olivier Sagna, founder of Osiris.sn (Observatory on information systems, networks and information highways in Senegal). One of the very first observatories of its kind, it is the most comprehensive source of independent information on information technologies that I found during my African journey. An innovation that is all the more remarkable since it dates back to 1998 and is proving increasingly useful. A historian by training and a documentalist, Mr. Sagna affirms that he is "not at all a computer scientist". Accessible information In "information society", the most important word is "society", he says. He wants to be a "sentinel" of civil society for everything concerning information and communication technologies. To better achieve this, he has bet on a "multi-stakeholder" site with participation from the private and public sectors, universities and the media. "We are anything but neutral. We are for free software, creative commons, open access, volunteer work... Instead of our computers being in the clouds, let's put them in our savannahs. We have to build the infrastructure and exercise a certain sovereignty over it." At a previous meeting in Dakar, Mr. Sagna stressed that Senegal is doing better than its neighbors "thanks to a properly managed public operator" and quality human resources. Some are tempted to attribute a good deal of the credit to Orange, which owns 42% of the capital of Sonatel, the main Senegalese operator. But if the infrastructure is rather good, the colonial legacy is quite negative in terms of innovation. The dynamism is less than in countries under Anglo-Saxon influence. "We inherited Colbertism, they are more pragmatic," believes Mr. Sagna with a regret that I have seen elsewhere. We must start from the fact that everything is forbidden. It takes more time to set up." The February 26 election saw notable progress. Absent online for the previous campaign, the significant candidates have a website and a Facebook page. Some even have a blog and post videos on YouTube. The best-known of the citizen initiatives is Senegal 2012 (Sunu2012.sn), which has its own Facebook page. This is useful for the diaspora and for young people who follow on their mobile phones. Conclusion: the information accessible on the Internet plays an "important but not decisive" role. Mr. Sagna believes that "social networks do not play a determining role in the mobilization of Senegalese citizens. Messages are transmitted more by radio, private television and mobile phones. On the other hand, they play an important role in the supply of cheap information to the private press, which has too few resources to reach people everywhere. [This] helps to relay and amplify information that only a minority can access on the Net." An alliance that we have already seen at work elsewhere.

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Fujitsu Conseil Canada, tasked by the Assembly with evaluating the product to recommend, between free software and the Office Pro Plus 2010 suite, with a view to drafting a call for tenders, presents itself as "one of Microsoft's largest partners in the world" and its employees "maintain close ties" with the multinational software company, a spokesperson for the company told Le Devoir yesterday. A proximity denounced by defenders of free software whose products were excluded from the call for tenders, in defiance of the rules of good and healthy governance, they maintain, while once again demanding the pure and simple cancellation of the call for tenders launched at the beginning of the week. Presented Wednesday as an "independent external firm" by the National Assembly to justify its decision to open its call for tenders only to Microsoft products for the firm replacement of 600 office suites and 600 others as options, Fujitsu Consulting Canada is in fact anything but independent of the American multinational. "It is a partner with whom we have very close business relations," agreed Caroline Senay, head of communications and marketing for this multinational consulting and new technology company, in an interview yesterday. "We develop projects jointly with the people at Microsoft, with whom we often sit around the same tables to find solutions to market problems together." This "alliance," presented in these terms on the Fujitsu Consulting Canada website, also allows it "to have access to privileged information from Microsoft," admits Ms. Senay, for the accomplishment of its mandates. Worse, Fujitsu "often promotes" the products of the American multinational, "but not exclusively," she adds. "This does not prevent us from helping a client move towards other technologies, if they wish." For the Fédération québécoise des communautés et des industries du libre (FQCIL), the hiring of this consulting firm by the National Assembly -- and its consequence, the publication of a call for tenders favoring proprietary software from Microsoft at the expense of solutions without user licenses that free software represents -- is simply "shocking." "When the Assembly mentions this study to justify that it acted according to the rules of the art, it is demonstrating incredible bad faith," indicated Cyrille Béraud, president of the Federation. More advantageous On Wednesday, the National Assembly defended itself in a press release from having launched a call for tenders that discriminated against free software, citing among other things the Fujitsu report, which, after evaluating "free software products," concluded that "Microsoft products [are] greatly advantageous in the case of replacing the office suite." However, the public institution refuses to reveal the precise content of this evaluation. Yesterday, the National Assembly reiterated the validity of its decision and its call for tenders, even defending the work of the consulting firm, "which not only represents Microsoft, but also other software publishers," summarized Jean-Philippe Laprise, spokesperson for the institution. "It is also a firm that has recognized expertise in the field of technologies." The contract for the renewal of the Assembly's office suites is valued between $900,000 and $1.2 million. The call for tenders ends on February 28. Earlier this week, the National Assembly's decision to favor Microsoft for the renewal of its office software was strongly criticized by the free software industry, which did not fail to highlight the inconsistency of the gesture in an institution that, a few months earlier, voted for Law 133 on the governance and management of information resources of public bodies and government companies. The legislative text stipulates that the government apparatus must in the future "consider free software in the same way as other software" when updating its computer equipment, in order to "ensure the sustainability of the government's digital heritage," we can read. It should be noted that the National Assembly is not officially subject to this law, but like all laws targeting public bodies, the institution nevertheless says it subscribes to it, added Mr. Laprise. In 2010, the Superior Court of Quebec had also declared illegal calls for tenders targeting and naming products associated with a single company, such as Microsoft. Rendered in the case opposing Savoir-faire Linux to the Régie des rentes du Québec (RRQ), this judgment even demanded that in the future the public administration take into account free software in its entire strategy for renewing its computer software. On the rise in public administrations around the world, free software, more flexible, less expensive and often just as effective as its proprietary equivalents under license, is increasingly popular. France, the United States and Great Britain have succumbed to it to reduce, among other things, their government expenses, but also to stimulate the sharing of information produced through these applications. Since the formats of this software are open, it facilitates the exchange of civic data between different systems and free software, which proprietary applications do not always allow. In Quebec, dozens of politicians, all political stripes united, have spoken out in favour of these computer tools in recent months. "Political speeches on free software are ultimately very hypocritical," says Mr. Béraud. "Clearly, there is an inability of the State to speak truthfully on this issue." A tragedy, according to him, as Quebec prepares to reveal its intentions regarding digital governance, in the wake of the Gautrin report, the broad outlines of which were revealed yesterday by Le Devoir. "We want to promote open government," he adds. "But there can be no open government without free software."

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The Assembly defended itself yesterday from encouraging such discrimination by repeating that its policy requires it to respect "free competition," Jean-Philippe Laprise, spokesperson for the institution, told Le Devoir. "We already use several free software programs here. In the case of replacing office suites, in accordance with Bill 133 [Act respecting the governance and management of information resources of public bodies], we commissioned an independent study which, after evaluating free software and Microsoft products, concluded that the latter would be more advantageous, for reasons of compatibility and integration." Based on this report, the Assembly launched a call for tenders at the beginning of the week for the firm purchase of 600 Office Pro Plus 2010 licenses from the American multinational Microsoft, coupled with the purchase of 600 others as options, for a total of 1,200 computer software programs. Call No. 370100474 ends on February 28. The contract is worth between $900,000 and $1.2 million. The Fédération québécoise des communautés et des industries du livre (FQCIL) is not budging, however. By acting in this way, the Assembly is sending a contradictory message, given that in its chamber, during the study of Bill 133, elected officials “unanimously” expressed the importance of taking into account “free software solutions” in public procurement, the organization summarizes in a press release. Yesterday, the President of the Treasury Board, Michelle Courchesne, pointed out that the National Assembly is not subject to this law and, despite this, “completed all the required steps” to issue the call for tenders. Nevertheless, for MNA Éric Caire, representing the Coalition avenir Québec, the Assembly’s decision is simply “disappointing,” he told Le Devoir. "It is not by locking ourselves into a monopoly [that of Microsoft] that we will make savings," he said. It has been demonstrated that free software allows us to make savings. It is therefore a bad decision and it is the taxpayer who will pay for it." The FQCIL also points out that, in June 2010, the Superior Court of Quebec had described this type of call for tenders as illegal, demanding that in the future public authorities take free software into account when updating their computer equipment. Distinguished by its open formats and flexibility, in contrast to the closed proprietary software of multinationals that demand usage rights for each of their software programs, free software is struggling to find its place in public administration, even if, according to its defenders, it stimulates a healthy democracy, based on open and free computing, encourages economic dynamism and avoids waste. According to the lobby group, the purchase of licenses for proprietary software is a source of waste for the benefit of foreign multinationals, waste that corresponds to "the amounts of the $200 health tax and the increase in tuition fees required of young Quebecers," claims the Federation. \*\*\* With the collaboration of Robert Dutrisac

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"We are dismayed," says Cyrille Béraud, president of the Fédération québécoise des communautés et industries du libre (FQCIL), a lobby group that defends the economic and social interests of free software in Quebec. "This is a blatant case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. Such a call for tenders, launched by the highest institution in the country, guarantor of our values and our common good, goes against the will of the legislator. It also harms Quebec's technological independence, innovation and does not promote sustainable economic development." A Microsoft product Published Monday, the National Assembly's call for tenders, emanating from the financial resources and procurement department, aims to replace 600 office suites and purchase 600 more as options, for a total of 1,200 software programs. The document specifically targets Microsoft's Office Pro Plus 2010 product, thereby ignoring existing equivalents in the free software field. The call for tenders, for this contract valued at between $900,000 and $1.2 million, is open until February 28. The FQCIL is demanding that it be cancelled outright and rewritten to include free products such as OpenOffice.org or LibreOffice, which "have amply demonstrated throughout the world that they perfectly meet the needs of organizations such as the National Assembly, while being much more economical," says the organization. An illegal call In June 2010, Superior Court Judge Denis Jacques had described as illegal and contrary to the law this type of call for tenders that discriminates against free software in favor of software from the American multinational Microsoft, in a judgment rendered in the case opposing Savoir Faire Linux and the Régie des rentes du Québec (RRQ). Summary: the company involved in free software denounced the awarding by this public body of an IT contract to Bill Gates' company without having taken the trouble to evaluate a replacement of its software with so-called free solutions. Worse, last June, the National Assembly adopted Law 133 on the governance and management of information resources of public bodies and government companies, in which free software occupies an important place as a means of "ensuring the sustainability of government digital heritage". In harmony with the Jacques judgment, the text also specifies that the state apparatus must in the future consider "free software in the same way as other software". In recent months, the Charest government, like the opposition, has come to the defense of free software and recognized its importance in the current budgetary, social and digital context. "When it comes to free software, there are fine words and there is reality," says Mr. Béraud, who points out that the adoption of this type of product by the public administration can be a source of savings, but also a way to stimulate the creation of a Quebec free software IT industry. With these open and free formats, this type of application whose source code is accessible to all programmers was imagined in opposition to closed and proprietary applications controlled by a handful of multinationals and associated with costly user licenses. Despite our calls, it was not possible to speak to a representative of the National Assembly yesterday. In several countries, such as the United States, France or Brazil, the proliferation of free software is encouraged in public organizations because of the savings that can result, but also because of other advantages: free software opens the door to more equitable access to technology and public data, creates more secure computing environments, less sensitive to viruses, more malleable, and the economic benefits are local... For several digital actors in Quebec, this free software is one of the components of a democracy and governance that are part of the new digital reality.

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"Program or be programmed," prophesied American essayist Douglas Rushkoff, a specialist in new technologies, in his eponymous 2010 book in which he expressed concern about contemporary digital illiteracy. Two years later, it was all hands on deck: 2012 was proclaimed the "Year of Code" and teaching computer science to these brainless people of the Facebook generation became a public safety mission. Learning to program means regaining control of the machines that rule our lives, enslaved to the vibrations of our cell phones and the bombardment of notifications from social networks. "In the digital age, whoever has the keys to programming ends up building the reality in which the rest of the world lives," says Rushkoff. Whether they are designed by Facebook, Google or Apple, deplores the essayist and fervent supporter of open source, we conform to their visions, executing what their software commands, without having the slightest idea of what is going on behind the screen. Computers and networks have not always been a one-way medium. In the 80s, using a microcomputer and learning to program it were one and the same thing. Anyone with a Commodore, Amstrad or Atari tried their hand at coding. Then, computers became more and more user-friendly and it was - fortunately - no longer necessary to master Basic to be able to communicate. So why this sudden injunction to all become programmers? "Knowing how to program is like being able to speak while others can only hear," adds the media guru. Knowledge that could prove to be a powerful weapon in the years to come, underlines the Washington Post, which presents hackers as the new political elite and code as "the lingua franca of web activists." Across the Atlantic, the number of courses has exploded. One of the most publicized experiments is Code Year, an online tool for learning programming that has attracted more than 360,000 registered students, diligent in the exercises of Codecademy, a coding school created by two students from Columbia University in New York. In Great Britain, it is the Guardian that is leading a Digital Literacy campaign aimed at improving the teaching of technology and computer science in English schools. The idea is to learn how a computer works and not just how to use it. Computer language, while it may seem intimidating at first glance, is ultimately just a set of instructions translated so that machines can read them. And there is no age limit for getting involved. In France, the Hype(r)olds workshop introduces women over 77 to the Web and the Coding Goûters make programming child's play. Launched in January, notably by Jonathan Perret, himself a computer scientist, this monthly event brings together kids from 6 to 14 years old, who get their hands dirty with Robozzle (a puzzle game that involves controlling a small robot with a set of simple instructions), tinker with Scratch to create small interactive stories and games, learn the Python language, or even create a game for iPad. "It's a place where you can explore, meet, fail, start over, have fun." And eat cake, which doesn't hurt. http://codeyear.com http://code.google.com/intl/fr/edu/ http://hyperolds.tumblr.com http://ils.sont.la/ http://robozzle.com http://rur-ple.sourceforge.net/ http://scratch.mit.edu.acces.bibl.ulaval.ca/

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After the controversies over nuclear power, GMOs and nanotechnologies, is a new controversy brewing with an emerging field of life sciences, synthetic biology? This is what the parliamentarians want to avoid, who, in October 2010, asked the Parliamentary Office for the Evaluation of Scientific and Technological Choices (Opecst) to produce a report on "the challenges of synthetic biology", submitted on Wednesday 15 February. The letter of referral recalled that the aim was "to allow a calm discussion of the issues raised by the development of this field of research". The text written by the socialist MP for Isère, Geneviève Fioraso, is both classic in some recommendations, original in others and already criticized on the aspects concerning the question of science-society dialogue, a usual pitfall of technoscientific controversies. On the classic side, we find the well-documented presentation of the context and definition of this famous synthetic biology. It is "an economic and scientific reality that cannot be ignored," notes Geneviève Fioraso. But its definition already poses initial problems. New science? New technology? Is it just biology or a mix with computer science, mathematics and engineering? The MP quotes biologist François Képès, from Genopole d'Evry: "Synthetic biology is the engineering of biological components and systems that do not exist in nature and the reengineering of existing systems. It focuses on the intentional design of artificial biological systems rather than on understanding natural biology." In this big bag, we find research aimed at creating artificial genomes by assembling ad hoc genetic sequences or work in which DNA would include molecules different from natural molecules. We also find the creation of mutant viruses, the synthesis of proteins from genetically modified bacteria. Or the creation of living cells from basic chemical elements... This resembles well-known things like GMOs or the synthesis of insulin by modified bacteria, but it is a little different. "It is not a question of manufacturing a protein from a single gene but of working on complicated metabolic circuits involving several steps. In this case, the processes involved are not linear, and modeling and interdisciplinarity are necessary," explains François Képès, author of an educational work on the subject (La Biologie de synthèse plus forte que la nature?, Le Pommier, 2011). The fruit of 160 meetings and hearings in France and abroad, the Opecst report does not therefore cut across these definitions. It nevertheless identifies the main approaches that inspire researchers as well as the different tools they use (DNA sequencing, computer modeling or miniaturization). It also cites the sectors likely to benefit from this progress, such as health, energy (through the manufacture of biofuels in particular), materials, etc. Remarkably, it does not give in to blind optimism, recalling for example that developments will be slow. On these general aspects, the report recommends several initiatives to promote the development of research, the interdisciplinarity that accompanies it and the gateways leading to applications. The report also, as it should, gives pride of place to risk management and their assessment. But it also emphasizes the little-known issue of intellectual property. "We must not let patentability drift over living things," recalls Geneviève Fioraso, who mentions the well-known cases of GMOs or work on the human genome that have made patents economic weapons to protect themselves from competition rather than to promote innovation. The MP points out that other models exist such as open access biology, inspired by free software and which consists of sharing data as much as possible. However, this system also has its limits. "The American database also contains patented elements, so it's a bit of a mess," notes François Képès. The most anticipated point of the report concerns the delicate question of science-society dialogue that resurfaces with each emergence of a new theme. "A consensus exists on the need for an open, transparent dialogue, upstream of mass applications, in order to avoid reproducing posturing and overly binary debates," recalls Geneviève Fioraso. However, there are several ways to "dialogue." The model favored by the report was developed in the United Kingdom. A long process, begun in 2007, allowed, in 2009, the organization of a citizens' conference (a representative panel trained on these issues before debating them) which resulted, the following year, in recommendations. Decentralization, duration, plurality of opinions, information, serenity of the debates... these were the ingredients of success. "It is a shame that France is looking towards the United Kingdom," regrets sociologist Claire Marris (INRA, seconded to King's College London), who has closely studied how this debate works. "Public dialogues were behind closed doors and by invitation," she recalls. Above all, the objectives and definitions were set in advance of the debate and not really open. And the citizens' conference ultimately resembled a survey. With Pierre-Benoît Joly (INRA), she had therefore proposed, in a report submitted to the Ministry of Research, another form of dialogue. This was also taken up for the creation of an Observatory of Synthetic Biology, in December 2011, which the Opecst report does not mention. "In March, we will bring together our steering committee of around twenty members to set the objectives of this observatory led by the CNAM," specifies Ali Saib, the coordinator, director of research at the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers. This will involve identifying current events, stakeholders, and everyone's positions on synthetic biology, before preparing a public debate. The model is in fact the Nano forum organized by the CNAM and the Vivagora association, particularly between 2007 and 2009. "The goal is to bring to life the controversies that can be useful for innovation. The recipe is based on the sustainability of discussion structures, pluralist management, knowledge sharing, and the explanation of issues by everyone. It's very different from a citizens' conference," recalls Dorothée Benoit-Browaeys, general delegate of Vivagora. Opecst did not choose this path. Which goes to show that synthetic biology also promotes diversity in social engineering.

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The new contracts obtained by the geomarketing firm Inventis in recent months have allowed it to achieve a 45% increase in its turnover. "Since our founding in 2005, Inventis' turnover has increased by 20% per year. After obtaining the contract with the United Nations in 2010, the following contracts, obtained in 2011, increased our turnover by 45%," explains Mathieu Lahaye, president and founder of the company. The entrepreneur, aged just 28 and winner of the Company of the Year award at the Young Chamber of Commerce of Mauricie gala last year, has obtained new contracts in recent months within engineering firms, government agencies and manufacturing industries. Success in Geneva The successful implementation of its program designed for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was undoubtedly the spearhead of the growth of its company. "It was a project to integrate three databases," explains Mathieu Lahaye. "The first was on the budgets spent on all the refugee camps in the world, another on the census of refugees and finally a geographic database: location of the camps, etc. Our job was to group this information together and integrate it into a digital map that provides precise management indicators. This allows them, for example, to anticipate a mass arrival of refugees." The Inventis project was implemented in February 2011 at the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva and, subsequently, in the organization's regional offices around the world. Diverse clientele Since 2011, a pivotal year for Inventis, many companies and organizations have shown interest in the geomarketing firm of the young Trois-Rivières entrepreneur. In addition to the non-profit organizations that the company has been serving for several years now, other organizations, particularly in Quebec and Geneva, and companies from various sectors benefit from Inventis' management solutions. "We also work with insurance companies, banking institutions, CLDs and mining companies. We have also been approached by companies in the oil sector in Alberta and by aluminum smelters," lists Mathieu Lahaye. The system for integrating databases into a geographic map could also be beneficial to retail. Whether for a market study or to better adapt its offering, a merchant could, using a virtual map, deploy a more effective marketing strategy and thus better target its customers according to very specific criteria. Market and export To date, 60% of Inventis' market is Canadian and 40% abroad. Mathieu Lahaye will later try to break into the American market despite the economic problems and the difficulty in benefiting from export assistance programs given the nature of his business. "As for assistance programs for SMEs, I believe there are gaps," says the entrepreneur. "Since 2005, we have been developing without any government assistance or subsidies. So we have been very cautious in our development." Free Software Inventis, since its beginnings in business, has chosen to work with free software. Not only can it offer low-cost business solutions, particularly for its clients in the cultural sector, but it also sees advantages for its larger clients. "Almost everything we create is open source," says Mathieu Lahaye. "It's both an economic and technological choice. It's also in line with our corporate vision. We don't want to force our customers to buy licenses and annual updates. The source code of our programs is accessible, so the customer is not tied to us."

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Until December 2010, few people in France had heard of OVH. The WikiLeaks affair was then in full swing, Eric Besson, Minister of the Digital Economy, revealed that an obscure technical service provider, based in the industrial zone of Roubaix, was hosting this site described as "criminal". For Octave Klaba, director of OVH, the media baptism of fire was unexpected. It was, he says, in the press that he learned that its data centers were hosting Julian Assange's site. A joke? No, OVH was not troubled by the courts. Protected by high brick walls topped with barbed wire, the OVH machines - for "We host you" - only automatically provided storage space to a client, who turned out to be mandated by WikiLeaks. "Technical provider of the technical solution that the client has ordered", Octave Klaba does not interfere in knowing the activity or the name of those who use his infrastructure, so gigantic that WikiLeaks data occupies a nanometric space there. A virtual megalopolis, OVH has three centers (Roubaix, Paris and Strasbourg) that store 100,000 terabytes of data and consume as much electricity as a city of 20,000 inhabitants. With 100,000 servers installed in kilometers of racks, the company hosts 18 million sites. In 2011, OVH became the number 1 in Europe for hosting - one European site in six, one French site in three. A place conquered in ten years, and starting from scratch. At the origin of this nugget, a Polish couple and their two sons, arrived in France in 1991 with 5,000 dollars in their pockets. Sole shareholders of this company that employs 440 people and has a turnover of 100 million, they have never relied on anything but their strengths: venture capital, banking, the stock market, you know nothing. So here is a family of four engineers aged 29 to 63 who continue to live very simply and reinvest all their profits in the company. The father, Henryk, "Mr. Klaba" as everyone calls him here, is the president. A genius organizer and handyman, he invented a technique for cooling servers using a water system that allowed OVH to halve its energy costs. The mother, Halina, very discreet, takes care of the finances. The eldest son, Octave, who had the idea for OVH before bringing the whole family on board, is its CEO. He is the creative, the visionary who sees the Internet as "a magma of ideas overflowing from a permanently erupting volcano and when he comes into contact with it, ideas cool down quickly." Finally, there is the little brother, Miroslaw, alias Miro, the head of research, who defines himself as the family peacemaker. A 100% Klaba cast, in a very young company (average age 27), with almost no hierarchy. His story has its roots in that of Polish emigration in the last century, with Marian Klaba, Octave and Miro's grandfather, born near Béthune, in the 1920s, to a father from the mining region of Silesia. Like his father, Marian "hired" in the mine at the age of 13. Having become French, he married in 1946 a "pure Polish woman he met in France", according to Octave, who became the spokesperson for the painful family memory. The young girl came from a family of farmers who owned apple orchards in Poland before the frost forced them to sell their land and go "to the coalface", literally, in France. Marian's father-in-law, deep in the mine, dreams of rebuilding an orchard in Poland. He regularly sends money to his brother who has remained in the country so that he can buy land. The end of the Second World War comes, Poland needs to be rebuilt, it is time to leave: Marian, his wife and his parents-in-law try to return to the Polish land and apples. "They came back by train," says Octave, happily. "Getting out of the mine has always been the goal in the family." But no orchard awaits them: the uncle has spent everything gambling. Back to square one and to the mine, in Poland this time, because the Iron Curtain has fallen and the new communist authorities forbid the couple from returning to France, even though they both have French nationality. "It was hopeless but there was nothing to be done," continues Octave. "The family spirit of resistance comes from there." In 1949, the couple have a son, Henryk. The little family registered at the French consulate, just in case. "In fact, they were considered foreign agents," Octave recounts, "very closely monitored, and forbidden from leaving the country." Raised to hate communists, young Henryk was destined for a mining career. But he would make the most of the socialist education system: he entered the Warsaw Polytechnic and graduated as an engineer. There he met Halina, who would become his wife. While still a student, she gave birth to Octave in 1975. Miro was born seven years later. "Our childhood was happy," Octave remembers, "even if all you could find was vinegar in the shops. The D system teaches you to get by." The family lived in Walbrzych, not far from the Czech border, in Silesia, the birthplace of the Klaba. Henryk, a hard worker, rose through the socialist hierarchy, but without ever mixing with the nomenklatura. He ended his career at the head of a kolkhoz of 550 people and 2,000 hectares. "A born engineer," says Miro. "The kind who makes you look up in the middle of a potato field to show you the details of the electrical lines that cross it." It was in the 1980s that the Klaba, immersed in this "Geo Trouvetou" atmosphere while Poland was in the midst of an uprising, discovered microcomputing. Having left to buy a car, Henryk returned home with an Amstrad computer. His two sons turned out to be very precocious geeks. Octave "coded" before he had blown out his ten candles and debugged the accounting system of his father's kolkhoz in exchange for chocolates. Miro knew how to type his name before he knew how to write it. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the hope of going to France was reborn, and exchanges with the Klaba who had remained in France intensified. Henryk's cousins went to the north of France on a tourist visa. "They stayed there and we said to ourselves that if we wanted to try our luck, we'd better hurry up before the authorities blocked us," recalls Octave, who was 16 at the time. One day, the parents solemnly asked their two sons to choose between the two countries. "They told us that for them, it was too late to start a new life elsewhere. It was up to us to decide." Banco. The Klabas sold everything, lived without furniture for a year and, in 1990, there they were, crossing the border in their Wartburg (a Trabant, but bigger) with their lives in a trunk. The arrival was tough. "We swallowed our pride and went," summed up Octave. The kolkhoz director ended up as a turner and milling machine operator. Octave, who didn't speak a word of French, dropped down from second to fourth. He eventually integrates thanks to his moped with which he gains his freedom, and his heavy metal band. He hangs on, passes his baccalaureate and goes into preparatory class before joining, like his brother later, the Catholic Institute of Arts and Crafts in Lille. So here he is, an "engineer", like dad. However, Octave Klaba dreams of anything but a "career". He sums up the five weeks he spent at Alcatel in Rennes, his only professional experience outside of OVH: "It killed me." "Oles von Herman" (this is the pseudonym he found for himself in maths sup, out of "pure delirium") has long spent his days and nights on his personal online page, a hodgepodge of forums and small self-service "utilities", like page counters. He is looking for a host for his increasingly large site. Young Octave finally finds refuge on the server of an American from Pennsylvania. "There was nothing in France, nothingness." The little money he earned, he swallowed up in hours of connection. Traffic increased, content exploded and the American could not keep up. SOS. "I don't know what came over me, I didn't have a penny but I took the first plane with my server under my arm to come and help him," he recalls. A shock that would decide his future. He expected "a futuristic clean room", he came across "a wooden hut with two old bikes. It opened my eyes to the back of the Internet store, it was very easy." Back in France, he started his own hosting business. OVH ceased to be a pseudonym and became the acronym of a very sharing association in the spirit of free software. "Not only did I earn nothing, but I spent all the money from my internships helping people and hosting their sites. They only paid once, and even then.sent our first reminder letter"The Klaba parents do not share their son's choices: "They would have liked their engineer son to find a "real" job. For them, I was a fanatic, which was not wrong." At the beginning of 2000, Octave convinced them to lend him 7,000 euros to transform OVH into a company. The first premises were a cellar and the beginnings were difficult, but Octave found support in particular from Xavier Niel, a successful entrepreneur who had just launched Free. Niel lent him a basement in eastern Paris to install his first server farms. Like Niel with Free, Octave was finally able to develop a hosting model that would break prices. His secret? Doing everything himself. From assembling the servers to designing the racks to the architecture of the data centers, the last of which, Roubaix-4, no longer even needed air conditioning. To supply its Strasbourg data centers, the company has launched into energy production by investing in a wind farm in Lorraine. "Mastering technology is the key to lowering costs," explains Octave, "the only thing we don't save on is salaries." After opening sixteen subsidiaries - the first is in Poland and the last in Senegal - OVH is launching an assault on the North American market, the largest in the world. Octave has just moved with his wife and children to Montreal, OVH's bridgehead for the conquest of the New World. "Across the Atlantic, hosting providers are four times more expensive than OVH, and they don't understand our model," he says. "We have to hurry up and take advantage of it. We're going to show them that we're not Care Bears." We never doubted it. photos Christophe Alix

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:910

When the media talk about WikiLeaks and its explosive revelations, the use of warlike images - bombs or grenades - is commonplace. The artist Julian Oliver has given substance to these expressions with his latest project Transparency Grenade, the prototype of which was presented at the Transmediale festival in Berlin. His weapon of mass disclosure faithfully reproduces the very popular Soviet F1 grenade, but inside its plexiglass shell, it conceals a computer, a microphone and a powerful Wi-Fi antenna. Once the pin is pulled, it can intercept data transiting on the targeted network: IP addresses of computers, HTML pages, downloaded images, fragments of emails. It also captures conversations that it transmits securely and anonymously to a dedicated server. This data is then made public on an online map, at the location where the "detonation" took place. “The lack of transparency from industry and government has been a topic of great controversy, and our only tool for greater openness is the slow and tedious process of political reform. The Transparency Grenade overcomes these frustrations. Leaking secret information is as easy as pulling the pin,” the statement said. The aim is to facilitate leaks by introducing the weapon into important private meetings, with the complicity of an infiltrator. Not exactly discreet, one might object. “Originally, the project was to take the form of a very small ‘information bomb’ that could be fixed under the table or hidden inside objects,” explains the New Zealand artist. “I chose the grenade for its iconic side, an object symptomatic of our times, embodying its fears and contradictions.” At the same time, he is developing an Android application, which could run silently and invisibly in the background of a phone, with similar functions. "Obviously, it is impossible to legally provide this kind of service," admits Oliver, who "will have to be content with providing the source code and the instructions to carry it out." Another reservation is the level of protection of the targeted network, which could hinder the proper functioning of the grenade. These are all tasks that the hacktivist is working on. Julian Oliver, who describes himself as a "critical engineer," operates at the interface of art and technology. He is also one of the developers of Newstweek, a tool that allows you to "reestablish the facts" by manipulating the news. Connected to the wireless network of a café or an airport, you are reading Le Figaro or the BBC on your tablet, your iPhone or laptop, and suddenly certain headlines puzzle you. Then you are a victim of Newstweek. Through this discreet device hidden in a socket, a remote person can modify in real time the information transiting through a public Wi-Fi access point before it reaches the screen. The project, which won an award at the Ars Electronica, questions the reliability of the media and the trust we place in them, allowing each citizen to distort the news and manipulate the media in turn. As with the grenade, the detailed manufacturing method is online, in open source. transparencygrenade.com weise7.org/labor-berlin-8 newstweek.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:911

CREATED BY THE LAW of 17 July 2001, collective interest cooperative societies (SCICs) are now 18 years old and are doing well, despite the crisis. "The average turnover of SCICs has almost doubled since 2007", indicates the research department of the General Confederation of Cooperative and Participative Societies (SCOP), which will publish, on Thursday 9 February, the statistical overview of the evolution of SCICs over the past decade. Each year, invariably since 2004, between 25 and 30 SCICs are created and develop with remarkable sustainability. Out of a total of 224 creations accumulated since the existence of the status, 190 are still in activity, while on national average one in two companies ceases its activity after five years. This innovative form of business represents a potential for creating non-relocatable jobs that is set to grow, because "they promote public-private partnerships and the economic development of territories for entire sectors of the economy that, without being 100% public, are activities of general interest, such as the environment, land management or accommodation. There are needs that the public sector no longer has an interest in meeting alone", believes Patrick Lenancker, president of the General Confederation of SCOPs. Established throughout France in the environment (22%), agriculture (19%), commerce (4%), housing (5%) or culture (13%), SCICs have the particularity of being able to associate local authorities with their capital and governance. Municipalities, departments and regions can thus invest up to 20% of the capital of a SCIC. In 2010, their participation in the capital was on average 13%. "All other cooperative models are "single-memberships". Farmers come together to buy together, or employees to produce. Until the creation of SCICs, there was no organization that would bring together the sometimes contradictory interests of the different stakeholders," explains Patrick Lenancker. SCICs bring together three types of partners: employees, users or customers, but also public or voluntary authorities, or even financiers. In 2010, 66% of the members were individuals and 34% were legal entities. "Non-relocatable employment" SCICs thus facilitate the change in scale of social economy companies (associations, cooperatives). Initially, this form of cooperative attracted stakeholders already familiar with these particular business models, who were hampered in their development by the legal constraints of their organization. The green electricity supplier Enercoop has thus chosen to transform its SCOP into a SCIC to invite local authorities to become partners, which was prohibited in the form of a SCOP. This is also the motivation of the iMaugis association, in the process of creating a SCIC planned for summer 2012. Fabian Pilard, the co-manager of this free software IT service provider company based in Champagne-Ardenne, explains: "We made the cooperative choice to adopt a professional structure while maintaining our values. The SCIC corresponds to our approach of co-construction with local stakeholders - the commune of Charleville-Mézières, department, region - to create non-relocatable employment and to be able to offer solutions at the right price. In other forms of cooperative, legal entities would not have been able to integrate the company's capital." In total, 41% of SCICs are the result of transformations of associations or SCOPs. But the number of creations ex nihilo has increased, rising from 50% in 2007 to 59% in 2010. "The SCIC nevertheless remains a confidential usage model", acknowledges Mr. Lenancker. SCICs in fact belong to the category of lightweights in the economy: the largest turnover is today 12.5 million euros and the average workforce is 13.6 employees. When the issues are strategic for local authorities, such as health or water distribution, the General Confederation of SCOPs must still fight to promote the model.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:912

The case caused a stir at the end of 2010: a young American researcher had apparently discovered a bacterium capable of surviving in an environment rich in arsenic. Even worse, the microbe had apparently integrated this poison into its DNA, in place of phosphorus. Enough to call into question the most well-established certainties about the universal architecture of hereditary heritage! The author of this sensational breakthrough, Felisa Wolfe-Simon, then an astrobiologist at NASA, the American space agency, and at the USGS, the geological agency, benefited from a more than enviable launch in the media: NASA had organized a press conference to announce the discovery, published simultaneously in the journal Science. But questions quickly arose about the validity of her observations. Some did not fail to point out that the bacterium in question had not been named GFAJ by chance: "Give Felisa a Job" referred to the precarious professional situation of the young researcher, who needed to publish results to promote her hiring - a situation, it is true, far from being the exception in the world of research. More seriously, specialists in the field pointed out methodological inadequacies in the demonstration. The bacterium came from the brackish mud of Mono Lake, in California. Felisa Wolfe-Simon had gradually weaned it off phosphorus, by simultaneously increasing the arsenic content of the culture medium, to see if the latter, close on a physicochemical level, would not replace it in its metabolism. Science in the making When questioned in the heat of the moment, microbiologists expressed their doubts. For the demonstration to be complete, they noted, many verifications were still missing: making crystallographic images, to visualize the arsenic at the heart of DNA, for example. Rosie Redfield, a microbiologist at the University of British Columbia, quickly took the lead in the protest. On her blog, she criticized Science for not having required these verifications before publishing such spectacular results. Like other skeptics, she sent the journal a critical "comment", which duly gave rise to a response from Felisa Wolfe-Simon's team: the latter maintained its initial conclusions. The logical next step was therefore to try to reproduce its results, independently. This is a classic approach in principle: it allows us to verify that the observations are solid. But it is not always done, because the time spent risks being hardly productive, in terms of publications: scientific journals want something new, not an exact copy of results published previously. While there is a chance that the initial result will be invalidated, the risk is worth taking. Rosie Redfield therefore asked Felisa Wolfe-Simon for GFAJ samples and set about replicating the experiment. But she did it in a new way: she used her blog to share with the public and the community of microbiologists all the steps of this "remake". Rosie Redfield is indeed a follower of "open science", a movement that seeks, in line with open source in computing, to share the process of scientific production with as many people as possible. In this movement, some go so far as to put their laboratory notebook online, with all the raw data. This is not the case for Rosie Redfield, but reading her blog has offered a fascinating glimpse of science in the making for months. Where are we now? The final checks carried out by a Princeton student, in collaboration with the Canadian researcher, show no trace of arsenic in GFAJ's DNA. Is the die cast? Questioned by Nature, Science's rival, Felisa replied that she "did not fully understand the results and the conditions of the experiment on the website", and said she hoped that these would be published in a peer-reviewed journal, "because that is how science progresses best". So Rosie submitted a manuscript to Science on January 30. Will it take up the challenge?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:913

Two competitors, specialists in information and document management, have decided to pool their software and expertise in a consortium that will now offer free software solutions for integrated document management (IDM) by businesses and public organizations. DocuLibre and Gestar each offered their own integrated document management solution. But after a few chance meetings, the two presidents, Rida Benjelloun (DocuLibre) and Michel Roberge (Gestar), realized that their two companies had very complementary strengths. "I'm into technology, he's into business," summarizes Rida Benjelloun. In reality, their respective skills are much broader. Michel Roberge is Quebec's IDM specialist. He wrote the first and only Quebec book on the subject, and last year he published another book on the hierarchical classification scheme for administrative documents. Rida Benjelloun is a specialist in electronic information management, semantic search engines and open source software. DocuLibre supports the official search engine of the Government of Quebec and those of more than 400 sites of ministries and other affiliated organizations. Gestar offered its own software for document management, OmniDok, while DocuLibre had developed an open source software suite, IntelliGID. DocuLibre also created a government open source software "community" in 2011 with users of its software. Gestar, which has been working in this field for more than 25 years, decided to join it by contributing the OmniDok code and the DocumentFaire methodology to the IntelliGID community. "This is the first time in Quebec that I have seen a private company contribute commercial software to an open source community," says Rida Benjelloun. This is a sign of confidence from Gestar, and it will allow us to offer a GID solution in Quebec as well as internationally." No merger The concept of free communities was not yet very familiar to Michel Roberge. "I asked Rida if we could create a community on classification schemes. By working with hundreds of clients, we have developed a huge amount of knowledge. The idea is to make our structure accessible free of charge to users to avoid them investing unnecessarily, because in the end, the scheme is repeated from one place to another. The crux of the matter is the support and training of the personnel who will use the system." The two companies have not merged, but to work closely together, the DocuLibre team will soon move into Gestar's offices. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:914

"In terms of technology, Quebec is generally behind, and this delay is also felt in the modernization of the State," says Sylvain Carle, a major player on the digital scene in Quebec and organizer of this GouvCamp (http://www.gouvcamp.org). This meeting will therefore be an opportunity to bring together people from various backgrounds who are thinking about this subject and who, above all, now want to take action." A pure product of digital culture, the principle of BarCamp, which modulates its name according to the subjects it addresses -- GouvCamp for questions concerning democracy 2.0, PodCamp on podcasts, YULCamp on the technological development of Montreal --, is intended to be a meeting of citizen-experts during which each participant is both audience and speaker. These unconferences are organized through social networks and the Web and subsequently use these same tools to disseminate the ideas and content they have generated. A moderator is in charge of supervising the conversations. Democracy issues The first GouvCamp will take shape on February 22 in Quebec City on the sidelines of the WAQ (Web in Quebec City) conference, which brings together technology experts. Between 40 and 75 people are expected to discuss topics related to the opening of public data, the current use of government budgets in terms of technology, transparency, digital citizenship, communication between the government apparatus and citizens. Among others. The themes are brought by the participants according to their interests and expertise. "Until now, the government has approached these issues timidly," says Mr. Carle. We sense that it is not very comfortable with it. GouvCamp is an opportunity to take advantage of the thinking and ideas of citizen experts who can certainly help the government in its modernization process," and this, in a "pragmatic logic," continues the man who recently, online, called on Quebec to adopt a "Nerds Plan" to bring the province into the digital reality of the present, rather than a Plan Nord widely publicized by the Charest government. "In the government apparatus, technology suffers from being only in the hands of financial managers," he says. But today, we can no longer see it solely as a simple production tool. It is a social issue." The BarCamp principle was born in 2005 in California in the offices of an IT company that held the first of these unconferences where each participant must put a concrete idea, a project, a documented analysis on the table. Its theme: free software. Since then, this tool for exchange and collaboration, deeply rooted in the culture of Web 2.0, has multiplied its founding principle everywhere on the planet: "no spectators, everyone participants".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:915

Launched in 2010 by two 23-year-old Frenchmen, Makesense.org aims to help social entrepreneurs around the world carry out their projects with the help of volunteers wherever they are. In the process, they have developed a new working method. Christian Vanizette and Romain Ranguin met at Euromed, a business school in Marseille. Candidates are chosen based on their projects, and the teaching is adapted to what they need to carry them out. It is therefore “necessarily proactive and necessarily à la carte,” explains Christian, and different from the case studies at Harvard (which seems to have understood that change was needed). Tahitian (on his father’s side) and Vietnamese (on his mother’s side), Christian, whom I met in Paris, has the charm of a mixed-race person slowly blossoming in the sun and the dynamism of an entrepreneur who already knows very well what he wants: to change the world without taking himself for Mother Teresa. Attracted by what Muhammad Yunus means by "social business" - a company that does not lose money, does not distribute dividends, and whose objective is to solve a social problem - Christian and Romain decide to go and see how things work in Asia, in early 2010. Without contacts and without preparation, they arrive in New Delhi with open arms. First initiative, "a funny video followed by a tweet" to announce themselves. A well-known blogger spots them and allows them to benefit from his megaphone. They tour the subcontinent, going, at the pace of their inspiration, "from cool encounter to cool encounter". Each one is the opportunity to make a video on which their interlocutors tell the challenges they have to solve. They put everything on their blog we.makesense.org, because they had the intelligence to invest the 1,000 euros won in a school competition in the purchase of this fabulous domain name. On their return, they launched a website that didn't take off, until they realized that they also needed to create an offline dynamic. "It was the combination of the two that made our trip successful," explains Christian. They then started organizing workshops: 80 in 2011, and already 25 by the end of January 2012. All this thanks to a Facebook page on which social entrepreneurs are invited to present their "challenges": how to better sell paper bags produced by Indian women, for example. Business, technology and design But style is business. Vocabulary counts. Makesense is a multitude of "gangs" made of "gangsters." And the workshops are "hold-ups." "Influenced by 1990s rap," says Christian with an angelic air, while affirming his desire to be "offbeat" compared to the language of big companies. The method is well-established, and Makesense is preparing to launch an application for organizing "hold-ups." Requests for help will fall into three categories: business, technology and design. Those who want to lend a hand will have the choice between four modalities: I can help, I know someone, I pass the message on and I create a hold-up. "Depending on the type of challenge, we will send him a certain method: a way to organize a brainstorming session or a "hackathon" [meeting of programmers] if it is about technology, for example." A layer of gaming techniques means that "people have fun solving social challenges." Those who help with the organization range from DJ Dude to DJ Buddha. Inspired by open source working methods (Apache and Wordpress), their platform is taken up by other initiatives (SenseSchool.org for schools, for example). It all comes down to a concept, outsourcing to small, connected and motivated groups, which is hesitant to find its name: why not gangsourcing or tribesourcing?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:916

In 2006, the Lektrolab collective rehabilitated the art of teletext at the Rotterdam Film Festival, inviting artists to take over this service that allows channels to broadcast news in text form on the television screen. They made available free software so that everyone could imagine alternatives to boring program schedules. The naughty German cable channels had nevertheless gotten ahead of them in creative diversion, as shown by the Teletex Babez collection, flashy and suggestive images, despite their large pixels. In March, in Helsinki, the International Teletext Art Festival will be held. You have until January 25 to submit your creations, which will be broadcast for a month on YLE, the prudish Finnish public television which nevertheless specifies that porn is prohibited... http://drx.a-blast.org/~drx/projects/teletext/ index.en.htmlhttp://www.fixc.fi/itaf/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:917

More than 1,200 Revenu Québec employees were able to purchase the Microsoft Office Professional suite, worth $669, for personal use for just $11. This is therefore a benefit worth more than $800,000 that Microsoft had granted, before the end of 2011, to employees of the Agence québécoise du revenu. Revenu Québec indicated, in response to an access to information request by Le Soleil, that this is a program (Home Use Program or HUP) offered by Microsoft to any client of a business contract. In fact, the multinational did not make an exception for Revenu Québec. The Home Use Program has existed for several years, in both the private and public sectors. Except that the Regulation respecting ethics and discipline in the Quebec public service stipulates that "a public servant may not accept any gift, token of hospitality or other benefit other than those customary and of modest value. Any other gift or benefit received must be returned to the donor or to the State." "We consider that there is no benefit, neither for Revenu Québec nor for its employees," observes Manon Tremblay, spokesperson for the Agency. "It is not a gift because employees pay ($11) for the office suite... It is an offer that Microsoft makes to several of its clients. It is not as employees of Revenu Québec that they have access to this offer. If they worked for another organization of the same size, they would have access to the same program." The same is true at the Syndicat de la fonction publique du Québec. "Employees will be more familiar and therefore more efficient, that is why Microsoft offers it to its clients...", believes the president of the Union, Lucie Martineau. So, we do not really see a conflict of interest." However, she admits, if an employee received a computer for free, "it would be a taxable benefit. Here the software is not provided for free, it is a discount, as if I were a Ford employee and the company offered me a discount to buy a car." Microsoft itself justifies this program by saying that people who use it at home gain experience with the product. In reality, the practice appeared in 2003 to pass the introduction, by Microsoft in 2001, of software assurance, which now required users to pay an annual fee to benefit from updates, among other things. The Quebec government thus buys tens of thousands of these licenses each year, for several million dollars. Dependence Microsoft's strategy is obvious, according to Daniel Pascot, professor of organizational information systems at the Faculty of Administration and spokesperson for FACIL, an organization that promotes free computing. The goal is to make people dependent on its platform. "The more people use Office at home, the more the employer is encouraged to stay with Microsoft. If, on the contrary, people used OpenOffice, they would ask the Ministry: why pay hundreds of dollars to Microsoft when you can do it for free? "According to him, "if the public administration makes software available to everyone, it should offer free software." Such initiatives are also taking place in France, where the administrative region of Paris (Île-de-France) has announced that it would offer a new version of the LibreOffice suite to high school students, their parents, their teachers and administrative staff, i.e. nearly a million users, for the 2012 school year. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:918

Humanitarian aid is going techno. After giving more than two million laptops to underprivileged children around the world, an American NGO is launching its ultra-rugged, solar-powered tablet. Saving the world, one tablet at a time. Since 2006, the American NGO One Laptop per Child has been promoting humanitarian aid, modern version. To educate poor children, there's nothing better than providing them with a free computer packed with educational software, the NGO maintains. No fewer than 2.4 million of these computers have been shipped to 46 countries to children aged 6 to 12. But in this era where tablets are all the rage, the NGO is adding a touchpad for underprivileged children to its range. The XO 3.0 tablet, unveiled last week at the Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas, has all the assets to go deep into the South American jungle or the African desert. Its long-lasting battery is recharged by solar energy (a world first for a tablet); its screen is readable even in bright light. And the construction is robust; perfect for a young child who has never laid hands on such a technological object. And if the sun is scarce? It also recharges by hand, with a crank. On the software side, it unsurprisingly relies on open source software like Linux, while opening a door to the Android system. The latter is full of applications, many of which are educational. equity "It is the logical successor to our laptops," said the foundation's chief engineer, Edward McNierney, last week. "And our tablet requires low energy consumption, a critical issue for children in developing countries." Currently, the previous generation of computers has found buyers in Peru and Rwanda, among others. For now, the foundation prefers to target countries and schools rather than scattering the devices left and right. For example, when a Rwandan child gets a computer, all his classmates get one too. It's a question of fairness, and above all, of not marginalizing those who don't have access to technology. Computers - and soon tablets - are always given to children. Never lent. The idea of using computers to promote education in poorer countries germinated 10 years ago in the mind of Nicholas Negroponte, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He launched One Laptop Per Child in 2005 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. sauger@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:919

Sherbrooke - A "critical choice for the future" awaits the Charest government in February, cornered by the giant Microsoft, which will stop supporting its Windows XP operating system in two years. The result? A massive migration to be expected for the government's 400,000 or so computer workstations, estimated at $800 million. Figures deemed still too timid by Benoît des Ligneris, president of the Association professionnelle des entreprises de logiciellibres (APELL) and Révolution Linux. "The migration is estimated at approximately $2,000 per workstation. We believe that the real total cost is more like $3,000 to $6,000 per unit. Like all major projects, we are unable to predict the exact expense, but we believe that it could go up to $2.6 billion," he says. To counter this budgetary hemorrhage, Mr. des Ligneris is proposing the use of a free office suite. A solution that would offer savings “in the order of 20%,” with European precedents to back it up. In Finland, in particular, a project carried out on more than 10,000 workstations made it possible to cut $4.5 million from the bill, or more than half. “Free software offers incredible potential for savings and sustainable development,” assures the Sherbrooke entrepreneur. “I often use an analogy with a house: in the case of proprietary software, like Microsoft Office, you are tenants, you pay every month to use the property. With free software, you become the owner. These are not the same rights and responsibilities, you have to maintain it, pay insurance, but from the time you acquire it, it is a lifelong investment. “After ten years of paying rent, you have nothing at all. But the house, it belongs to you,” he illustrates. Beyond a "computer scientist problem", Mr. des Ligneris speaks of a choice of governance and advocates for a direction that "will not be controlled by a single company and that will allow us to detach ourselves from technology". "Developing for a particular company is a mistake," he maintains. "Who knows what the market will look like in ten years. The open standard is more secure, we protect ourselves." Time to choose The Secretary and Chief Information Officer, Marc Lacroix, has mandated an interdepartmental working group to recommend the position to take and the actions to put forward collectively from the beginning of next month. And the president of APELL makes no secret of it: his industry is claiming to be a serious candidate. "We hope that the open standard will be adopted," he confirms. Already, signs are pointing in this direction. Like the adoption of Bill 133 in 2010, "the first legislation in North America that established a policy favorable to free software," according to Mr. des Ligneris. This Act respecting the governance and management of information resources of public bodies and government enterprises stipulates that free software must be considered when replacing, acquiring, renewing or upgrading software within departments. "The free software industry has always been greeted with a certain skepticism as long as there was no government support," admits the businessman. "We were not very big, and therefore, not very credible." An enthusiasm that was however tempered by decree 1111-2011, promulgated less than a year after Bill 133, and which authorizes, under certain conditions, private agreements with many suppliers of proprietary software. Its adoption immediately caused "quite a stir" among APELL members. However, Mr. des Ligneris specifies that no agreement has yet been reached since the decree was adopted and hopes that the situation remains as it is. "Of course, we would have preferred not to see this decree, but the framework that is being implemented seems to us to be in line with the real desire of the Centre de services partagés du Québec not to transgress the law." "It is up to us to be the watchdogs, and we will be."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:920

It's hard to miss the faces of the contributors and directors of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia. From November 2011 to early January, every time you searched, their portraits appeared at the top of the page, inviting you to make a donation. Susan and her long white hair. Rémi Mathis, president of Wikimedia France, with his schoolboy look. Jimmy Wales, the American founder. Some 450 million people consult Wikipedia each month. The encyclopedia is translated into 280 languages (including the twelve regional ones in France) and offers 1.1 million articles in French, consulted by 18.8 million readers. The fifth most visited site in the world is a company apart. The first four (Google, Yahoo!, YouTube and Facebook) have raised colossal investments, finance themselves through advertising, employ thousands of employees and conduct costly marketing campaigns. Wikipedia, for its part, operates with 7.6 million dollars (6 million euros), 95 employees, tens of thousands of volunteer editors. And without advertising. Independent, the participatory encyclopedia is 85% funded by donations from individuals, the rest coming from foundations. The last fundraising campaign, which ended on January 3, broke a record: 20 million dollars, or 15.3 million euros, donated by 1 million people. These donations will help develop Wikipedia and its complementary projects: the multilingual dictionary Wiktionary, the news center Wikinews, the digital libraries Wikibooks (educational) and Wikisource (universal), the collection of quotes Wikiquotes, the educational platform Wikiversity, the media library Wikimedia Commons, the directory of living species Wikispecies. A colossal amount of free, illustrated knowledge, constantly updated. A library of Babel containing all knowledge, worthy of the one imagined by Borges in Fictions. How can we explain such success, which contradicts all economic models? The history of Wikipedia is as eventful as it is enlightening. In March 2000, Jimmy Wales, majority shareholder of Bomis.com, an online search portal for erotic-pornographic images, launched Nupedia, an encyclopedia on the Net. He hired an editor-in-chief, Larry Sanger, who formed a scientific committee. The first articles were validated. But then a programmer explained to them the principle of the "wiki", a website whose visitors could modify the pages - "wiki-wiki" meaning "fast" in Hawaiian. On January 15, 2001, financed by Jimmy Wales, Wikipedia was launched, with an appeal to readers. The new site was soon swamped with articles and, very quickly, Wikipedia expanded throughout the world, taken over by teams of passionate volunteers. Wikipedia is part of the cooperative movement born with the Internet. It is inspired by the principles of "copyleft" (which authorizes, as opposed to copyright, the free distribution and modification of a work) and free software (whose use, modification and duplication are permitted, technically and legally). Two fundamental texts, written by two former hackers, influence Wikipedians. First, an essay, The Cathedral and the Bazaar, by Eric Raymond (not translated, ed. O'Reilly Media, 1999), which defends "the logic of the bazaar": if a multitude of contributors intervene on a project without obeying a hierarchy or a master plan, they develop a work in motion, not a frozen cathedral. Then, "The Free Universal Encyclopedia", an appeal put online by Richard Stallman in 1999. The father of the free GNU operating system called for the creation of a free and participatory encyclopedia: "In the past, encyclopedias were written under the direction of a single, centralized body. It would not make sense to develop the free encyclopedia in this way." This cooperative and libertarian philosophy is the basic rule of Wikipedia, which has given itself the slogan: "The freely distributable encyclopedia project that everyone can improve." In June 2003, Jimmy Wales transferred his property rights to the Wikimedia Foundation. It is run by the founders of the site and representatives elected by the associations of active Wikipedians (around thirty in 2010). Jimmy Wales, named one of the 100 most influential people by Time in 2006, no longer has a leading role there. He is in charge of Creative Commons, an organization that aims to develop copyright contracts that allow the sharing of knowledge, works, data and universal access to culture, education and research. He explains to us: "Wikipedia is a temple of the mind, a place to learn and share knowledge, not a commercial space. Commerce should not invade every sphere of our lives. We are both a public service and a common good." No merchants in the temple, free cooperation, decentralization, these are the principles. But how, by appealing to the public, can you write a reliable encyclopedia, without amateurism, that does not become a free-for-all or a place of all manipulations? It is very difficult. Since its creation, Wikipedia has been torn between its two original requirements: the concern for expert proofreading desired by Larry Sanger, in the tradition of the great encyclopedists since Diderot and d'Alembert, and the richness of editorial material that is sometimes approximate, biased, little referenced, provided by thousands of enthusiasts or sectarian minds. To avoid these pitfalls, the founders have put in place, year after year, ethical rules. The first is "neutrality of point of view", or "describing the debate rather than engaging in it". Each contributor must also present "the different points of view of a controversy", emphasizing the best supported ones, with reliable and authoritative sources. Thus the Internet user discovers the famous "Ref. required" or "Non-neutral article" for texts deemed imperfect. Since anyone can contribute to an article, intense debates take place behind the scenes between editors, disgruntled experts, people concerned, ideologues of a subject, idlers who put their two cents in... During these controversies (all available online, which sheds light on the quarrels of interpretation and reveals the sectarians), Wikipedia requires "rules of etiquette", set out on the "Founding Principles" page: "Seek consensus. Keep your cool when the atmosphere heats up. Avoid edit wars." The clashes are innumerable, even if a "consensus search" grid has been developed, pushing to always resume the discussion amicably, arguing that solid, "rational" content can be found. This sometimes results in long and rich articles, where several interpretations balance each other out. Sometimes, the desire for consensus results in interminable files. In the event of a violent dispute, an administrator, elected by the communities of each country, can suspend a page or ban a contributor, pending an agreement. A very Dadaist section "the most pitiful edit wars" is online. One among many others, French: the age of Arielle Dombasle. So much for the principles. Are they really applied? Are they enough? Many precise and learned critiques denounce amateurism and list the flagrant errors. Daniel Garcia, from the magazine Livres Hebdo, wrote a corrosive article on November 3, 2006: "Open the entry on Wikipedia relating to the Dreyfus affair. Go down to the bibliography. And there, as the first reference, we read: Henri Dutrait-Crozon, Précis de l'Affaire Dreyfus. With this comment, in all letters: "Fundamental work to consult as a priority." » This 1909 book, revised in 1924 and 1938, is an anti-Dreyfusard plea in the Action Française movement. The novelist Pierre Assouline took up the criticism on January 9, 2007 on his blog "La République des Livres". He points out that the incriminated work is a "gospel of nationalists". He notes that Wikipedia, following the intervention of the Human Rights League, has just added the mention "contested work", but left it at the head of the bibliography, before works by respected historians. Regretting the "ambient demagogy" that would have everyone become an encyclopedist, Pierre Assouline exercises this fundamental criticism: "The question of sources is the basis of all research, whether historical, scientific, journalistic; but Wikipedia dilutes the source so much that it eludes it. It cannot be repeated enough: in the field of ideas, and in particular in history, the spirit of the reference is intrinsically linked to duration and not to the ephemeral. However, on Wikipedia, the reference is variable geometry: the last one who spoke is right, until the next one." In 2008, five journalism students from Sciences Po carried out a detailed investigation of Wikipedia France articles. They also did a test. They added false information to Pierre Assouline's profile: "In 2001, won the French tennis championship." This error soon circulated everywhere. It called into question the very functioning of Wikipedia: thousands of false pieces of information, outrageously laudatory or malicious notices can pass through the encyclopedia's filters. Moreover, several sites noted these persistent errors, such as the "WikiGrill" section of the magazine Books en France, in which an author pointed out "laissez-faire as an organizational principle." He wonders: is it anarchy or the credo of the liberal economy that is invoked? Noting that Wikipedia defends "an equal right of participation for all without regard to age, competence or origin", he is surprised: is not being "without regard to competence" dangerous for an encyclopedia? Another example of slippage on Wikipedia concerns Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, co-author of The Black Book of Psychoanalysis (Les Arènes, 2005). First presented on Wikipedia as a reasoned critic of Freud, he suddenly found himself treated as a "failed analyst" and a "behavioral psychiatrist". Pro-Freudians intervened on the text, seeking to discredit it. He protested, the false information was removed. Then reintroduced: Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's Wikipedia page has become a battlefield in a war between Freudian and anti-Freudian associations. This is not anecdotal. These clashes take place on a number of sensitive subjects: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Algerian War, prostitution, George W. Bush... They extend to insider quarrels: is Shakespeare the author of his plays? Is ayahuasca a dangerous psychotropic drug? This goes on and on. Each time, Wikipedia's "cyber-firefighters" have to warn readers: "The form and substance of this article must be verified", "Non-neutral assertion", "Sources required". At the end of their investigation, the Sciences Po students published, at the end of 2007, The Wikipedia Revolution (A Thousand and One Nights, preface by Pierre Assouline). They raise several notable points: the large number of unreliable contributors discourages experts on a subject from intervening, which harms the quality of the articles as well as the prioritization of information. The speed of Wikipedia, capable of providing articles on a work that has just been released or the latest talent in vogue, does not allow for the necessary perspective for encyclopedic work. Rémi Mathis, 28, president of Wikimedia France, is a curator in the prints department of the National Library of France (BNF), rue Vivienne. He attended the Ecole nationale des chartes. He is a good connoisseur of 17th century diplomatic history - he is a major contributor to Wikipedia in his field of expertise. In mid-December 2011, he was reassured by the call for donations launched in France: "We receive donations by the thousands. Each time, people add words of encouragement. » At the end of December, 36,000 people had donated 980,000 euros. For what projects? First, Wikipedians and the BNF will continue their partnership. They have been tasked with proofreading and correcting 1,400 books digitized by the library - from Nana, Zola, to Thiers' History of the French Revolution - before making them accessible on the Gallica portal. The French team will also put a large number of literary and graphic works online (Wikisource already has more than 50,000 works) by collaborating with the Centre Pompidou, the Cluny Museum, the Toulouse archives, etc. They will work with several universities, in France and French-speaking Africa, in order to involve teachers, students and researchers in writing articles. There is also this fight for "freedom of panorama". "In France, images of a public monument such as the François Mitterrand Library or the lighting of the Eiffel Tower are subject to copyright," explains Rémi Mathis. As a result, the architect or lighting designer can request rights to distribute photos representing their work. To promote an exemption from this legislation, "we launched the "Wiki Loves Monuments" competition in Europe, so that Internet users can photograph historical monuments and display them on Wikipedia Commons." Rémi Mathis is irritated by criticism of Wikipedia's credibility. Where consensus exists, in the fields of hard sciences, natural sciences and technology, Wikipedia offers solid knowledge, he emphasizes. He recalls that in 2007, at the request of Stern magazine, an independent team compared 50 articles chosen at random from Wikipedia and Brockhaus, the great German encyclopedia. 43 out of 50 articles were judged more exhaustive, readable, accurate and up-to-date on Wikipedia. He adds with a pained smile: "Our censors would do better to help us improve the site." Rémi Mathis adds that fast software like Wikiscanner now identifies the IP addresses (which allow the computer to be identified) of contributors. Microsoft, pharmaceutical laboratories, sects, politicians, fans have thus been caught red-handed retyping. As for the famous "trolls", the vandals and pranksters of the Net, they are now spotted more quickly when they change George W. Bush's second name, Walter, to "Wanker", claim that the drink Red Bull contains "cow sperm" or wrongly announce the death of a star. Rémi Mathis brings the discussion to the heart of the matter. According to him, we are witnessing a democratization of knowledge comparable to that which followed the invention of the printing press. At the time, the elite who read and wrote the books accused the printing press of multiplying errors through mechanical printing and of drowning talent in the mass of publications. For him, the contributory encyclopedia challenges those who claim to know a subject better individually than a group of researchers discussing among themselves. Jean-Noël Lafargue, lecturer at Paris-VIII, former administrator of Wikipedia, grades his students on their articles published in Wikipedia. For him, "we will always hear the defenders of the "civilized" Internet complain, because the freedom to do and say inspires mistrust. They will prefer censorship to disorder, will never admit the educational value of error or of endangering established knowledge. They do not believe in education but in training."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:921

Discreetly, he places it on a table in a corner. Immediately, several customers, who are looking for the café's Wi-Fi network to go online, see a new icon appear on their screen: "Pirate Box, Share Freely!" They connect with one click, but instead of arriving at a website, they find themselves facing a skull, accompanied by a menu that offers them to participate in a live messaging service, to download texts and music or to upload their own files to offer them to other connected customers. In the messaging service, the conversation quickly goes off in all directions. David Darts intervenes to explain how the Pirate Box works, but the café's customers have already understood it, intuitively: the box placed on the table creates around it a mini autonomous wireless network, allowing the computers in the neighborhood to interconnect for free, without any control. In a few minutes, the files begin to circulate. David Darts doesn't know how many people are connected: "That's on purpose, the Pirate Box doesn't have any tools to track or list users. If bad people -- or the police -- come in here and take over my box, they'll never be able to know who used it." As he pleases He has chosen to share musical works based on samples considered by their authors to be royalty-free. That said, if someone uploads a file protected by copyright, he has no objection: in this small, closed universe, everyone does as they please, without fear of being spied on or punished. Beyond its fun aspect, the Pirate Box was designed to give food for thought: "The protection of our privacy and our anonymity is intimately linked to the preservation of our fundamental freedoms. However, on the Internet, we accept being spied on constantly by Google or Facebook and by state agencies. In exchange, we receive very practical services, but, in my opinion, it is too expensive." Initially, at the end of 2010, David Darts had launched into the adventure alone: "I had borrowed the free software Droopy, written by a Frenchman, and I had started to adapt it to my needs." But, very quickly, he realized that he needed help. He then opened a website and launched an appeal to the free software community, which operates on the principle of mutual aid and sharing. In a few weeks, experts voluntarily sent him solutions and suggestions, which allowed him to complete his work. A million visitors To check the appeal of his Pirate Box on different audiences, David Darts conducted tests everywhere: on campus, in bars, at parties, in parks, in the metro, in his building... To date, the reception has always been positive. He also distributes his software for free via the Internet, with instructions that allow DIYers to build their own box. True to his principles, he doesn't want to know anything about them, but he guesses that there are many of them: "In Amazon, the server plug was on sale for $20, but suddenly, demand exploded, it went up to $60. Moreover, Amazon indicates that those who bought it also bought a box decorated with a skull..." In ten months, his site has received more than a million visitors, some of whom have joined the project. A German hacker realized that the server plug was in fact useless, because the Pirate Box software can be installed directly on certain routers, such as the Buffalo AirStation. At the same time, a community of geeks has undertaken to transform a smartphone into a Pirate Box, while another is doing the same with a laptop. In New York, David Darts is now receiving messages urging him to start creating a parallel network, composed of a series of interconnected Pirate Boxes: "My little project is part of a larger movement. Lots of people dream of creating an alternative version of the current Internet, which they no longer want, because it has become commercialized, centralized and monitored from everywhere." Utopia Other, more politicized New Yorkers are working to realize this utopia, with variations. Activists for a libertarian Internet have understood that, in order to reach the general public, they must provide ready-to-use devices. The small NGO Access Now, which is dedicated to the defense of "digital freedoms," has undertaken to transform an ordinary Internet router into a machine for anonymizing Internet traffic. Its technical director, Gustaf Björksten, based in a dilapidated building in southern Manhattan, has also chosen the Buffalo AirStation router, on which he is trying to install a modified version of the TOR (The Onion Router) system. Developed by a team of American and German hackers, TOR is a network of anonymous servers that encrypt Internet data and pass it through multiple relays to cover tracks. Direct action A few miles away, on the 17th floor of a skyscraper in a New York business district, another team has embarked on a more ambitious adventure: the design of a Freedom Box, which will combine in a single box a wide range of functions to protect the confidentiality of communications over the Internet. The project is hosted by the Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC), a nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services to creators of free software. SFLC boss Eben Moglen, a long-time activist for the defense of individual liberties, also a lawyer and professor of law at Columbia University, understood that, when it comes to protecting citizens' rights on the Internet, the law is an insufficient weapon. So he decided to take direct action: "We are going to produce equipment that will allow each citizen to take personal control of the protection of their privacy on the Internet, without really knowing anything about computers." In keeping with the spirit of the free software community, the team works partly from existing programs and relies on about fifty experts, many of them volunteers - among them, Jacob Appelbaum, co-founder of TOR, who is also close to WikiLeaks. Eben Moglen already dreams of seeing his company sell millions of copies on the Internet, thanks to commercial agreements with manufacturers and distributors. That said, he knows that his efforts will never end: "Hackers and secret services will attack our network, and some will succeed in compromising it. We will therefore have to find new countermeasures each time. We will also probably have to negotiate with certain States, accept compromises..." In short, establish ourselves as a new player in the global network.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:922

New York Special Envoy - A trendy café in a neighborhood frequented by Manhattan students. At the end of the morning, the room is crowded, but not too noisy, because half the customers are reading or writing on their laptops. David Darts, head of the art department at New York University, enters discreetly, holding a school lunch box - a small black tin box decorated with a skull. Discreetly, he places it on a table in a corner. Immediately, several customers, who are looking for the café's WiFi network to go on the Internet, see a new icon appear on their screen: "Pirate Box, Share Freely!" They connect with one click, but instead of arriving on a website, they find themselves facing a skull, accompanied by a menu that offers them to participate in a live messaging service, to download texts and music, or to upload their own files to offer them to other connected customers. On the messaging service, the conversation quickly goes off in all directions. David Darts intervenes to explain how the Pirate Box works, but the café's customers have already understood it, intuitively: the box placed on the table creates around it a mini autonomous wireless network, allowing the computers in the neighborhood to interconnect for free, without any control. In a few minutes, the files start circulating. David Darts does not know how many people are connected: "That's on purpose, the Pirate Box does not have any tools to track or list users. If malicious people - or the police - come in here and take my box, they will never be able to know who used it." He has chosen to share musical works based on sampling (sampling) considered by their authors to be "out of copyright". That said, if someone posts a file protected by copyright, he has no objection: in this small closed universe, everyone does as they please, without fear of being spied on or punished. Beyond its fun aspect, the Pirate Box was designed to give food for thought: "The protection of our privacy and anonymity is closely linked to the preservation of our fundamental freedoms. However, on the Internet, we agree to be constantly spied on by Google or Facebook, and by state agencies. In exchange, we receive very practical services, but, in my opinion, it is too expensive." When you open the box, you discover an assembly of ordinary devices costing around a hundred euros: a "plug server" (peripheral management module) acting as a central unit, a WiFi router, a USB key containing the site and files, plus a battery. The whole thing works thanks to the free and open source Linux operating system. Initially, at the end of 2010, David Darts had embarked on the adventure alone: "I had borrowed the free software Droopy, written by a Frenchman, and I had started to adapt it to my needs. » But very quickly, he realized that he needed help. He then opened a website and launched an appeal to the free software community, which operates on the principle of mutual aid and sharing. In a few weeks, experts voluntarily sent him solutions and suggestions, which allowed him to complete his work. To check the appeal of his Pirate Box to different audiences, David Darts conducted tests everywhere: on campus, in bars, at parties, in parks, in the subway, in his building... To date, the reception has always been positive. He also distributes his software for free on the Internet, with instructions that allow DIYers to build their own box. True to his principles, he wants nothing to do with them, but he guesses that there are many of them: "On Amazon, the server plug was on sale for $20 [15 euros], but suddenly, demand exploded, it went up to $60 [46 euros]. In fact, Amazon says that those who bought it also bought a box decorated with a skull..." In ten months, its site has received more than a million visitors, some of whom have joined the project. A German hacker realized that the server plug was actually useless, because the Pirate Box software can be installed directly on certain routers, such as the Buffalo AirStation. At the same time, a community of geeks has undertaken to transform a smartphone into a Pirate Box, while another does the same with a laptop. A third group is building a more powerful Pirate Box, using only components whose plans are freely available (open source). An enthusiast makes Pirate Boxes for those who can't do it on their own, and sells them to them at cost price. Upon inquiry, his name is Joseph, and he introduces himself as a 15-year-old boy living in Virginia. He doesn't know if he'll continue for long, because it doesn't bring him anything, but for him, there's no question of making a business out of it: "The main attraction of the project is to go against the grain, outside the commercial system." Joseph tests his own Pirate Box, at school, in town, at friends' houses: "The young people chat like on Facebook, except that it stays between us. We exchange photos, videos, recordings of local groups, books like Harry Potter, and also documentation on pirate sites." In New York, David Darts is now receiving messages encouraging him to start creating a parallel network, made up of a series of interconnected Pirate Boxes: "My little project is part of a vast movement. Lots of people dream of creating an alternative version of the current Internet, which they no longer want, because it has become commercial, centralized and monitored from everywhere. » Other, more politicized New Yorkers are working to realize this utopia, with variations. Internet libertarian activists have understood that to reach the general public, they must provide ready-to-use devices. The small NGO Access Now, which is dedicated to defending "digital freedoms," has undertaken to transform an ordinary Internet router into a machine for anonymizing Internet traffic. Its technical director, Gustaf Björksten, based in a dilapidated building in southern Manhattan, has also chosen the Buffalo AirStation router, on which he is trying to install a modified version of the TOR (The Onion Router) system. Developed by a team of American and German hackers, TOR is a network of anonymous servers that encrypt Internet data and pass it through several relays to cover its tracks. Access Now hopes to launch a simple, inexpensive tool for people who need to use the Internet discreetly—environmental and humanitarian activists, political dissidents, trade unionists, and more—in 2012. A few miles away, on the 17th floor of a skyscraper in a New York financial district, another team has embarked on a more ambitious project: the design of a Freedom Box, which will combine a wide range of features in a single box to protect the confidentiality of Internet communications. The project is hosted by the Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC), a nonprofit law firm that provides free legal services to creators of free software. SFLC CEO Eben Moglen, a longtime civil liberties activist who is also a lawyer and law professor at Columbia University, has learned that when it comes to protecting citizens' rights on the Internet, the law is not enough. So he decided to take direct action: "We are going to produce equipment that will allow every citizen to take personal control of protecting their privacy on the Internet, without really knowing anything about computers." To develop its software, the Freedom Box team chose Globalscale's Dream Plug, a mini-computer running Linux and costing $150 (115 euros). The scale-up will be done in stages, starting with encrypted messaging. Then, if all goes as planned, starting in 2013, Freedom Box owners will be able to browse the Internet and download files anonymously, bypass corporate firewalls, make free encrypted calls, exchange sounds and images live and in deferred mode, and deposit sensitive files in a safe place in another Freedom Box. This alternative network will also make it possible to publish documents on the Internet while remaining anonymous: everyone will thus have their own WikiLeaks. Finally, the Freedom Boxes community will be able to create a social network offering the same functions as Facebook, but with a horizontal and decentralized architecture: the personal data of its members will never be stored in a single place, and each will retain control over it. In keeping with the spirit of the free software community, the team works partly from existing programs, and relies on around fifty experts, many of whom are volunteers - among them, Jacob Appelbaum, co-founder of TOR, who is also close to WikiLeaks. Eben Moglen already dreams of seeing his box sell millions of copies on the Internet, thanks to commercial agreements with manufacturers and distributors. That said, he knows that his efforts will never end: "Hackers and secret services will attack our network, and some will succeed in compromising it. We will therefore have to find new solutions each time. We will also probably have to negotiate with certain States, accept compromises..." In short, to establish ourselves as a new player on the global network.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:923

The idea of an Internet space of unlimited freedom has faded over the years. Today, Internet users can be tracked by cookies, the snitches left by websites and by the surveillance systems of national authorities. Coming from the free software and hacker communities, projects for alternative systems are multiplying. Boxes with evocative names like Pirate Box or Freedom Box allow users to connect anonymously to a computer network without leaving the slightest trace. Collaboration between Internet "tinkerers" allows these innovations to progress rapidly.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:924

In response to the editorial "The fear of free software" by journalist Pierre Asselin Bravo, Mr. Asselin, for your editorial of January 6. While individuals generally recognize that we owe the Internet to free software, that the largest computers on the planet are managed by free systems and that free software is generally less expensive, the nut is clearly harder to crack when it comes time to get into the good habit and adopt such a solution. For government institutions, it is an aberration to choose solutions that are not only more expensive, but also, above all, not free of charge. While many people around the world recognize this, your editorial points out that the Quebec government is really dragging its feet on this matter. Gaétan Martineau Lévis

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:925

What could the provincial government possibly be afraid of when the time comes to open its IT market to free competition? The adoption of the framework policy and a law on the governance and management of information resources of public bodies, put forward by the President of the Treasury Board, Michelle Courchesne, was supposed to promote the opening of the public administration to free software. But in reality, the only actions taken so far by government managers have aimed to shield them from this desire. Starting with a decree, piloted by the Centre des services partagés du Québec (CSPQ), aimed at allowing over-the-counter purchases of Microsoft products, under conditions that contradict, word for word, the framework policy. This is also evidenced by the project for the Management of Members' Activities (GAD) system, piloted by the secretariat of the National Assembly. Parti Québécois MNA Marie Malavoy thought she had convinced her peers to carry out this project using free software, which would have been an exceptional showcase for these tools. Several MNAs were interested in trying it out, but once again, a Microsoft solution was chosen for them (MS Office Pro office suite under Windows 7) before even issuing the call for tenders. The same thing is happening in the education network, where the GRICS Corporation, which is nevertheless part of the school boards, has also chosen a Microsoft platform for the development of its administrative suite. School boards that would like to use free software will therefore have to look elsewhere. Free software allows, among other things, any user to have access to the code to study how it works, and to modify it according to their own needs. Everyone is also free to redistribute copies, modify it again, etc. And the free software ecosystem is much larger than the GNU/Linux operating system. For example, since the beginning of the Internet, more than half of the world's servers have been running on an Apache system, supported by a vast community that operates entirely in collaborative mode where all decisions are made by consensus. The reluctance always shown by the Quebec public administration, despite Ms. Courchesne's obvious goodwill, contrasts with what is done in other countries. In Washington, the White House itself has contributed, on two occasions, to the code for the Drupal software, a free and open-source content management system (CMS). Another important contribution, the Veteran Health Administration (VHA) has been developing for nearly 10 years a medical computerization system, VistA, used by 1,400 institutions and seven million patients, which won the Harvard Innovation Prize in 2006. The software is available free of charge, by decision of the American government. The European Commission is also investing in the development of collaboration platforms (see: joinup.ec.europa.eu) to allow its member countries to work on "open source" solutions, then shared by the entire community and to have access to a large repertoire. Free software will never be a miracle solution, its adoption must be done in stages, but compared to the achievements that we see in several other public administrations, the Quebec allergy has something of a caricature. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:926

The media's relationship with data diverges widely on both sides of the Atlantic. In the United States, isolated journalists began manipulating tables of figures in the 1960s. "Then Philip Meyer, who is a kind of pope in the field, published Precision Journalism at the end of the decade, a manual for using statistics for the press," explains Sylvain Parasie, a lecturer at the University of Paris-Est-Marne-la-Vallée, who has studied American data journalism at length. "In 1971, the same Meyer showed that the Detroit rioters in 1967 were both educated and uneducated people, and that things were therefore more complex than everyone thought." But these investigative techniques then required intense fieldwork, often based on questionnaires. The 1980s democratized the approach a little more, when computers became accessible. Little by little, data journalism became a respected specialty, if not understood and practiced by all. In 1989, Bill Dedman received the Pulitzer Prize for investigative journalism for The Color of Money, a study that demonstrated, based on figures collected and cross-referenced on very explicit maps, that blacks obtained fewer bank loans than whites in Atlanta. "Since the 1990s," continues Sylvain Parasie, "all the major American dailies have had one or more 'computer-assisted journalists'", while French editorial offices are still content with infographics. This situation is tending to rebalance today, "but this type of journalism is still quite marginal in France, where it is often practiced by personalities from the computer science, and in particular from free software. This is an important fact here, because their culture leads them to question the transparency of the State and thereby to deeply question the critical spirit of journalists in the face of the figures provided to them."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:927

The Société de transport de Montréal (STM) is giving itself a nearly $3 million tech makeover to modernize its website and all of its electronic communications. The STM has just awarded a three-year contract to the digital agency TP1. Its mission will be to completely overhaul the stm.info website. "It's an old site, even though a few interactive tools have been added since it was created in 1997," said Jan-Nicolas Vanderveken, founding partner of TP1. The agency will also be responsible for reviewing the STM's other technology services. Social media, mobile technologies and design are at the top of the list of these services. "It's going to be a major project to integrate everything, and that's what's missing," he continued. "We want to make it easier to get the information we need, no matter where we are." Mr. Vanderveken assures that schedules, bus routes and geolocation will be on the agenda for this overhaul. Codesourcelibre TP1 will also support the STM in its transition to using open-source software. "It's less expensive, but it's also the best technology to take advantage of social media," Mr. Vanderveken emphasized. "These are software programs that were born at the same time as social media. It's not a question of price, it's more about the appropriate technology." The STM usually manages its electronic communications internally or awards contracts to subcontractors on a piecemeal basis. The first changes to this overhaul should appear on the web in early 2012.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:928

An open space for geeks, investors, entrepreneurs and hackers in Nairobi (Kenya), the iHub is an almost mythical place for the entire continent. It is associated with the birth of Ushahidi, an interactive mapping service that allows citizens to describe and geolocate the situations they witness, by SMS or via the Web. Already used in more than 20,000 situations, it allows to draw up maps on which everyone can report the polling stations where fraud is taking place (in Mubarak's Egypt for example) as well as the points where to find help in the event of a disaster like in Fukushima, Japan. Those who launched it, in 2008, formed a small community accustomed to meeting in cafes and other rooms. Until the day they wanted a roof of their own. "We didn't want Ushahidi to be the only success coming out of the country," Tosh, iHub's "community manager" explained to me. “We were convinced that, based on open source, our community could make a bigger contribution.” Unlike others who start by buying furniture as soon as they have a space, the team first installed high-speed lines (20 megabytes per second today). “People came quickly, which illustrates the importance of the need.” The lines were saturated and it was necessary to organize. iHub now has more than 5,000 members who do not all have the same status, therefore the same color. The vast majority are white. They are the virtual community, have access to information and discussions but not to physical spaces. The greens, nearly 250, have access to everything for free but must renew their application every year. “We want the doers, not the talkers,” Tosh explained to me, “and we want to see what they do, how they take advantage of the iHub.” » For a "semi-permanent" office and a locker, the ten reds pay 85 euros per month, for a maximum of six months. The interest is "to have at hand brilliant individuals sharing the same interests, with the capacity to develop websites, mobile applications or quality design. Many beautiful things come out of conversations that are woven at random. The main thing is to have direct access to the ideas that arise in this collective space". An essential part of the dynamic comes from the special events organized around established companies, notable individuals, collective activities, such as conferences, hackathons (time-limited programming competitions on a particular subject) ... The recipe is less simple than it seems, as everyone who sets out on the same track discovers. Several elements seem to have played a determining role. The first two, highlighted by Tosh himself, are government support and the fact that a large number of Kenyans are interested in information and communication technologies (ICTs). More important is the pre-existence of “freelancers. It was their interaction that created the community.” The funding (in the millions of dollars over several years) and advice provided by the Omidyar Network, a network created by the founder of eBay, has helped immensely. I was also struck by the existence of a research sector that shows that it is not enough to offer broadband lines to a bunch of geeks. Finally, iHub also serves as a magnet for a whole range of initiatives that are found on other floors of the same building: incubators, such as Nailab for social entrepreneurs, and m:lab for those specializing in mobile, among others.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:929

Jean-Noël de Galzain founded Wallix in 2003 to meet the IT security needs of companies. With a growth of 150% per year, the company has become the French leader in the field of management and identification of access to computer networks. What is Wallix's field of activity? The security of computer systems essentially concerns three areas: first antiviruses, then firewalls (protection) and antispams (filtering), and finally identity and access management. It is this last part that we take care of. We publish software that allows companies to manage all the risks linked to the increase in the number of users of their networks, who thus access all their IT resources. This is also the case when a company entrusts the administration of its IT equipment or network to an external service provider. The risk is that certain people use this information for their own benefit. We see it every day! One of the most famous cases is that of Jerôme Kerviel. Initially, at Société Générale, he was an IT controller. He checked how far traders went in their commitments. When he became a trader himself, he kept his codes and his rights on the network. As a result, he had become judge and jury, and no one had control over what he was doing. Another example: the WikiLeaks affair. Once again, it was an employee who used his right of access to retrieve confidential information that he did not have the right to consult and even less to distribute. What technologies can prevent this? Our software allows, among other things, to control who has access to what and who has been on the network recently. We can then activate or deactivate the codes, or even restrict the scope of access. In 2006, we developed a similar system that has been downloaded several million times. But our flagship product is Wab, a solution that allows both this type of management and traceability of any intrusion, by means of regular screenshots and the possibility of reviewing everything that has been done on video. Wab is continuously evolving and we are constantly investing in new features. We have signed agreements with research laboratories such as those at Inria or the Epita engineering school to always be up to date and strengthen our offer. Who are your customers? I founded this company in 2003. At that time, there was a real need for IT security on the market. Banks and multinationals wanted to ensure that their information was safe everywhere in the world. We were able to secure the subsidiaries of large groups located in sensitive countries - Burma, Iran, South Asia, Libya, Syria and Latin America. These are countries where network security is not reliable, and where the network itself is of poor quality. These subsidiaries are located in extreme conditions, where it is very hot or very cold, where there can be sandstorms and... political instability. You have to be able to intervene from afar, while maintaining the best possible quality of service. We have set up a team of twelve people to monitor these sites remotely. We were lucky that Total was the first major company to trust us, to secure its sites in 70 countries. They chose us at that time, because we had the technology best suited to their requirements. It is a group of colossal importance, working for them was very demanding and led us to become more professional. Today, in addition to Total, we have 120 major customers, 50% of which are in banking and the public sector. But we also have local authorities and SMEs as customers. How do you see the future of Wallix in the current economic context? Our goal is to go from 3.5 million euros in revenue today to 50 million in the next six years. We are already leaders in France, but we have just raised 2 million euros to become number one in Europe. Then, we will go to China and the United States. We are not very worried, the market we are in is growing very strongly. Not a week, or even two days, goes by without a security problem appearing. Before, IT was confidential, managed by IT specialists; now, it is omnipresent and needs to be protected. Smartphones, "cloud computing", which consists of a company storing its data on external servers, all this is becoming strategic and critical. However, companies do not have enough resources and must deal with this generalized interconnection. It is difficult to know who has access to what, when and how. A recent study by Symantec shows that cybercrime costs them an average of 1.7 billion euros per year! 90% of them are expected to experience at least one incident that will cost them money and time. So we could have many more customers! One hundred and twenty is not enough. We are in a race against time to gain market share in this sector. p

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:930

1995 Jean-Noël de Galzain, born in 1971, founded Best of Media, a company specializing in multimedia publishing. 1999 Founding of Aurora Groupe, one of the French pioneers of free software. 2003 Resale of Aurora to the Business & Decisions group and founding of Wallix, of which he is still president.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:931

Senegalese, Lebanese and French, Karim Sy, a computer scientist trained in Montreal, launched his first company at 19. Today, he runs Jokkolabs.net, in Dakar (Senegal), one of those curious spaces from which an essential part of the Africa of tomorrow could emerge... the very one that The Economist declares is the continent on the rise. Jokkolabs is a collaborative workspace (coworking). There are nearly 800 in the world, including 16 in Africa. A "coworking visa" allows members of 200 of them to work freely at each other's homes. "We are part of the contributory economy," explains Karim Sy. A somewhat idealistic model that allows us to be both global and local. » It draws inspiration from the most beautiful African traditions, such as Ubuntu, the interdependence dear to the South African Desmond Tutu, and the open source spirit, betting on information technologies and collective intelligence. Jokkolabs defines itself as "a center for technological and social innovations that also works on the development of the individual, a think tank that does not rely on experts, but on the experience of people." In Africa, such meeting places are essential. But we must distinguish coworking spaces from incubators, preferred by institutions and investors who finance the development of start-ups there. In both, we find technical facilities and the possibility of meeting peers. But in the incubators that I have seen, each company has its office where it locks itself away to secretly develop its project. The common areas are only used for "networking" during special events. "The network is made up of weak links, they must be transformed into strong links. My role is to sense the candidates' disposition to encourage the community to blossom," Karim Sy recalls. This is the part of the Silicon Valley recipe that cannot be recreated institutionally. Money and brains can be brought together, but how can individuals build connections? During a meeting organized by Karim Sy with about fifteen bloggers in the Jokkolabs offices, a developer expressed his desire to be an entrepreneur: "We must live according to the market's potential. If we don't have motivation, it doesn't work." But "he must also be interested in what is happening around him," replied Soukaye Dieng, a midwife in a white boubou who is fighting for access to demographic data, because this would allow civil society to participate in the implementation of better birth rate and health policies. "We must therefore improve relations between developers and communities, and get them to work together," she believes.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:932

So, the capital of France is becoming encumbered with an additional category of motor vehicles. Three thousand electric cars will gradually be freely available to people who subscribe to the so-called Autolib' service. They will be able to borrow a car from a station and drop it off at any other station in the forty or so neighboring municipalities of Paris participating in the system. This new system was designed in the wake of Vélib', bicycles accessible to all. It would allow Parisians to no longer own a car while traveling in a non-polluting way. But if environmentalists applauded the launch of Vélib' with both hands, they strongly criticize Autolib'. First, the environmental impact of the electric car does not seem positive, since the production of electricity needed to move it is always polluting, whether it is fossil or nuclear - without forgetting, of course, the mass of metals and plastic that the car itself represents. In fact, Friends of the Earth point out that instead of pushing for "reducing energy consumption", Autolib' "encourages the deployment of an industrial sector of electric cars". Let's imagine that this is successful. The number of cars and vans in the world exceeds 1.3 billion vehicles. Who can believe that their replacement by so many electric vehicles would really improve the ecological impact of this fleet? The real issue is to reduce the number of vehicles. From this point of view, is Autolib' so negative? "We want to make Parisians realize that the most important thing is not the ownership but the use of a car", says Annick Lepetit, deputy mayor of Paris. To which Europe Ecologie-Les Verts responds that "car sharing has existed in Paris for several years" in the form of numerous small rental companies and carpooling associations. Why favor a firm - in this case Bolloré, the parent company of Autolib'? Because in shared mobility, as much as the vehicle counts the computer network that connects users and means of transport. With Autolib', control of the network is held by a company, whereas it could be managed by the community, in the manner of Wikipedia and free software, as suggested by Yves Heuillard on the site Ddmagazine.com. Car sharing will be cooperative or it will not be.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:933

If the Quebec government is looking to save money with its office suites, it can always consult the many experiments conducted in several countries with OpenOffice. A project carried out by the Finnish Ministry of Justice, on more than 10,000 workstations, saved $4.5 million, or more than half the bill. A study carried out in 2010 on this project, started in 2003, concluded that the transition to OpenOffice resulted in substantial savings: costs of $2.1 million with OpenOffice compared to $6.7 million with MS Office. It also had beneficial effects in terms of sovereignty, governance and reduced dependence on a single supplier, underlines the author of the study. More recently, in France, the Paris administrative region (Île-de-France) announced that it would offer a new version of the LibreOffice suite to high school students, their parents, their teachers, and administrative staff, nearly a million users, for the 2012 school year. All will receive a USB key allowing access to the software. LibreOffice is an office suite derived from OpenOffice, and the version offered is called LooL (Libre Office On Line). This is an online software, like Google Apps, which will be hosted by "Marguerite", a cloud computing project serving students and researchers in the Paris administrative region. France is undoubtedly, along with Brazil, the country with the longest experience of free software. Several services have been completely converted. This is the case of the National Gendarmerie, which includes the police force and the military police, i.e. more than 100,000 employees. In 2005, the organization began migrating from Microsoft Office to OpenOffice, for 70,000 workstations. In 2008, the Gendarmerie then began replacing Windows operating systems with a GNU/Linux system, targeting 90,000 workstations by 2015. In 2010, Lieutenant-Colonel Xavier Guimard estimated that the Gendarmerie had reduced its IT spending by more than 50%, without losing functionality. Savings in licensing and maintenance costs were estimated at €50 million (CAD$68 million) for the period 2004-2009. Munich In Germany, the city of Munich also began converting the municipal administration's approximately 15,000 workstations to the Linux platform in 2003. The city even created its own operating system: LiMux. The much more ambitious migration, however, ran into problems along the way. Munich now has 3,000 workstations running LiMux, but all users use the Firefox browser, the Thunderbird email client and the OpenOffice suite. Furthermore, the Finnish study identified a key condition for such transitions to be successful. They must be initiated and supported at the highest level. In the case of Munich, the city council and the mayor of the city were behind the project. In this case, the project was less about reducing costs than about freeing itself from Microsoft's proprietary formats.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:934

Ignoring a moratorium that the Treasury Board has just decreed on all renewals of Microsoft licenses in the Quebec government, the National Assembly is moving forward with a call for tenders, exclusively reserved for Microsoft, to equip all MNAs and their staff. As of April 2014, Microsoft is ceasing all support for the Windows XP system. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) at the Treasury Board estimates that 400,000 workstations will have to "migrate" to more recent versions of Windows and Microsoft Office. At $2,000 per workstation, the expense is estimated at nearly $800 million. Given the magnitude of these costs, the CIO asked all departments and agencies in early November to suspend all migration operations until next February. In the meantime, an interdepartmental working group is to propose ways to achieve savings. Last September, the National Assembly's Financial Resources, Procurement and Verification Directorate issued a public call for tenders for a "Members' Activity Management" (GAD) system to computerize the management of constituency cases and subsidies. The system is to serve 500 people, including the 125 MNAs and their support staff. But last week, the National Assembly published an addendum specifying that "the technological orientation chosen is MS Office Pro 2010 and Windows 7." The deadline for the call for tenders was then extended to December 14. Different platforms Quebec is therefore excluding from the call for tenders any supplier whose products use a different platform, such as Apple or Linux, as well as proposals based on OpenOffice suites, which nevertheless work very well on the Windows platform. The Parti Québécois MNA for Taillon, Marie Malavoy, the official opposition's spokesperson for research and development, says she is shocked by the news. In fact, she herself had proposed, in June 2010, to the Bureau of the National Assembly to carry out a pilot project in free software. "I am very troubled, because I had understood that we were going to keep Microsoft for the administration, and make this GAD the pilot project." She cites the report published by the heads of IT services, who propose "that this project [Management of Members' Activities] become the pilot project, if the solution deemed the best belongs to the free software world..." But everything hinges on this last "if". Indeed, even if the framework policy on the governance and management of information resources, implemented by the Treasury Board, provides for the analysis of the free software option, this analysis is done BEFORE the call for tenders. "I thought we were giving free software a chance to assert itself in the process," observes Ms. Malavoy, "but if you rule it out before you even start, it doesn't make any sense anymore!" During her discussions with the Bureau of the National Assembly, she adds, it was concluded that the GAD system would lend itself well to a pilot project for free software. "You need a limited, homogeneous clientele; there are only 125 members, not 5,000." There are members who were more than happy to take the step, continues the member, especially since free software can be modified to adapt it to the specific needs of certain constituencies. "I don't know how this decision was made, I don't understand what could have happened." passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:935

SHERBROOKE - The president of Révolution Linux, Benoît des Ligneris, has just been elected president of APELL, the Professional Association of Free Software Companies. During their annual general meeting in Montreal, APELL members chose to entrust the Sherbrooke resident with the presidency of their new board of directors. The six other members of the board of directors are the first vice-president, Rida Benjelloun, president of Doculi; the second vice-president, Cyrille Béraultbre, president of Savoir-Faire Linux; and the vice-president of Finance, Serge Martel, president of Gestion Ressources. They will be joined by Sylvain Boily, president of PR; François Beauregard and Stéphan Champagne. During this meeting, APELL members considered the interpretation that should be made of decree 1111-2011, which allows, without a call for tenders, the renewal of some software from large companies. The digital heritage to which free software contributes is booming throughout the world and in Quebec in particular, following the adoption of Bill 133 and the framework policy on the management of information resources. In this context, the general assembly decided on the priorities of the new board of directors for the year 2011-2012, namely communication, transparency and structure.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:936

"On the Internet, information and a rumor are equal," says Ignacio Ramonet in an interview with Libération.fr. With these words, the then director of Le Monde diplomatique comments on the famous sex and politics affair of Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky who did "very inappropriate" things in the Oval Office of the White House. It was 1999, at the very beginning of the Web explosion. The Monica story was circulating on the Web, a phenomenon that the Libération website hailed as "the founding event of a new media." But who, today, remembers this prophetic analysis? No one, except the database of servers in the basement of the National Library of France (BNF), in Paris. For two years, the web pages of all domain names preceded by "www" and ending in ".fr" have been saved here, or nearly two million sites to date. Not just once, but twice, for security reasons, in order to comply with the Dadvsi law (Copyright and related rights in the information society). Passed in 2006, it extended the scope of legal deposit to digital publications, bringing the Web under the national heritage code. The Web is therefore recorded and preserved in the same way as Gutenberg's first printed Bible, a children's coloring book, Anish Kapoor's prints, 320,000 issues of periodicals per year, from Le Monde to the Journal du Gers, including freebies, the fifty-three editions of Ouest-France, comics and classified ads... All legal deposit services are affected by this new archiving activity. In the periodical sorting room, Arnaud Avril watches over the robot that photographs the home page of 76 press sites between two packages stuffed with newspapers to be sorted. Collected daily, this selection of sites aims to represent "a spirit of the times," explains Gildas Illien, head of digital legal deposit. That of the French person who, when he gets up in the morning, checks the news of the day on his computer or phone." An obligation created by François I Selection? Legal deposit is nevertheless supposed to collect without discrimination any document distributed, produced or published on the national territory. The enterprise, begun in 1537 by royal order of François I, has been able to integrate new media (cinema, audiovisual documents). Until the transition to digital disrupted the legal deposit landscape. New books are still transported by entire carts to the floors of the Tour des Temps, one of the four of the BNF (with Numbers, Letters and Laws), where the legal deposit is located. But the paper work, this physical, stable medium, added to the national bibliography after description of its metadata (author, publisher, themes, etc.) now coexists with the immaterial. Make way for flows, cohorts of formats and computer codes, flash, plugins and javascript - a whole complex, fleeting and constantly evolving environment that must be recorded. "Danaids' barrel", "Sisyphus": these expressions are constantly on the lips of those who, at the BNF, are responsible for this unprecedented mission. But "we must imagine Sisyphus happy", assures Christine Genin, quoting Albert Camus. A specialist in contemporary French literature, she has one foot in both worlds - paper and digital -, like 79 of her colleagues in the Collections Department associated with the legal deposit of the BNF Web. These librarians sort the sites that will be sucked up during "targeted collections", more systematic and therefore more complete than the so-called "broad" collection, conducted once a year. In total, 20,000 sites deemed to be of general interest are thus the object of special attention and an exhaustive collection. Thus, Zazieweb.fr, a vast community of e-readers brimming with resources on contemporary literature, active for twelve years, was fully archived before its closure in 2009. An example among others of the interest in the legal deposit of digital. However, to carry out this unprecedented mission, it was necessary to overcome unprecedented technical problems. "We will never be able to preserve more than portions of this living artifact that is the Web," warns Gildas Illien's predecessor, Julien Masanès, who led the first experiments in digital recording at the BNF and who now heads the Internet Memory foundation, a private structure engaged in the same archiving work. He explains: the URL, this address that we type in the bar of our browser, gives access to an infinite number of web pages nested one inside the other. To record them, engineers invented "click simulators" called "crawlers". Seven of them are at work in the icy engine room of the BNF, cubes measuring no more than 50 cm by 50 cm. A sort of harvesting robot similar to those of search engines, they navigate the tricky twists and turns of the Web to index the desired sites, avoiding as best they can the "noise": advertisements, calendars, statistics, and other dynamically generated web pages, ad nauseam. And all this while respecting certain rules of decorum, the main one being not to over-solicit the servers visited, under penalty of being perceived as attackers, like Anonymous. The result of their harvest: to date, 13 billion files indexed and stored in rows of secure server bays. But the work does not stop there. For a given site, it is not only a collection of pages that must be archived, but also the way in which one moves between these pages. We must "be able to restore not only the flow, but especially the publication methods," explains Jérôme Thièvre, an engineer in the legal deposit section of the Web at the Institut national de l'audiovisuel, in Bry-sur-Marne (Val-de-Marne). This department of the INA, headed by Claude Mussou, has a special mission: to archive the sites produced by the audiovisual world. Jérôme Thièvre shows the black screen where lines in green characters scroll by at high speed, evidence of the ongoing collection of the 8,000 indexed sites, including those of Radio France, France Télévisions, many web-TVs, or even web-documentaries, or even blogs of TV or radio journalists... 8,000 sites is a lot, but still less than the 2 million that the BNF must capture. As a result, the INA's collection is more complete. Some home pages are even harvested every two hours by these crawlers which, like in Pixar films, have names. At the INA, Crocket scours the "deep Web", these pages which are hidden behind drop-down menus and which only appear when a mouse hovers over them (such as the TV programmes on the France2.fr home page). And Webcollecte takes care of the rest. At the BNF, Heritrix does the work: software developed in open source by the Internet Archive organisation. Twenty-four hours a day, Crocket, Webcollecte and Heritrix collect millions of pages which can then be explored using software which allows, from a URL, to go back in time to sites which have disappeared or changed. A great feat. At the service, for the time being, of the happy few. Only a few certified researchers - a hundred per month - can consult the archives of the INA and the BNF... at the BNF. Even regional partner libraries do not have access to it. However, anyone could explore this database from home. In 2000, the Internet Archive developed a freely accessible online application, Wayback Machine, which allows users to benefit from the fruits of the crawlers' work. The reasons for restricted access are legal and political. "Libraries have been far too timid to defend open access," insists Julien Masanès, "so the rules of the game have been set by others [the music industry, editor's note], and for other types of content. However, these archives will only be important if they are on the Internet." Therefore, an Internet user who comes across a "404 Not Found", the detestable mark of an untraceable address, would be immediately redirected to the disappeared archive. Are libraries cautious? Cautious with the law, like the State, the National Commission for Information Technology and Civil Liberties (CNIL) and the publishers who refuse, in France, its opening. However, the preservation of this digital cultural fund more evanescent than ever would imply thinking about exemptions, believe some librarians. As for the International Internet Preservation Consortium (IIPC) where the BNF and the INA play a leading role alongside the Internet Archive, it is struggling to become the lobby it should be. If it facilitates exchanges between institutions, it comes up against the incompatibility of the different national laws protecting copyright, the question of respect for privacy and personal data being moreover waved like a scarecrow. Means in the private domain But all is not decided. "We have been waiting for the decree [of the Dadvsi law, editor's note] for five years," sighs Gildas Illien. Currently on the desk of the Council of State, "it is supposed to specify the terms of public access to the archives. And also the scope of the "French Web"". Because the 2 million sites placed within the scope of the BNF only represent a third of the addresses in France. Would it be possible for public players in digital archiving to go further, and manage even larger masses of data? For the time being, it is clear that the expertise and the means are in the private domain. Search engines and social networks "accumulate a colossal mass of information, in the most total opacity. We do not realize what an enormous privilege it is to have a giant index like Google", says Julien Masanès, visibly annoyed. "It's as if Areva were running CERN [the European Organization for Nuclear Research, editor's note]. Imagine all the research on particles depending on a private company." Let's imagine what a mine for the analysis of social relations, images of the world, adolescent cultures, or even representations of the normal and the pathological could constitute the archives of Facebook, Skyblogs, or Doctissimo forums, provided that the anonymity of the data is protected. "We do not have the vocation to become a cemetery," summarizes Jean-Michel Rodes, director of collections at the INA. We are at the very beginning of this media. It is up to us to build a science of the Web and to imagine the uses of tomorrow." (1) The law specifies that "signs, signals, writings, images, sounds or messages of any nature that are the subject of communication to the public by electronic means are subject to legal deposit." Photos Patrick Tourneb&OElig;uf Tendance floue

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:937

It took time, but here it is: there is an alternative to Facebook. The baby is called Diaspora, it aims to be an alter-Facebook social network that is very strict on privacy and has just opened its "alpha" version to the public for testing. In April 2010, the four fathers of Diaspora, New York computer science students, announced the creation of a completely transparent, open-source and decentralized system to give Internet users control over their personal data online. For over a year, the four founders worked hard on the security of the site, after hackers reported a whole series of flaws that could allow them to hack user accounts. In October 2011, short of funds, they launched an appeal for donations to continue developing the project. A few days later, one of the members of the quartet committed suicide while the "alpha" version was almost ready... Since this week, it has been open to everyone. Anyone can now create an account on Joindiaspora.com and form their own opinion on the baby network. "Tags". Let's say it right away: it's not ready yet. The French version is grammatically shaky and it's complicated to use. But we can already see and appreciate a few points that could help the site make a small place for itself in the sun. When you sign up, the site leaps with enthusiasm: "Well, hello! The Diaspora community is happy to have you on board!" So, we're very happy too, even if we don't yet see the shadow of the beginning of a community. The truth is cruel: on this network, we don't have friends. To populate the timeline, Diaspora suggests "following" "tags". The vocabulary and idea are clearly borrowed from Twitter: by subscribing to keywords like "#cat", "#zelda" or "#pancakes", for example, you are sure to be kept informed of all the messages from Diaspora users on said subjects. You still take care to find one or two friends, either by inviting them by email or by importing your Facebook address book. Contacts are grouped into "aspects", the equivalent of groups of friends on Facebook or circles on Google +. By default, you have a "Family", "Friends", "Work", "Acquaintances" aspect... Each message that you post on Diaspora can thus be intended for a specific circle of people or posted in "public" mode. Barbarian. First good point: only messages posted in "public" can be "reshared" by a contact on their own profile. The original sender is thus assured that, unlike Facebook, his message will not become visible to more people than he initially wanted. Otherwise, as on Facebook, you can "like" a message, comment on it. As on Facebook, you are informed in real time as soon as a contact interacts with content that you have posted and, as on Facebook, you can send private messages. In the confidentiality parameters, however, we note the effort not to fall into the pitfalls of the network with 800 million members: an option allows you to download an XML file containing the data that Diaspora stores on us. The next step will probably be to offer the same possibility in a less barbaric format for the average user. The experience is interesting but, for lack of friends, for lack of content, we soon have little left to test. See you in six months.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:938

TALENDFree software publisherCreated: 2006 "We started our business in 2008," explains Bertrand Diard, CEO of Talend, "since then, we have doubled our turnover every year." The entrepreneur, based in California, co-founded Talend, a specialist in the management and integration of "free" data, five years ago. The company, which has kept its French headquarters, carries out 45% of its business in the United States compared to 50% in Europe. Talend publishes "free" software, as opposed to Microsoft's proprietary software, for example. The particularity of free software is that it offers opportunities in terms of collaboration and therefore data aggregation. After four rounds of funding, including a $34 million fundraising from the American fund Silver Lake and historical investors, Talend could consider an IPO. A. DE G.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:939

Free software advocates describe as "dubious" and "probably questionable" a recent decree on the government's acquisition of computer software. Decree 1111-2011, adopted by the Council of Ministers on November 2, allows the government, for three years, to bypass the call for tenders procedure for the upgrading and updating of its 373,000 computer workstations. The latter are almost entirely equipped with the Windows XP operating system and the Microsoft Office 2002/2003 office suite. Over a period of seven years, updating these workstations will cost an average of $2,000 per workstation. The total bill should be around $800 million, according to the Treasury Board itself. "The decree is a real step backwards compared to Bill 133, which was passed a few months ago," lamented Cyrille Béraud, president of the Professional Association of Free Software Companies (APELL). The law requires the government to consider the free software option. But there is a double discourse. We always give in to the proprietary software lobby." That said, the president of APPEL does not plan to challenge this text in court. "Our lawyer must study the decree, but we are in collaboration mode with the government," he specified. "Substantial savings" Even if he is not able to quantify the "substantial savings" that a switch to free software would allow, Mr. Béraud believes that Quebec would do well to take inspiration from France. "This year, there are 500,000 workstations in the French government that have switched to free software," he reported. "Everywhere in the world, it has allowed savings." Yesterday, it was the QuébecLeaks website, inspired by WikiLeaks, that made public the decree "kept secret by the government" of Quebec. "The definition of what is secret does not only concern what is decreed as being secret, but also what is sought to be kept away from the public eye," a QuébecLeaks representative explained to the Journal by email. The spokesperson for the President of the Treasury Board did not return the Journal's call.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:940

Synthetic biology is a bit like Frankenstein 2.0. A story of a demiurge that gives you the shivers, where it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the true from the plausible, the false from the not yet arrived, science from fiction. Almost two centuries after being imagined by Mary Shelley, the famous doctor is no longer alone, biologists are now legion to want to remake life from its elementary bricks. Some are getting close to the goal. Their creatures will not have a voice in the chapter to moan about having been (counter)made: there is no question today of creating a monster endowed with speech. The ambition, already excessive, is to manufacture elementary life, in the form of cells equipped with a DNA whose sequence will have been manufactured by man and which will be able to reproduce to, at will, manufacture biofuels, medicines or raw materials, clean up the environment, etc. What are these promises worth? Are they credible and, if so, should we let them be? Have we measured the threats, the possible excesses, the ethical issues? These questions are at the heart of the fascinating work of the philosopher of science and technology (Paris-I) Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent and the journalist Dorothée Benoit-Browaeys, general delegate of VivAgora, an association for citizen engagement in the governance of technologies. Their book asks: where is synthetic biology going, this emerging discipline which, by combining the latest industrial tools developed to decipher genomes, proposes to reconstruct them de novo? "Oecological" approach They show that this simplistic presentation - sometimes simplified by the standard-bearers of the discipline, such as the American Craig Venter - masks a plurality of approaches and objectives. Should we start with elementary bricks and stack them until we recreate life (bottom up)? Should we take inspiration from what already works (top down), remove the superfluous step by step, before "accessorizing" it? Should we favor a middle voice? There are enough teams, enthusiasm and funding to cover the entire spectrum - with the notable exception, the authors emphasize, of an "ecological" approach, capable of understanding synthetic living things in their interactions with the ecosystem in which they will be immersed. On this emerging "biocapitalism", between industrial genius and tinkering, Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent and Dorothée Benoit-Browaeys avoid any simplification. They emphasize that the open approach inspired by the world of free software advocated by the promoters of interoperable BioBricksTM can mask issues of standardization. They note that artificializing life makes it easier to "patent", and that this has not escaped the attention of synthetic biologists, who are also often entrepreneurs. As diverse as they may be, all these actors have in common that they have armed themselves from the outset with regard to ethical questions. Surrounding themselves with philosophers or sociologists, launching calls for vigilance themselves, they lull it to sleep and confuse governance and ethics, never getting to the bottom of things, the authors regret. For them, "the creation of technomimetic living things has as its horizon the humanization of nature, so that man can contemplate his own image in the world around him". Between the biologist-Narcissus-Frankenstein and his reflection, they suggest that the general public get involved. With their book as a viaticum, the dialogue will only be more fertile.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:941

Less than a year after opening the door to open source software with the Framework Policy on Information Resource Management, the Council of Ministers has just adopted a decree that protects the exclusivity of large corporations for certain contracts. The policy, tabled in 2010 by Treasury Board President Michelle Courchesne, stipulates: "Public bodies will be asked to consider open source software when replacing, acquiring, renewing or upgrading software." It is nevertheless possible for departments to avoid the call for tenders process, provided they conduct "serious and documented research" to demonstrate that a single product meets their needs. According to the new decree, "this research is not relevant in the context of renewing a software maintenance contract, upgrading, acquiring additional licenses or acquiring additional software in a set of integrated software." In other words, the framework policy asks departments to consider open source software for these purchases, and the decree authorizes them to disregard it... About ten suppliers are identified in the text, including Microsoft, Oracle, IBM and Adobe, who can thus sell their products over the counter to the government. Daniel Gilbert, vice-president of material resources and means of communication at the Centre de services partagés du Québec (CSPQ), assures that this decree essentially targets exceptional situations, such as when additional needs arise during the fiscal year. Judgment To understand this imbroglio, we must recall the judgment, rendered in June 2010, which declared illegal a purchase without a call for tender, by the Régie des rentes, of hundreds of Microsoft operating systems and office suites. The judgment was based on the distinction between "upgrade" and "migration" of a computer system. If we confuse the two, "everything would become an upgrade, making the rule of the call for tenders inapplicable," wrote Judge Denis Jacques at the time. The decree responds in some way to the judgment, by stating that the purchase without a call for tender of a new version of software is possible, provided that the two versions are separated by a maximum of three years. Beyond that, any purchase must be the subject of a public notice of intent, and the "serious and documented research" must be validated by an objective expert. These conditions did not exist before the judgment, Mr. Gilbert emphasizes. "The decree will be useful to us in ensuring the continuity of a licensing contract, by allowing the renewal of 25% of licenses per year or 50% over three years." The decree allows for the signing of three-year agreements, which corresponds to an agreement that the CSPQ wanted to negotiate in 2010 with Microsoft, in the wake of the judgment rendered for the Régie des rentes. "Things are not moving forward," notes Cyrille Béraud, president of the Association professionnelle des entreprises en logiciellibres (APELL) and the company Savoir-Faire Linux. The problem is that the public administration considers free software as a product, when it is above all a way of doing IT. The State would have every interest in taking control of its information system by favoring the use of free software and recourse to a competitive market instead of monopolies." Despite the opening announced by the framework policy, he deplores, ministries are abandoning promising free software projects, and the Round Table that was to bring together representatives of APELL and representatives of ministries and organizations has still not seen the light of day. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:942

NEW YORK - Jeffrey Marx isn't ready to applaud Michael Bloomberg, far from it. But he's convinced that the New York mayor's decision to deploy hundreds of police officers to clear Zuccotti Square, the symbolic encampment of the Occupy Wall Street movement, will ultimately work in favor of the "outraged." "Every time the police have used force against us, our movement has gained new activists," said the 34-year-old receptionist, who himself joined the movement after the arrest of some 700 protesters on the Brooklyn Bridge on Oct. 1. "People know it's not right," he added, referring to the police raid, carried out under cover of darkness, which led to the dismantling of the Zuccotti Square encampment and the arrest of nearly 200 people, including at least five journalists. Time will tell whether Jeffrey Marx is right. In the meantime, Mayor Bloomberg has won a round against the Zuccotti Park protesters. They will be able to continue protesting in the square located a stone's throw from Wall Street, but they will no longer be able to camp there, a New York judge confirmed late this afternoon. "They [the protesters] have failed to demonstrate that remaining in Zuccotti Square falls within the scope of the First Amendment" of the American Constitution on freedom of expression, Judge Michael Stallman wrote in his decision. The judge added that the "tents, equipment, generators and installations" of the Occupy Wall Street activists go against "the rights and duties of the owner to maintain the park, or the rights of people who would like to enjoy this space in complete safety." Shortly after this verdict, the New York police allowed the protesters to return to Zuccotti Square, which is owned by the real estate company Brookfield Properties. "Zuccotti Square will remain open for all who wish to enjoy it, as long as they respect the park's rules," Bloomberg said in a statement. Earlier in the day, the New York mayor justified the eviction of the protesters by citing "safety and health" reasons. "The majority of the protesters were peaceful and responsible. But a minority were not, and as the number of protesters grew, it created an intolerable situation," Bloomberg said at a press conference. Hundreds of protesters celebrated the reopening of Zuccotti Square, which they had occupied since September 17. In the early evening, the sound of drums could be heard again, as well as the chanting of slogans. "You can't oust an idea," was one of the chants. However, all the protesters vigorously denounced the NYPD raid, calling it "brutal" or "illegal." “They barely gave us 10 minutes to leave the park peacefully,” said Tiffany Rose, a 27-year-old from New Jersey who camped out for 44 days in Zuccotti Square. “Within 10 minutes, they started using pepper spray, stun grenades, tear gas, and their batons.” “It was so clean and organized here,” she said. “We had our kitchen, our library with 500 books, our media center, our clinic. We had started to build a real community and they destroyed it all in a matter of hours.” Jason LaTour, a 25-year-old New Yorker who worked in the camp’s kitchen, painted a less rosy picture of Zuccotti Square. "The place had become difficult to manage. More and more people were coming here to drink or do drugs. It created an unstable, dangerous climate. In a sense, the evacuation will perhaps allow the movement to be restarted on a healthier basis," he said. Deborah Goodman, a 50-year-old retired secretary, shares the same hope. "Every time Mayor Bloomberg tries to crush us, we come out stronger," she said. "After Occupy," the editorial by Ariane Krol, on page A30.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:943

New York - Jeffrey Marx is not ready to applaud Michael Bloomberg, far from it. But he is convinced that the decision of the mayor of New York to deploy hundreds of police officers to evacuate Zuccotti Square, symbolic encampment of the Occupy Wall Street movement, will end up turning in favor of the "indignant". "Every time the police have used force against us, our movement has gained new activists," said the 34-year-old receptionist, who himself joined the movement after the arrest of some 700 demonstrators on the Brooklyn Bridge on October 1. "People know that this is not right," he added, referring to the police raid, carried out under cover of darkness, which led to the dismantling of the Zuccotti Square encampment and the arrest of nearly 200 people, including at least five journalists. Time will tell whether Jeffrey Marx is right. In the meantime, Mayor Bloomberg has won a round against the Zuccotti Park protesters. They will be able to continue protesting in the square located a stone's throw from Wall Street, but they will no longer be able to camp there, a New York judge confirmed late this afternoon. "They [the protesters] have failed to demonstrate that remaining in Zuccotti Square falls within the scope of the First Amendment" of the American Constitution on freedom of expression, Judge Michael Stallman wrote in his decision. The judge added that the "tents, equipment, generators and installations" of the Occupy Wall Street activists go against "the rights and duties of the owner to maintain the park, or the rights of people who would like to enjoy this space in complete safety." Shortly after this verdict, the New York police allowed the protesters to return to Zuccotti Square, which is owned by the real estate company Brookfield Properties. "Zuccotti Square will remain open for all who wish to enjoy it, as long as they respect the park's rules," Bloomberg said in a statement. Earlier in the day, the New York mayor justified the eviction of the protesters by citing reasons such as "safety and health." "The majority of the protesters were peaceful and responsible. But a minority were not, and as the number of protesters grew, it created an intolerable situation," Bloomberg said at a press conference. Several protesters celebrated the reopening of Zuccotti Square, which they had occupied since September 17. In the early evening, the sound of drums could be heard again, as well as the chanting of slogans. "You can't oust an idea," was one of the chants. However, all the protesters vigorously denounced the NYPD raid, calling it "brutal" or "illegal." “They gave us 10 minutes to leave the park peacefully,” said Tiffany Rose, a 27-year-old from New Jersey who camped out for 44 days at Zuccotti Square. “Within 10 minutes, they started using pepper spray, stun grenades, tear gas and batons.” “It was so clean and organized here,” she said. “We had our kitchen, our library with 500 books, our media center, our clinic. We had started to build a real community and they destroyed it in a matter of hours.” Jason LaTour, a 25-year-old New Yorker who worked in the camp’s kitchen, painted a less rosy picture of Zuccotti Square. “It had become unmanageable. More and more people were coming here to drink and do drugs. It created an unstable, dangerous environment.” "In a sense, the evacuation may help restart the movement on a healthier footing," he said. Deborah Goodman, a 50-year-old retired secretary, shares the same hope. "Every time Mayor Bloomberg tries to crush us, we come out stronger," she said.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:944

"We are being taken for a ride with this decree," said yesterday PQ MNA Marie Malavoy, who last spring campaigned with her colleague Sylvain Simard for the cause of free software. "It is very disappointing, especially considering the battle we have waged." In broad terms, decree number 1111-2011, adopted a few days ago by the Council of Ministers and which, for the moment, has only been the subject of limited distribution in circles of insiders and government IT suppliers, gives the Shared Services Centre (CSP), the supplier of goods and services to the government apparatus, the "right to enter into contracts under conditions different from those applicable to it under the Act respecting contracting by public bodies," we can read. Basically, until March 31, 2013, the Centre will be able to "enter into private contracts for the acquisition of software for a maximum period of three years" with several suppliers whose names and products are listed in the decree. The giant Microsoft, with its hegemonic Windows operating systems and Office suites, among others, is among them. As are Oracle Canada, McAfee, IBM Canada, Adobe and Symantec. The Charest government's decision yesterday surprised defenders of free software who, last spring, had welcomed the adoption of Bill 133 on the governance and management of information resources of public bodies and government enterprises. In essence, this law affirms the need to make more room for free software in the administration by opening the door to calls for tenders. This had been far from being the case for several years. At the time, the Minister responsible for Government Administration, Michelle Courchesne, had also reaffirmed the government's position in favour of the development of free software in the state ecosystem. In contrast to so-called proprietary software, these applications reduce the dependence of public bodies on large industrial groups, improve data security and promote respect for digital heritage. What's more, it could stimulate the creation, with state funds, of a free software industry in Quebec and expertise in this field. Several countries, including the United States, France and Great Britain, are now encouraging their proliferation. "Faced with free software, politicians are becoming schizophrenic here," summarizes Cyrille Béraud, president of the Professional Association of Free Software Companies (APELL). On the one hand, there are speeches that encourage the development of free software, and on the other, actions, such as this decree, that ensure that nothing changes." Despite our calls, it was not possible to speak to Ms. Courchesne yesterday. However, through her press attaché, the minister insisted on reiterating her support for this new form of software not associated with costly operating licenses. "This decree in no way affects the obligation of organizations to respect the principle of calls for tenders," assures Isabelle Mercille. "It only targets secondary purchases." According to the Shared Services Centre, the administrative document, known in the private sector as the "software decree," allows, among other things, the awarding of contracts by mutual agreement only for updates or for purchases for which managers have demonstrated that free software is not a valid option. Nevertheless, for Ms. Malavoy, the decree mainly gives "the impression that free software is relegated elsewhere. For a period of three years, proprietary software will have free rein," she said, explaining this by the resistance to changes in the administration, but also "the significant pressure" exerted by multinationals of licensed software on the government and elected officials. According to the public registry of lobbyists, the giant Microsoft has in fact hired since December 2008 a major lobbyist from Quebec, Martin Daraiche of the communications company National, in order to influence "legislative and regulatory proposals" in its favor and position the company in government calls for tenders, we can read. His mandate is, for the moment, valid until the end of the year. Currently, almost all of the 373,000 computer workstations in the government apparatus as well as in the health and education networks run under the Windows XP operating system and have the Microsoft Office 2002, 2003 office suite. At the beginning of November, at the Forum des dirigeant de l'information, the secretariat of the Conseil du trésor presented to an audience of managers its scenario for updating the workstations of the state machine for the next seven years, mentioning only the transition to Windows 7 and Office 2007, 2010 computing environments from the same multinational. In a document of about sixty pages, which Le Devoir has seen, free software is not mentioned anywhere. This computer "migration", as they say in the industry, is estimated at $2,000 per workstation, for a total bill of... approximately $800 million spread over seven years. "Imagine the free software industry that we could build here with that amount of money," says Mr. Béraud. \*\*\* With the collaboration of Robert Dutrisac

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:945

Aiguille d'Entrèves, at 3,600 meters in the Mont Blanc massif, on August 13, Lionel Daudet, perched between France and Italy, greets his climbing companion, Philippe Pellet, laughing: "And one less!" There are still so many other peaks on his path... no less than a thousand, scattered over nearly 6,400 kilometers of an astonishing journey: at 43 years old, the mountaineer, adventurer and writer Lionel Daudet, known as "Dod", has embarked on an unprecedented Tour de France. Having left Mont Blanc on August 11, he has since followed the exact outline of the land borders and coasts of France, banning any motorized mode of transport. He heads back north, then follows the coasts of the Channel and the Atlantic, as close as possible to the coast. He should reach the foot of the Pyrenees in January and, if all goes well, reach the Mediterranean two months later. At the end of the summer of 2012, after a long climb up the Franco-Italian border, he will return to Mont Blanc. That morning, the Alps stretch as far as the eye can see to the south of the Aiguille d'Entrèves, enhanced by the rising sun: thousands of peaks, domes and needles. In the middle of this chaos, the border winds its way to the invisible Mediterranean. Today, Dod will continue with Philippe Pellet, known as "Tronc", the Aiguille de Toule, the Grand Flambeau, the Pointe Helbronner, the Aiguilles Marbrées and the Dent du Géant: fourteen hours of high-perched mountaineering between the Italian Val d'Aosta and the French Glacier du Géant, sometimes via classic routes, more often on little-used or never-used terrain, often unstable. Whatever the terrain encountered, he will only stray a few dozen meters from the border, and a few meters at most when it is reduced to a sharp ridge. "No one has ever approached the border so closely on the continuity," explains Dod. "Even if I stop for a few days, I will never break the line. Where I leave my ice axe on the border, I come back to get it." His second obsession is accuracy: "The terrain dictates, of course, but I will stay as close as possible to the border or the coast, depending on my physical means and logistical requirements. It is a desire for authenticity, for elegance!" Following the line: this is truly a mountaineer's obsession. Lionel Daudet has spent half his life identifying virgin faces, unknown summits, everywhere in the world, to climb new ascent routes, as vertical and straight as possible. He did it brilliantly, drawing beautiful and bold lines that earned him the respect of his peers. With the same ethics, Dod forces himself to follow as closely as possible another line, drawn by men but that no one has ever fully traveled. An eternal adolescent, a poet eager for challenges, he could not resist this crazy idea: "I want to be amazed. The capacity for astonishment is a quality of life. I feel that this adventure arouses enthusiasm among the people I meet. It brings a new perspective on the border, which brings together well-known places and others that are ignored." The first part, from Mont Blanc to Lake Geneva, required a month of intense effort from Dod and Tronc. They bivouacked more than one night out of two, sometimes without a tent, crossed the Grandes Jorasses, the wild ridges of Leschaux, Talèfre and Triolet, always at an altitude of almost 4,000 m, up to Mont Dolent whose summit spans Switzerland, Italy and France. They then rode the ridges straight north, up to Lake Geneva, via the Aiguille d'Argentière, that of the Tour, and after the only descent through the Chamonix valley, via the Haut Giffre and the Chablais, sometimes wild massifs. "We had very little information, we worked on instinct, on experience," says Dod. "Only the pioneering spirit and adaptation to the terrain allow you to find the route." They knew how to get around the difficulties that were too pronounced, on rock as well as on ice. They had to keep their distance, never letting up to avoid making a mistake or a loose block that would have dragged them down together. "Very often, we felt like we were in a minefield, with very risky descents. There were a few pretty close calls," Dod admits. Meaning: rock falls that could have led to the worst. Dod was hit in the shoulder under the Dolent. He won't say more. Physical suffering has been part of his daily life since his amputations - eight and a half out of ten toes frozen during a solitary and stubborn winter stay on the north face of the Matterhorn. His right foot often hurts. A raw nerve, wounds that regularly reopen: he tightens the laces of his shoes and doesn't talk about it, preferring to continue to marvel at new horizons, laugh and savor his freedom. On the morning of September 12, Dod boarded a Polynesian pirogue. He assembled a crack team to cross Lake Geneva, using paddles and GPS to stay within a metre of the Swiss and French waters, including the right angle off Geneva. The crew was led by Franck Ardisson, Olympic champion. The 60 km were covered in seven hours. Dod kept up the pace but could no longer feel his shoulders, he laughs. He has an astonishing ability to bring along friends and new recruits. Isabelle Autissier can testify to this: to enable him to climb virgin peaks in Antarctica with Patrick Wagnon and Mathieu Cortial, she had pushed her sailboat further south than she had ever done before, to 70° south latitude, and landed on icy shores where no one had yet risked their keel. The next day, the "Dodtour" took on a new rhythm, far from the high mountains. Daudet prepares to walk and cycle to the Rhine, across the Jura, alone or joined here and there by a friend or a friend of a friend for part of the way. That day, across the Geneva plain, the border is capricious, tortured. Compass in hand, Dod tirelessly consults his 1:25,000 maps which mention each building, each stream and all the border markers. Here, they are granite blocks laid by the Swiss in 1816. When the border follows the course of a stream, the markers are rare. If the boundary runs through a field or a wood, they are sometimes only a hundred meters apart. Dod tries to find them all, caresses them before setting off towards the next one: "There is a playful aspect to this, complicit in my demand for precision and elegance. I do it without being a prisoner of it!" Sometimes, the marker is in the middle of a beet field or a freshly plowed field. The walker goes around it without regret, wondering about the hazards of history that have fixed the border here and there: "It has a ridiculous side: what is the meaning of this piece of rock at the end of a field?" The border enters the agglomeration of Annemasse following a stream, the Foron. Paradoxically, this portion is as deserted as in the mountains: the inhabitants, on both sides, turn their backs on the Foron. The walls of the properties sometimes completely enclose the watercourse, Daudet then wades through the mud of the no man's land, laughing, crossing the villages incognito. Sometimes, a passer-by on a bridge observes him below, taken aback. One of them grumbles: "But what an idea!" Daudet smiles and continues on his way. Often, a path on the Swiss bank allows you to move quickly, it is the vestige of the Swiss customs path. "They stopped patrolling here at least fifteen years ago!" assures a local resident. "Now, they prefer to stay in their cars." Further on, the border is bordered by a road on the French side. Daudet has arranged to meet Véro, his partner, an accomplice in many of his adventures. She will accompany him in a camper van in the coming months, with a stock of 1:25,000 maps, a kayak, a mountain bike and supplies. Daudet gets on his bike and goes up against a long traffic jam of cross-border workers, French people working in Switzerland. They cross the border every day, without realizing it anymore. By the evening, Daudet has covered about thirty kilometers of border at the cost of fourteen hours of effort: a solid stage, a drop in the ocean on the scale of the journey! On October 1st, after crossing the Jura and paddling on the Doubs, he reached, moved, the Rhine, which separates Germany and France over 200 km. Franck Ardisson joined him. They embarked in a two-seater kayak for long days of paddling interspersed with countless crossings of dams, on this border heavy with history. "I don't want to be taken over by the nationalists," Daudet sighs. "I would like, by crossing the line, to shatter the notion of a barrier border to highlight that of a hyphenated border!" In the coming months, "with antennas deployed," he will cross former war zones, pass through Sangatte and La Hague, cross old paths of smugglers and smugglers. He will be accompanied on the landing beaches by veterans, a German and an American, elsewhere by local friends or locals he met by chance. He hopes to sail to tickle the southern tip of Corsica, after an unprecedented crossing of the Pyrenees by the border line, a high-level route never done in winter. He wants to treat himself to the complete crossing of the coves at water level by climbing, which he has only managed once so far. "My driving force is the search for difficulty, but this adventure only takes on meaning through the encounters it allows, through the stories I discover. It's like free, participatory software: I provide the foundation and I take the time to travel and listen." Notice to enthusiasts... Photos François Carrel

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:946

The documentary seems sad today. The tall concrete and glass buildings, already not very cheerful in themselves, struggle to stand out from the cloudy and heavy sky. But the uniform grayness is not an aesthetic choice: if it's ugly in the film, it's because it's ugly in real life at the time we're watching it. The images are directly connected to Yahoo!'s weather application and generated in real time according to the weather in Toronto, the location of the filming. One Millionth Tower (1) is the latest episode in a series of web documentaries on high-rise apartment buildings and the living conditions of their occupants, Highrise, initiated and produced by the National Film Board (NFB) of Canada. These short films each explore the possibilities of interactivity in their own way: one accompanies a slideshow of photos with voice-over narrations, the other offers a 360° virtual tour of the tower's apartments... But One Millionth Tower is by far the most ambitious and the most audacious. Not content with letting itself be directed by the Internet user, who literally moves around the 3D image with the arrow keys on his keyboard, he can interact with the entire Internet. "We wanted to marry this magical ability that cinema has to tell stories, with the power of the Web," explains the director, Kat Cizek. In different places, under various pretexts, the web documentary "calls" information from Internet sites to integrate it into its very image: the weather forecast from Yahoo! so, but also Wikipedia articles on eco-responsible buildings, maps from Google Maps, photos of building renovations from Flickr... Such enrichment is made possible thanks to Popcorn.js, a brand new technological "toolbox" overseen by the Mozilla Foundation (developer of the Firefox browser). In its online version, which is quickly tamed, Popcorn allows, for example, subtitles or tweets to be embedded in the video, by synchronizing their appearance and disappearance to the nearest second. "We work together to open up perspectives for creators and model tools that are easy to use by everyone," explains Mark Surman, CEO of Mozilla. "It's our testament to a better Web, which we must build together." Popcorn particularly interested web journalists present at the Media, Freedom & the Web festival last weekend in London (see Libération of November 7), where One Millionth Tower was screened as a world premiere. Director Kat Cizek believes that the culture of the open Web and free software championed by Mozilla should be shared by public institutions like the NFB: "Art and life are much more fun when you build something new on other people's ideas!" (1) highrise.nfb.ca/ onemillionthtower

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:947

A black-circled 11 as a profile picture. A meager activity for this Facebook page created at the end of October and that 11,646 people have already joined. Its name? "We must not miss November 11, 2011 at 11:11" (tinyurl.com/c8x9z7a). A few photos duel, those of digital clocks frozen on an "11:11" and an invitation to make "the most memorable wish of the year" at exactly 11:11 and 11 seconds. Same time, same date. "The beginning of this new millennium marked the beginning of interesting dates in terms of format," emphasizes the site timeanddate.com (tinyurl.com/bsuh6fl). The year 2011 alone gave us three opportunities to make a wish with dates with the same sequence or numbers, such as 11/1/11, 1/11/11 and 11/11/11. Already, 2010 had graced us with a 10/10/10 at 10:10 and even a 20/10/2010 at 20:10. For my part, I waited, in all futility, for this sequential date of 9/10/11 counting down the 14 seconds that followed 12:13. And in terms of a fully palindrome date, have you paid any attention to the date of 10/02/2001, which still took 809 years to arrive (tinyurl.com/bwuyerd)? And to think that Valéry Giscard d'Estaing chose February 20, 2002 to inaugurate the Vulcania park, "pushing the "palindromism" to the time of the ceremony which took place at 8:02 p.m." (tinyurl.com/czj4ew) Only one date of this kind is still approaching, which none of us will see in real time: 12/21/2112 at 9:12 p.m. Same date, different wish. "November 11 is a well-known date to us because it marks the end of the First World War," we can read on the Framablog blog, dedicated to free software. But this year, in a 6-digit date format, it will be written 11/11/11, namely a magnificent and perfect binary date. » From this "digital excuse" was born an initiative of Spanish-speaking free software Internet users who will celebrate this November 11 "the beginning of the century of free software" (tinyurl.com/6whfmjh). On this 11/11/11, everyone is making their wishes!

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:948

Seven departments and agencies of the Quebec government have just formed a first "free software community" around a Quebec product, IntelliGID, which allows the management of the entire life cycle of electronic documents, from their creation to archiving. This project marks a major change in the way the State manages its software needs. Instead of purchasing licenses for a closed software suite, the seven organizations pool their resources to adapt open-source software to their needs. If an organization modifies the product for a specific need, this modification automatically becomes accessible to all other users of the software, free of charge. The system thus avoids paying multiple times for a new feature, by eliminating all licensing costs related to the use of the product. IntelliGID was designed by the company Doculibre, with the participation of Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, which is part of the new community, as is the Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor, moreover. This management tool aims to ensure the sustainability of government digital heritage and supports the Government Integrated Document Management Framework. Apache Model The IntelliGID community's operating process is inspired by the Apache Software Foundation, explains Rida Benjelloun, President and CEO of Doculibre Inc. "Everything is based on the concept of sharing and recognition. Decisions are made by consensus, through a voting system," he explains. At the top of the community is a management committee that defines the project's directions and chooses the "developers." A technical committee ensures the software runs smoothly and provides support. Then, committers are chosen, who are programmers or document management specialists. The recruitment process is based on meritocracy. Only those who have made the most significant contribution to the application and the community are included, explains Mr. Benjelloun, who himself was once one of Apache's 2,000 or so committers. He hopes that the government will take advantage of this openness, facilitated by Law 133 on the management of information resources. He would like to see not only other free software communities, but also "software forges" that can identify free software designed and supported by the government, to make it known to the entire government apparatus. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:949

“Don’t just use the Web; start building it.” Come on, get to work! What are you still doing hanging around in the introduction to this article? The cyber-rhetoric class starts in three minutes, there’s still time to get going. Then you can head to room 211 to start a blog on Wordpress and learn how to monetize it in room 209. A few meters further on, it’s around the video that we rack our brains: how to subtitle it without any editing skills? If you’re feeling even more adventurous, write your first lines of Javascript code to program a platform game. From the first to the sixth floor, the building is teeming with workshops and construction sites. It is to transmit this culture of sharing that characterizes the world of free software that the Mozilla Foundation, known for developing the Firefox browser, organized the Freedom, Media & the Web festival this weekend. Three days of meetings in the very stylish Ravensbourne College in London, with its half-floors, balconies, walkways and its Gruyère façade pierced with giant portholes. The motto is simple: "Let's come together to build real projects that will change the media, the Web and the world" ("without wanting to put pressure on you", specifies the official site). But why is Mozilla interested in the media, after a first edition of the festival devoted, last year, to education? "Because journalism evolves twice as slowly as the rest of the Web, summarizes Katharina Borchert, boss of Spiegel online, the site of the German weekly. In the editorial offices, we cram the developers into the cellar and we talk to them once a week when we need them. We have to succeed in marrying those who make the stories and those who make the tools. Understand each other to build together." UFO. Some are there to pass on their knowledge - like this Al-Jazeera journalist who hosted a round table (without a table, but with tablets) on his experience of live-blogging during the Arab revolutions. Others want to learn. Still others have a great project and need collaborators to find applications for it. This is the case of Chris and Nico, who are showing off on the sixth floor with their Octocopter. Half spider, half UFO, their eight-propeller machine can hover a camera at an altitude of 20 meters to film impressive aerial shots. "But the Octocopter also records metadata during its flight: its GPS coordinates, its altitude, the temperature and air pressure, its energy consumption... All this data could be processed to enrich the video." Good ideas are legion; all that remains is to find the right tool to implement them. And that's just as well! The Popcorn.js team is there. Its software allows you to enrich a video by synchronizing it, to the nearest hundredth of a second, with all sorts of data extracted from a database, or even from the Web, in real time. "The first generation of Internet users were very keen on tinkering," recalls Mitchell Baker, president of the Mozilla Foundation. "Today, things are changing: the Internet is increasingly linked to consumer behavior. We see very beautiful things, easy to use; the iPhone and the iPad are the paradigm of this "elegant consumption." But it is enriching and gratifying to be able to touch these tools, change them, to build the Web ourselves." Determined not to leave the future of the Internet in the hands of private and opaque companies (in the crosshairs, Facebook and Apple), the Mozilla community advocates the appropriation of the network and technologies by Internet users themselves. We must lift the hood, study the engine, get our hands dirty. In short, you have to "hack" everything that falls into your hands. "Real life". The 600 people who occupied Ravensbourne College lent themselves to the game with disconcerting enthusiasm. British, Americans, but also Brazilians, French, Lebanese, Jordanians, Germans... All have written their Twitter handle on their badge, below their name. One eye on the screen of their laptop and the other on the co-festival-goers, they double the "in real life" meetings with an uninterrupted online conversation, traceable with the hashtag (keyword) #mozfest. "Human applications", recognizable by their white coats, wander through the crooked corners of the College to help whoever feels the need with a particular technical skill. The most important thing will be to then apply what we discovered in London. Share our findings, pass on the message. And stay in touch with the people we meet, even the one dressed as a red panda, the Firefox logo. In the "big space" on the fourth floor, he plays a game of geek ping-pong: the racket in his right hand, a smartphone in his left to film in subjective view. The referee updates the score on a hastily coded application, displayed on the computer. Just a few points, time to let off steam before the next session "Let's write the bible of data journalism". Photo Immo Klink

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:950

INTERNET The success is significant. For the first time, in October, Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser fell below the 50% market share mark, according to a study by Netmarketshare. A few years ago, this software, offered from the outset with the Windows operating system, was riding high at over 90% market share. Its supremacy has been challenged since 2004 by Firefox, a free browser developed by the Mozilla Foundation and thousands of volunteer developers. In September, the latter became the second most used browser in the world, with between 20 and 25% market share depending on the country. In its wake, other browsers, such as Google's Chrome, were launched, finally shaking up the Microsoft giant. This victory is not essential for the community of developers and enthusiasts gathered this weekend in London for the Mozilla Festival. The projects that were initiated there aim to realize a greater ambition. "Mozilla is best known for Firefox, but our project is broader: we want to build an open, transparent and decentralized Internet," like Firefox, recalled Mitchell Baker, the iconic president of the Mozilla Foundation, at the opening of the event. Media and journalists To achieve this, Mozilla is now working beyond the sphere of developers. A year ago, the Mozilla Festival dedicated to education thus made it possible to launch projects facilitating the training and transmission of this digital culture. This year, the conference was focused on the media and journalists. "The disruption caused by technology in terms of journalism is considerable," explains Mitchell Baker. "We want to help the billion people who use the Internet to become its builders, by building tools and educating them," continues Mark Surman, executive director of the Mozilla Foundation. With the rise of Internet uses, these are as many front lines that multiply for Mozilla. So, while Facebook is infiltrating the Web with its Facebook Connect tools, Mozilla has started working on a dashboard to manage your digital identity. The slayer of the proprietary Internet is also attacking mobile ecosystems with the launch of an open source mobile operating system, Boot2Gecko. "Our goal is to have a sufficient market share to be viable and to shake up the market. We have seen with Firefox that we start to have a little influence with 5% market share and that at 10% we have considerable influence", explains Mitchell Baker. However, Mozilla does not intend to develop a social network or even network infrastructures that would guarantee the neutrality of the Internet. "Our role is to help people understand the Net and to alter it", continues the president of Mozilla. With the hope that this will be enough to preserve the original spirit of the Net.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:951

Former Tunisian President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali had partly understood the importance of technological innovation and the potential of the digital economy, and he left a country rather better placed than many of his peers. But the paradox of the dictator in the digital age is that he cannot tolerate innovation without control and that he enshrines it in institutions. A real time bomb. Rare in the world (traveling teaches us not to say "unique" lightly), the Tunisian Internet Agency (ATI) is the technical manager of the three main functions of the network of networks: domain names, IP addresses and the IXP, the Internet Exchange Point ("the physical infrastructure through which Internet service providers exchange traffic between their networks" to increase bandwidth while reducing costs, Wikipedia explains to us). However, Khaled Koubaa, president of the Internet Society Tunisia, tells me, "these three functions must always be separated." It's a bit like a single body concentrating the three powers that are the executive, the legislative and the judiciary... like in a dictatorship. "The ATI was closely linked to the [presidential] palace," adds Moez Chakchouk, who is its current boss. "It is a very well-equipped and profitable technical agency. It promoted the digital economy while working with the regime. It had a role in innovation but controlled the media." This control is in fact a fourth function, that of security of the regime with which the ATI is thus invested. "It was considered the iron curtain of the Internet at the time of Ben Ali," adds Mr. Chakchouk. Appointed in the early days of the revolution, he does everything he can to limit the damage. First point: no more secrets. He receives media and bloggers. He opened a free platform for free or open source software and another providing the instruments to thwart censorship. He proposes to leave the control of the content to the discretion of each user without the State or an intermediary company having their say. He wants the ATI to become a neutral actor and for other operators to be allowed to be present in the capital. It must not be destroyed as some demanded at the beginning of the revolution. "It must be transformed." A formidably dangerous tool For Khaled Koubaa, as long as the tool exists under these conditions, it can be used differently. He supports Moez Chakchouk, but he adds (and the person concerned is well aware of this): "The revolution has changed the CEO but not the structure. All you have to do is fire him to return to censorship. It is extremely dangerous." The problem is very concrete: ordered to censor pornographic sites, Moez Chackchouk refused to do so. Convicted by the court, he appealed and now appealed to the Court of Cassation. And that is where the problem lies. As long as the ATI is regulated as it is today, the judge (this is not the worst case scenario) can force it to censor. His successor, who should be appointed soon, will not necessarily have the courage to stand up to him until the end. This is a poisoned chalice that Ben Ali left by offering the new leaders the temptation not to destroy a tool that works, but which is terribly dangerous. The situation risks quickly becoming complicated because it must be understood that it is less the actors directly involved than the structure in place that poses a problem. We are entitled to wonder what Nicolas Sarkozy, José Luis Rodriguez Zapatero or David Cameron would do if they had such a tool.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:952

EDUCATION Unlike in previous years, the French came in large numbers to the World Innovation Summit for Education, or Wise, the international summit on education in Qatar that ended yesterday. An event that has become "unmissable" according to Luc Chatel, the Minister of Education, who made the trip. In barely three years of existence, this summit created by Sheikha Moza, wife of the Emir of Qatar, has become "a sort of Davos of education," according to the minister. Of course, relations between the two countries are "at an excellent level" in diplomatic and economic matters. Luc Chatel's Qatari counterpart has just made the teaching of French in schools compulsory again. In fact, around forty French people were present for the occasion. By coming to Wise, French officials hoped, among other things, to "fertilize the French education system." Strange initiatives According to Luc Chatel, the many international meetings allow us to imagine what the school of the future will look like: "It will no longer be the blackboard, the stage and the students taking notes." He imagines instead "amphitheaters" for 70 students and small rooms for individualized support for 5 or 6 students. The individualization of teaching is the key word at Wise, where, from Poland to Australia, via Canada and Great Britain, all political leaders agree on this point. "Here, we don't just talk about means: it changes!" says the minister. They also advocate the autonomy of establishments, while recognizing that reforms in education are the most difficult to implement with those in health: "Ask Obama!" says a Jordanian representative. Pragmatic, the Qataris highlight what works in terms of education. Some initiatives seem a bit strange, such as this Danish principal who explains that he had to interview the students to get his job. In this Sydney school, the math teachers are also researchers and the English teachers are poets! As for the Norwegian teacher Magdalene Storsveen, she claims that the students who play the online game World of Warcraft are also those who speak English best... The French are keen to show that they are innovative. "We are making progress on school dropout. And our boarding schools of excellence are generating a lot of interest abroad, as is the skills booklet," says Jean-Michel Blanquer, Director General of School Education. Wise also allows for lobbying. For example, to establish the principle of free software in education, some hope. But above all, such a summit gives international prestige to an often neglected field, even if it represents one of the main concerns of the populations everywhere in the world. A strong sign of this is this year's inaugural Wise Prize for Education, worth $500,000. It was awarded to Bangladeshi Sir Fazle Hazan Abed, founder of the educational NGO Brac, in recognition of a career dedicated to reducing poverty through education.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:953

Frustration can be a powerful driver of academic innovation. Richard Baraniuk, 46, knows something about it. A professor of electrical engineering, twelve years ago he created Connexions, a knowledge-sharing website where anyone can consult courses sent by volunteer contributors. This global school textbook evolves as its members contribute. : a snub to the rigid world of school publishing. This discovery owes much to Richard Baraniuk's personal experience. In 1999, this Canadian, who also has American citizenship, taught electrical engineering at Rice University in Houston (Texas). He was passionate about the subject, but the young teacher struggled to capture the attention of his 25 students. "I was frustrated by the way students were educated in American universities, with textbooks: I saw that this method did not reach many of them," analyzes Richard Baraniuk. So I tried to explain to them that signal processing is one of the fundamental ideas behind the Internet." Over the course of the year, the professor worked to erase the disconnection between university teaching and the real world. The method was successful. He realized that "one of the most important things in education is to personalize the subject matter to the class and to each individual." How could he extend the experience beyond his students? At the time, publishing a textbook seemed the only solution. But a book is expensive to publish, and its content does not evolve over time. The turning point came when Richard Baraniuk installed Linux, an "open source" operating system, on his computer that anyone was free to modify. "I told myself that this idea could be applied to school textbooks. In ten minutes, it was clear to me." The rest took more time. "Two, three" professors and students helped him design Connexions, an "open source" education platform. A few months later, Rice University invested in the project. It was not until 2002 that funds, particularly from the Hewlett Foundation, began to arrive. In total, the site has received $15 million (€11.3 million) from various associations to date. 2002 also marked the arrival of Creative Commons licenses, which protect authors' rights while facilitating the circulation of their creations. In 2006, Richard Baraniuk summarized the principle of Connexions at TED, a prestigious Californian conference. "Imagine taking the world's books. Imagine digitizing them and storing them in an interconnected global warehouse," he told his audience. "Think of an iTunes for books," added this music enthusiast. The comparison with iTunes is only partly valid. On Connexions, the modules - the equivalent of three pages of a school textbook on a specific topic - can be consulted for free. The platform, which has continued to expand since 2002, lists more than 19,000, grouped under more than a thousand "collections" or themes. It is also possible to write by e-mail to the author of the module. A notable difference with Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia born in 2001 and which is enriched, like Connexions, thanks to collaborative work. Six people work for Richard Baraniuk's project. The site is linked to Rice University but the majority of its content is produced by people outside the institution. The platform attracts about 2 million visitors each month and has 10,000 registered members. "2,000 of them are active and send contributions regularly," says Richard Baraniuk. The content, mainly in English and at university level, is rich in science and electrical engineering, but also includes music lessons or literacy modules intended for India. Quality control of articles is a constant challenge. The few pages in French are currently only poor translations, unusable. But some articles are certified by contributors, according to the principle of "peer review". The IEEE, the world association of electrical and electronics engineers, has validated the content of about fifteen collections on electrical engineering. Richard Baraniuk denies wanting to make manual writers work for free. "There are two categories of authors. Professionals in educational content: they cannot work for free. But the second category is that of professors. By publishing a manual, which brings in little financially, most of them want above all to move things forward, to leave a trace. By using the site, they have the possibility of being read by millions of Internet users." In fact, the hundred modules on electrical engineering that he has written have been consulted 5 million times. Richard Baraniuk now divides his working hours between teaching at the university and his project. “I have two full-time jobs,” he says. In ten years, he dreams of classrooms using Connexions textbooks. And he hopes that “20% to 50% of the world’s textbooks will be free or open access.” Frustration can be a potent force for educational innovation. Ask electrical engineering professor Richard Baraniuk. Twelve years ago Baraniuk, now forty-six, set up Connexions, a knowledge-sharing platform offering Web users free access to courses designed by volunteer contributors, together with the chance to share their own skills. The result: a worldwide “digital educational ecosystem” that evolves in line with member input and cocks a snook at the hidebound world of educational publishing. This godsend owes a lot to Baraniuk’s own experience. In 1999, this Canadian-American was teaching electrotechnology at Rice University in Houston, Texas. He loved his discipline, but wasn't happy with his job: the students in his classes of 25 were finding the subject dreary and holding their attention was a problem. “I was frustrated with the textbook-based teaching approach in American universities, because I could see it wasn't reaching a lot of students. I teach signal processing and my challenge was to show that this seemingly dry math is actually the center of this tremendously powerful Web.” In his classes, he worked at repairing the “disconnects” between university teaching and the real world. It worked. He felt more commitment coming from his students and realized that “one of the most important things in education is customizing the subject for the class and for each individual student”. The experiment worked just fine, but how to extend it beyond the limited circle of his classes? At the time, a textbook seemed the only solution, but Baraniuk was quick to spot the cost of editing a book, and the problem of ongoing content updates. Things fell into place almost by chance, when he was installing on his computer the open-source operating system Linux. “I realized this idea could work for textbooks as well. In ten minutes, I had it worked out.” The next step took longer. From the start, a few other teachers and students were ready to lend a hand with designing the new, open-source educational content repository. A few months later, Rice put some money into the project. But it wasn't until 2002 that funding, notably from the Hewlett Foundation, really started coming in. So far, the site has received $15m from various bodies. 2002 also saw the creation of the Creative Commons licenses that protect authors' rights while allowing free circulation of their material. In 2006, Baraniuk summed up the Connexions concept at the prestigious annual TED conference in California: “Imagine taking all the world's books and imagine just tearing out the pages, digitizing them and storing them in a vast interconnected global repository... Think of it, added the man who was a DJ at his university, as a massive iTunes for book-type content.” The iTunes comparison is only partly valid, since the Connexions “modules” - each one the equivalent of three textbook pages on a specific subject - can be accessed and used for free. The platform hasn't stopped expanding since 2002 and now includes over 19,000 modules grouped together in more than a thousand “collections”. If you like, you can email the module's author - something you can't do with Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia born in 2001, which shares the Connexions fondness for teamwork. The team in question is currently six strong, but despite the Rice University base, the bulk of the content comes from outside contributors. Connections pulls in some two million individual visitors every month and boasts 10,000 registered members. “2000 of them are active, sending in regular contributions,” says Baraniuk. The content, mainly in English and aimed at university-level consumers, shows a marked science and electrotechnology leaning, but its most consulted offerings also include music courses and modules for teaching children in India to read. With fresh articles arriving on the site daily, quality control is a full-time challenge, but articles can be certified by other contributors through the peer review principle. For example, the IEEE (International Electrical and Electronic Engineers Association) has so far given its seal of approval to fifteen collections falling within its domain. Given the site's collaborative, open-source structure, Baraniuk has had to defend himself against accusations of making his writers work for nothing: “Authors in the field fall into two categories. Firstly, the educational content professionals, who can't work for free. But the second group is made up of teachers; for most of them publishing a textbook, which brings in very little money, is first and foremost a way of advancing knowledge and leaving a legacy. Our message is, “You can publish your textbook and sell maybe 5,000 copies. Or you can use the site, and have the opportunity to reach millions of Internet users. »» The hundred or so electrical engineering modules he has written himself have so far clocked up 5 million visits, and Connexions has now joined forces with print-on-demand publisher QooP for production of low-price textbooks. Richard Baraniuk is currently dividing his time between university teaching and his project - “I have two full-time jobs,” he says. He dreams that, ten years from now, Connexions textbooks will be used in classrooms. And hopes that, by then, “20-50% of the world's textbooks will be free or open-source.”

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:954

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But the second group is made up of teachers; for most of them publishing a textbook, which brings in very little money, is first and foremost a way of advancing knowledge and leaving a legacy. Our message is, "You can publish your textbook and sell maybe 5,000 copies. Or you can use the site, and have the opportunity to reach millions of Internet users. "" The hundred or so electrical engineering modules he has written himself have so far clocked up 5 million visits, and Connexions has now joined forces with print-on-demand publisher QooP for production of low-price textbooks. Richard Baraniuk is currently dividing his time between university teaching and his project - "I have two full-time jobs," he says. He dreams that, ten years from now, Connexions textbooks will be used in classrooms. And hopes that, by then, "20-50% of the world's textbooks will be free or open-source." Yann Bouchez

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:955

Beyond the daily miseries and the announced deprivations, our leaders no longer hide the risk of collapse and chaos. A sudden surge after years of complacency towards financial capital, its arrogance, the explosion of its toxic products, the prosperity of its tax havens, its unbridled race towards extravagant profits. But, even today, while trying to extinguish the most threatening sources of fire, the governments in place, prisoners of their economic model, are not tackling its excesses head on. And the people are demonstrating their indignation. Already hit by unemployment, the erosion of purchasing power, the dismantling of public services, the degradation of the environment, the extension of exclusion zones, these people are trying to oppose the successive austerity plans that are reducing activity and employment. But their indignation is struggling to transform into commitment; Public opinion, under strong ideological and media pressure, encouraged to withdraw into personal interests, has difficulty conceiving the viability of another economy that is free from the sole pursuit of profit and that focuses on people, their better living, and the protection of their environment. And yet, there are paths, alternatives to this other economy; they are already emerging. We encounter them everywhere in multiple forms, although still fragmented. Myriads of social and solidarity initiatives are flourishing, which do not create deficits or debts, which do not squander energy. We find them where the market is shrinking due to a lack of sufficient profitability: AMAPs - Associations for the maintenance of peasant agriculture, these local circuits, carrying organic products and an alliance between farmers and city dwellers - with fair trade based on cooperation; from integration companies recruiting, training, and qualifying people rejected from the job market to ethical, solidarity, and territorial funds (such as France Active) that ensure their development; from associative daycare centers to intergenerational residences; from shared gardens to carpooling and the eco-construction of popular education; from street shows to free software... these initiatives are investments (not costs) that anticipate and prepare other modes of production, consumption, and power. They can only prosper when sheltered from the all-powerful power of money. It is to give them their rightful place, to multiply them, to strengthen them, but also to irrigate and pollinate the entire economy and society that we launched the general states of the social and solidarity economy, bringing together 5,000 people at the Palais Brongniart (this former stock exchange that became a place for debates on values other than money for three days in June). It is in the same spirit that we have brought back from the field 400 "notebooks of hope", which express a capacity for resistance to financial excesses, for innovation, cooperation, and transformation. And it is in this movement that more than 100 organizations and personalities have signed a joint declaration (1) emphasizing the challenges and paths of an economy based on another conception of wealth, its sharing and on a deepening of democracy by listening to and participating citizens. The political class (at least those among them who are attached to democracy and progress) is not insensitive to these solidarity initiatives, but it has not yet managed to appropriate them; it appreciates their restorative role better than their capacity to transform the system; it is up to it to take their measure both in terms of social ties and job creation, of real wealth. It is high time to give them the means to change scale to meet the challenges. This is the objective of this month of November, dedicated to the social and solidarity economy, where thousands of initiatives are displayed and deployed that demonstrate the commitment of citizens, their ability to come together, to cooperate to live better together, to organize themselves on their own territory, to give power to people and not to money, to collectively share the wealth produced while preserving common goods. It is urgent to ensure that this period fraught with difficulties and threats becomes one of salutary shock. (1) Available on the website www.pouruneautreeconomie.fr

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:956

There will be more than 1,500 people today in the large hall of the Québec City Convention Centre for the Journée de l'informatique du Québec (JiQ). As usual, there will be conferences for everyone and two blocks of workshops with more specialized content, with a new feature this year called the Annex. An Annex, not to leave participants apart, but to bring together young people from the world of information technology (IT) in a different atmosphere based on the experiences of bar camp, tweet camp or Web camp, popular with young people. It will therefore be a lively area where "the discussion will be focused on specific topics such as free software, mobility, cloud computing and the world of games," explains Bernard Cinq-Mars, head of programming. The workshop is not offered to say whether free software is good or not, whether it should be used or not, but to say how to do it, what are the pitfalls to avoid. It will be the same for mobility and other topics, because we are bringing together young people who have their hands in the dough to say how we make a success with these practices." He adds that it will not be a philosophical debate, but a discussion > > to talk about results, successes, ways of resolving difficulties. We are aiming for the practical. gaming component With the gaming component, the people from Réseau Action TI are approaching a sector of IT that seems to be a parallel world. However, in the world of gaming, IT is used for other purposes. "By mixing people from traditional IT and those from the gaming world, we want to spark a debate around the use of techniques, work methods and development of the two worlds." There will be the workshop, but also the end-of-day conference in a large group with the president of the Frima studio, Steve Couture, to talk about "gamification" or ways of doing things to stimulate employee performance, better expose a brand or make training more fun. For him, the gaming world is not just for teenagers, but it can be interesting for companies as a learning method. A first "punch" conference will be presented by IBM with its Watson robot that played a historic game of Jeopardy against humans. It will present what happens in the heart of the supercomputer that uses advanced analytical technology. It will be explained that Watson's ability to understand the meaning and context of human language and to quickly process this information offers enormous potential in different sectors. There will even be a stand to put your knowledge to the test in front of Watson. AGILE Method The workshops will focus on the Agile working method, cloud computing, open data, integration architecture, telehealth, security, mobility and software interoperability. At noon, journalist Sophie Langlois will show the impact of social networks on democracy with her observations abroad, particularly in Arab countries. ytherrien@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:957

IT Relocating the production of digital tablets to France, after having started manufacturing them in China, was a bold move. For Jean-Yves Hepp, founding president of Qooq, it was both a question of survival and personal conviction. "I wanted to prove to my children that it was still possible to undertake and produce in this country," says Jean-Yves Hepp. Tired of the difficulties encountered with his Chinese suppliers (delivery delays, quality problems, etc.), Jean-Yves Hepp started almost from scratch. "To remain competitive as a manufacturer in France, we rethought the entire architecture of our product," he explains. He called on an industrial subcontractor, Eolane. The tablet is manufactured in the latter's factory in Montceau-les-Mines (71). "We are making significant savings, particularly on logistics costs. We have managed to offset the additional cost of labor," he says happily. In the kitchen The result is there, with the Qooq tablet, like "cooking" in English, the use for which it is primarily intended. Unlike other tablets, Qooq is solid, easy to clean, and does not fear water or oil... a wipe with a sponge is enough! A strong argument for using the 3,000 recipes put into images and videos by Qooq from your hob. But will that be enough to convince consumers to pay 349 euros for a tablet? "Our economic model is based on two pillars: the tablet and subscriptions, from 1.99 euros for one day to 99 euros per year," explains Jean-Yves Hepp. Qooq's services are also accessible on any PC, smartphone, tablet from the website and soon on most connected TVs. Beyond recipes, culinary lexicon and sommelier advice, Qooq is full of tips, such as creating a list of meals and friends or automatically managing the shopping list adapted to the preparation of a recipe and the number of guests. Finally, Qooq is not just a tablet. It also allows you to surf the Internet, listen to the radio and should soon allow you to watch TV, provided you convince the channels. More generally, Qooq must attract developers: it is equipped with a not very widespread operating system, Linux QT, but which has the advantage of being free software. "Qooq has a solid cash flow, which gives it the financial means to achieve its ambitions," notes Olivier Goy, CEO of 123 Venture, a fund that holds a third of Qooq's capital. "We participated in the three rounds of funding," he adds. "The management is financially committed, which is reassuring for investors.", the company raised 8 million euros.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:958

This is a pivotal year for the Mont Blanc Meetings. Firstly, because the 5th edition will aim, among other things, to transform and reform the Meetings themselves. The association wants to expand and extend its platform to a more international scale by integrating more representatives from other continents and by varying the locations where the summits will be held from one edition to the next. Also pivotal because this 2011 edition will take place on the eve of the Rio +20 Conference, which will capture the attention of the planet from 4 to 6 June 2012. Twenty years after the Rio Conference on the Environment, where 178 governments adopted Agenda 21, the UN is returning to the Brazilian metropolis to ensure global political commitment to sustainable development. The two main themes of this conference will focus on the green economy and the institutional framework necessary for sustainable development. A model economy In Chamonix, starting November 9, there will be a lot of discussion on how to bring the social economy as a model to this conference. "For us, it is a fundamental issue to demonstrate that the social economy is a complete model of sustainable development," says Thierry Jeantet, president of the Rencontres du Mont-Blanc, during a telephone interview with Le Devoir. Recalling that the issue of sustainable development is broader than the ecological question and that it is based on three "pillars" -- economic, social and ecological -- he sees the social economy as an essential way of doing things. "Who can better combine these three pillars than the social economy? I would say in fact that it is consubstantial to the social economy to link these three pillars," he considers, regarding this model which is based on a system of ownership that is both private and collective, democratic management and a fair distribution of surpluses. A scientific committee, led by Louis Favreau and Gérard Boismenu, is currently working on drafting a report on the Mont Blanc Meetings, which will be sent to nearly 200 heads of state before they attend the Rio +20 Conference. "It's an interesting text, because it includes both an analysis and proposals for work and, as a result, challenges to heads of state," explains Thierry Jeantet. At least 25 proposals will be at the heart of this report and will specify, among other things, the importance of promoting a shared mode of governance, a democratization of the economy and the means to feed the entire world population. This report will be presented on November 10 and submitted to the participants of the Mont Blanc Meetings, who will discuss it in depth to make changes and approve it. "Maybe it will be more than just touch-ups. It's an open debate," acknowledges Thierry Jeantet. Towards a dialogue There is a desire, therefore, to make contact with the political world which is illustrated in this report, but also in the programming of the Mont-Blanc Meetings, with the participation, among others, of Inacio Lula da Silva, former president of Brazil, and Michel Rocard, former French prime minister. In addition to politicians, the Mont-Blanc Meetings will also attempt to challenge political and administrative leaders, communities, unions and even certain companies in the traditional economic sector. "The social economy wants to strengthen its partnerships," explains Thierry Jeantet, also general director of the Euresa economic group. Dialogue is needed to move forward. The social economy wants to present itself as a model, but it does not want to be the only model, otherwise it would be dangerous. We are in a plural world. What we want is for the social economy to take its rightful place in this plural world, and therefore much more than it has today." Because, for several years now, capitalism has no longer reigned as an indisputable model. "The nesting" of several crises, namely ecological, climatic, energy, food and financial, has proven its limits and stimulated the search for "other competing paths compared to the traditional model, but which do not claim to be unique and dominant paths". If the problem of visibility of the social economy was posed as one of the main challenges when the Rencontres du Mont-Blanc were created in 2004, the situation has changed a lot since then, even if more than ever the association feels the need to communicate, to disseminate, to make itself known. "We feel that there is an awareness that, faced with the aging capitalist model, it is time to look at what other paths can be taken. That is why it is urgent that the social economy gives itself the means to dialogue", insists the author of the book L'économie sociale, une alternative au capitalisme, published in 2008 by Economica. "I think that the social economy must take its rightful place in the commercial world -- because it is a regulatory element of a globalization that should become more human -- and that it must keep and develop its rightful place in the non-commercial world. One of the characteristics of the social economy is that it is capable of adapting to the challenges of both worlds. I think that it is precisely the only model that is capable of managing this duality." In his opinion, this dimension, both private and collective, of the social economy makes it "a very modern property system, which inspired those who created free software, and which now inspires a reflection on free seeds" in agriculture. This free software, more often referred to by its English name, OpenSource, will also be the subject of a conference in the section devoted to Rio +20 during the Mont-Blanc Meetings. Offered free of charge and easily accessible via the web, free software represents, for Thierry Jeantet, a "case of maximum shareable property", as well as "a new form of social economy". "We must never forget that one of the origins of the social economy is to give access to the greatest number of people to products, services and means of working."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:959

In his career, Steve Jobs has experienced everything: the hesitant beginnings of the innovators of personal computing, the first successes of the Lisa and the Macintosh, then a sort of crossing of the desert when he left the company he had founded with Steve Wozniak and, finally, the crowning glory of the return as boss of Apple with the series of products that transformed the Cupertino company into the largest computer company in the world. Financial success is here only the most visible sign of a determining influence that has profoundly transformed our culture. His death marks the beginning of the end of an era, that of the first generation of nerds who will have changed the world with their vision of personal computing, accessible to the greatest number. Among these pioneers, Steve Jobs occupies a special place. By his determination, his passion, and especially by his choices. These choices, sometimes rightly contested, most often imitated, form a considerable legacy that has contributed to the transformation of the computer industry into an unsuspected cultural industry. Steve Jobs has always stood out from his colleagues (we think here of Bill Gates and Lawrence Ellison) by his conviction that elegance in computing is neither accessory nor superfluous. On the contrary, style (or "taste", to literally translate the taste that he often used when discussing the specificity of his approach) is as important as the power of a machine intended for personal use. The aesthetic choice is the common thread of Steve Jobs' career. After a now legendary visit to Xerox PARC in 1979, he decided to adopt graphical interfaces for his computers. The industrialization of these interfaces contributed greatly to the birth of digital culture. Through its familiar metaphors, it popularized the appearance of a simplicity that, by seducing users, made possible an expansion of the field of computing to all activities: calculation, certainly, but also word processing, image manipulation, etc. After leaving Apple, he bought Pixar and founded NeXT. It was the late 1980s. This last company, often considered a commercial failure, nevertheless played a crucial role in Jobs' career and in the history of digital culture. NeXTStep was a system built on the basis of the BSD (Berkeley System Distribution) variant of UNIX, but with a more refined graphical interface. It was the first system designed both as a server and as a personal machine. Thus the NeXT Cube was a computer already ready for the network. It is therefore not surprising to see Tim Berners-Lee propose and develop, in the wake of his innovations, his WorldWideWeb, the first browser of what would become the Web on a NeXT. And that it is this same NeXTStep that became the OS X that powers Apple machines today. NeXTStep is paradigmatic of the Steve Jobs method: an unprecedented fusion between components of the system from free software and graphical interface elements, all controlled by a desire to offer the user both a high-performance system and an elegant and orderly environment. This blend of free software and control also characterizes the way in which Apple changed the landscape of online music sales with the introduction of the first iPods and iTunes. At a time when digital rights management was all the rage after the Napster shock, iTunes allowed for more open use and sharing than was desired by the music industry. By offering a single price and allowing users to distribute a file on five computers, Steve Jobs showed the viability of a more flexible economic model, more open to the realities of daily Internet use. This relative openness, unfortunately, was hampered by the need to always go through the computer, a characteristic that survives to this day with the iPhone and iPad. Steve Jobs never adhered to the spirit of free software and open source and in practice, he even imposed the model of a single store that became a rival to Amazon. In this context, he embodied a new trend: that of opposing the cultural industries (film producers, publishers), while trying to impose his own monopoly. The economic model of Apple stores (iTunes, App Store and iBook) is now the archetype of a digital cultural economy. One of Steve Jobs' most important contributions is undoubtedly another hybridization, more radical and more important. It is that of mobile and touch. The first iPods had transformed the experience of listening to music. But with the introduction of the iPhone and then the iPad, it is our daily life that has been reinvented. With the introduction of touch, it is indeed the culture of the screen that has been radically transformed. The reader's gaze is now associated with touch and tactile manipulation. Modifying an image with one's fingers establishes a new era in our relationship with the image. The reader and spectator functions are thus subject to new possibilities that allow, through the body, to concretize desires and wishes. Touch, in this context, signifies the passage towards a new network that has its origins in gestures, because the body has become the primary interface of all our communications. Communication and knowledge, like the space of their production and reception, are now subject to the constraints and promises of this new digital reality. For the digital aesthete, Steve Jobs' greatest influence will have been this return of the body in our digital daily life, a return that has transformed our habitus by modifying the work space, the public space and the intimate space. A return that also signifies the emergence of the new digital culture. If the latter was born from a culture of the office and the chair, it has transformed since the iPhone, partly thanks to Steve Jobs, into a traveling culture. This mutation is still in its infancy, and it is largely the legacy that this visionary has left us. For Steve Jobs, the decor was always right. He was the first to sense that digital was neither a simple calculation technique nor a tool reserved exclusively for work, but rather a human activity in its own right, a space that men, women and children inhabit, cross and, as such, shape as they please. He is one of the first architects of this emerging human space that the digital community has just lost.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:960

So it was not an iPhone 5 that was announced yesterday evening at Apple headquarters in Cupertino (California) by Tim Cook, the new CEO, during the ritual keynote, but a 4S model, an evolution of the version released in June 2010. "Seven times faster", an improved camera (8 megapixels), a better connection (4G), nothing but highly anticipated for a new technological object. The Apple company concluded with a demonstration of Siri, an "intelligent" voice recognition software. "What's the weather like?" The weather app launches. "How many days until Christmas?" 82. Oddly enough, there was no wave. Despite everything, this iPhone 4S will sell. By the truckload, probably. But the strong points that made Apple's phone a unique object are now often present in the competition. Some could even turn into weaknesses. The design Before the release of the first iPhone in June 2007, what was already called the mobile Internet was above all a fantasy. Smartphone models already existed, but none offered intuitive web browsing. Jonathan Ive, Apple's chief designer, who already designed the iMac G3 (the translucent ball) and the iPod, managed to imagine the device that would allow you to carry the Internet in your pocket: no keyboard and a single large, particularly responsive multitouch touchscreen. A first, and a phenomenal success. Yes, but the competition eventually caught up. It was far from easy, and manufacturers spent a long time looking for their bearings, but beasts like the Galaxy SII from Samsung or the Sensation from HTC no longer have much to envy the iPhone. The operating system In itself, iOS, which runs the iPhone, is a great success. The interface is fluid, intuitive, and responds perfectly to touch. It may not seem like much, but Apple's perfectionism in this area is unmatched in creating an obvious tactile relationship between the user and the machine. Yes, but: iOS is a black box, a system that is as closed as possible. It's hard to do worse in this area. And what may seem annoying when it comes to a computer becomes a real concern when we're talking about the object that will end up containing the lives of its users (communications of all types, social networks, cultural content, travel). Is it reasonable to have blind trust in a phone manufacturer, even with an Apple? Not sure. The discovery of the storage of the movements of an iPhone user recently showed this. Android, developed by Google, which must manage many more constraints, in particular the diversity of machines on which it must run, still does not compete with iOS on many points. But it is free and open source (its computer code is public). A bit more reassuring. Apps and games Finding your car in the parking lot? Calculate the energy intake of your breakfast? There is an iPhone application for almost any real or superfluous need. Apple's download platform, the AppStore, has grown exponentially and offers more than 500,000 mini-software. Two thirds are paid, but sold at a low price (often 79 euro cents) which encourages compulsive buying. The AppStore has above all an impressive catalog of games (about 20% of the total) against which Android cannot compete. The Android Market's game library is indeed much more dismal. Yes, but: Apple exercises very strict control over its application market. While adding an app to Android is only a formality, each candidate for the AppStore must submit its program to Apple's editorial police and then wait several days before obtaining (or not) the precious authorization. Applications deemed "inappropriate" (insults, nudity, or any other criteria) are ousted. We also remember some unfortunate refusals due to competition with in-house services, such as the voice over IP app Google Voice, blackballed for having, Apple argues, "reproduced capabilities offered by [its] phone". Never without iTunes It is the symbol of Apple's connected ecosystem. The software allows you to manage all the content on your phone (music, videos, books, apps, podcasts). And, despite being a rare heaviness, it is rather practical, especially when you are a regular consumer on the iTunes Store, the online store. Yes, but: the user has no choice and must go through iTunes to manage their phone. It is impossible to take advantage of the available gigabytes as they wish, as with any USB key. And anyone who has ever tried to synchronize their music library with more than one computer at a time will have painful memories of it. Apple takes refuge behind ease of use. The consumer should not ask himself any questions. It is certain that we are less likely to get lost when we are on a leash.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:961

To understand the meaning of the acronym P2P, you must first know that in a "traditional" computer network, the information sought (websites, social networks, etc.) is concentrated in "servers", at the center of a spider's web that connects them to our personal computers, which are "clients". The acronym P2P comes from the English expression peer to peer. It designates a different type of network where each personal computer is both a client and a server. When you search in a P2P network, you search through all the computers that are part of it, yours, ours and your brother-in-law's. No need to leave the house to borrow a CD from the neighbor and then copy it, you just have to find the coveted file among the members of the network and download it. And that's where BitTorrent comes in. This is called a "protocol," a set of rules that allow you to break a file into small packets of bits, like a puzzle. Instead of downloading the whole puzzle from a single source, you take a piece here, another there. The volume is thus distributed across the network instead of being concentrated at a single point. There are dozens of BitTorrent programs, and they can be used for perfectly legitimate purposes, such as distributing free software or public documents.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:962

Downloading pirated copies of movies wasn't very dangerous in Canada until now, but that's no longer the case. A judge has authorized, for the first time, a movie producer to obtain the identities of Bell, Videotron and Cogeco customers who downloaded his movie The Hurt Locker. On August 29, Federal Court Judge Michael J. Shore ordered the three companies to provide the names and addresses of their customers that correspond to about thirty IP addresses identified by Voltage Pictures LLC. The company demonstrated in court that the owners of these addresses had downloaded these copies using a P2P (peer-to-peer) network. While this decision is a first in Canada, it's not the first time that Voltage and a few other production companies have attacked the exchange of pirated copies. Over the past two years, a dozen cases have been filed in American courts, targeting nearly 140,000 individuals to date. Their strategies follow a certain pattern. Once the studios have obtained the identities of the Internet users, they receive a letter saying that it has been discovered that one or more copies of films have been downloaded illegally. They are then asked to pay between $1,000 and $1,500 immediately, or $2,500 after a certain deadline. If the case goes to court, it is threatened, the sums claimed could reach $30,000 per film, or even more if it is proven that the Internet user acted intentionally. So far, the courts have not gone that far, but the penalties can still reach more than $1,000 per file. We have not yet reached that stage in our country, since Voltage Pictures has only just obtained the identities it requested. We will soon see how the company intends to discourage consumers from using sharing networks to exchange copies illegally. In the decision rendered in Montreal, Judge Shore believes that "defendants should not be able to hide behind the anonymity of the Internet and continue to violate the copyright of Voltage Pictures LLC." This decision is causing concern among some observers, but not because they have anything to hide from. Daniel Pascot, director of the department of organizational information systems at Université Laval and president of the association FACIL (Pour l'appropriation collective de l'informatique libre), sees it as a danger for access to information. Control of information "They are giving corporations powers that are currently reserved for judges and police officers, and they are the ones who will control the flow of information. It is dangerous for our freedoms." Anything that undermines the neutrality of the Internet and allows companies to control information is problematic, according to him. "The industry wants to create all sorts of digital blocks and locks that risk making us dependent on proprietary software. We will no longer be able to choose the software we want to access documents, and the software that is imposed on us does things we don't want." On this subject, he cites the case of Amazon. "If I use their tools to read a book and I underline passages, Amazon is informed... If I send emails where I talk about certain products, I strangely see advertisements for these products appear on the pages I visit. We are constantly being spied on." The professor examines all these questions related to intellectual property in a course, Free Software and Societies, which he has offered to everyone since 2005 in an original format that allows the public to attend freely. The course is given every Monday at 6:30 p.m. (room 2307, Palasis-Prince building, or online). The next session is precisely on the legal dimension. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:963

TodaysArt, at least it's clear. Not the art of the day before yesterday that grandpa likes, but that of today or, more precisely, "of the day" as they say of a dish. So not necessarily that of tomorrow. A modest art, in the making, where we put our hands to the dough, to share. It was last week in The Hague (Netherlands) for the seventh edition of this cutting-edge festival, it's for the first time in Brussels this weekend. Dance, electronic music, theater, performances, conferences, films, interactive installations. Common pot. At night, on the square of the ultramodern town hall of The Hague, the scene was quite similar to another, painted and enclosed in the Mauritshuis museum not far from there, a typically Dutch winter landscape by Hendrick Avercamp, On the Ice (circa 1610), an urban party where all social classes mingle and fall backwards while skating on a lake. We said to ourselves that we would never see this in France. Never this idea of community art, not in the sense of what we "have" in common but of what we "put" into the common pot to live better together. Protestant culture versus Catholic culture. Containers transformed into express bookstores, places to exchange clothes and shoes, long paper beaches where everyone is invited to "invent" their own The Hague through words, drawings and collages. An innocent wrote in the center of the fresco "more philosophers", parodying Rembrandt's one with three sticks. Other visitors (young, that's what's striking) test the inflatable habitat of Raumlabor, a re-edition of a performance from the 70s. How do you stand there, how do you sit there, what kinds of conversations do strangers have there? Next door, near the fountain, Dus Architects has installed a structure made entirely of umbrellas. All over the walls, art school students and interventionist artists are setting up giant, moving projections. On one of them, SMSlingshot by VR/Urban, viewers are invited to shoot an electronic slingshot that draws patterns on the wall. We don’t discuss art. We do it, we exchange ways of seeing the world not through words but physically, through gestures. Even the cinema of TodaysArt (Saving the World by the British Gob Squad, which will not be shown in Brussels) comes out of a kind of feel-good movie invisible in France: instead of rejoicing in its navel (its couple, its family, its friends), Saving the World randomly fishes passers-by on the Market Square in The Hague and questions them about their age, their loves, their beliefs, trying to establish in a comic-pragmatic way the list of things to "save" in the event of the end of the world. The observation is bittersweet, terribly human, the result is a bit reminiscent of Varda's "documenters", so incredibly open to others. Physical involvement, more than digital art (which is nevertheless omnipresent), characterizes TodaysArt. Among the crowd of shows and concerts on offer that we will find in Brussels, there are superstars such as Hiroaki Umeda and his performance Holistic Strata (which has toured a lot in France) where the dancer, bombarded with visual particles, becomes both the toy and the organizer of his spatial environment, or the Mexican musician Murcof and his mental mixes. Among the perlouzes to listen to, the Toulouse duo Plapla Pinky of Maxime Denuc and Raphaël Hénard, who play the vinyl turntable and the mixing desk as if it were a drum kit, sweating and imprinting their big electro-industrial sound with the spasms of their bodies. In the same order of guts, the Quebecer Martin Messier gives a sound and light concert by connecting a series of sewing machines for grandmothers to audio processing software and, activating them himself in real time, he produces a rather astonishing concrete dance. "Guérilla". The final part of TodaysArt, architecture-performance, which gave rise to a series of screenings and conferences in The Hague. The films will not be shown this weekend, but the theory will be put into practice in a more lasting way than in the Netherlands. This concerned in particular a series of documentaries by Gordon Matta-Clark (1943-1978), a tutelary figure of architecture as performance, a specialist in cutting up buildings (he got kicked out of his architecture school after presenting as his final project an action consisting of breaking the windows of a room in situ) and the recovery of materials that he compares to ingredients in cooking recipes. In Brussels, we will find one of the champions of the performance movement, Lisbon's Pedro Gadanho, in a conference. Gadanho calls on architects to take back the streets and does not hesitate to give performance architecture the mission of supporting European social movements, from the Spanish indignados to the youth of French cities, even seeing in the burned cars the distant echo of Matta-Clark's actions. He explains this in various texts published online: "While governments abandon the streets and other infrastructures, while contemporary architecture has become a market object, it is time for architects to assume their incestuous links with art and explore, as some already do, the critical legacy of performance." And to specify that a whole generation of architects (including the Germans of Raumlabor and the French collective Exyst, present in Brussels) are now inspired by performance by devoting themselves to "transitory urban actions and to the service of the community rather than to monuments erected to the power in place." This is ultimately a fairly close description of what is happening at TodaysArt 2011 (subtitled "jump into the void"): intervention, hacktivism, open source culture. In "an atmosphere of social guerrilla warfare," Gadanho adds, it must be admitted that society will never be without conflict, that the great reconciliation will not take place: in art as elsewhere, "form will have to take into account not only fiction, but also friction."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:964

Inexpensive and effective, this is the common point of a series of technological projects that will be presented during a day open to the public, in Paris, during the Open World Forum, Saturday September 24. This conference, centered on free or open source software, does not forget the hardware that can also obey the principles of freedom of use, modification and diffusion. The company Hackable-Devices thus markets an educational kit, ExpEyes, developed for Indian schoolchildren. For less than 100 euros, teachers have a system and software that allows them to do more than fifty experiments based on electronic, acoustic or mechanical measurements. Two French high schools have already launched projects using this tool that students could use at home. In the same educational and philosophical vein, Pollux'nz City is another product of Hackable-Devices, which allows you to create an atmospheric observation station. Five sensors record concentrations of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, fine particles, and noise and temperature levels. Wireless transmission allows this data to be shared on the Web. The power consumption of the device, supported by the Ile-de-France region, has been reduced. The Jerrycan project (Youandjerrycan.tumblr.com) is the result of a meeting between an electronics start-up and a design school. It offers simple ways to deploy computer servers at a lower cost with consumer equipment in areas that are not equipped. The set, which won an award at the Humanitech humanitarian and technological competition, fits in a jerrycan and can be enhanced with new functions.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:965

"It's not important to understand everything she says, you just have to follow her and the magic happens," my less-than-new economist husband had warned me, completely captivated by this flirtatious fairy whose magic wand is a smartphone. Follow her, I'd be happy to, but where? Louise Guay is both on Earth and in orbit, capable of exploring dimensions where the imagination colludes with the most complex databases. I'd need 3D glasses. This pioneer in many fields, particularly those involving virtual technologies, is starting her second year as an entrepreneur in residence at CIRANO (a breeding ground for 180 professors in research in various fields, economic, social and legal). Her position, created from scratch, is quite unusual, the fruit of her connections, her credibility in the field and a doctorate in multimedia communications obtained in Paris after a bachelor's degree in philosophy. Perhaps also because there is a kinship between these researchers in their bubble and this beautiful ethereal who only sleeps five hours a night. Louise Guay's role? To build a bridge between research that often leads to nothing concrete and the field, real needs and other pieces of the urban puzzle. Her title? Social entrepreneur, a bit like Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is, in spite of himself. "Academics are easy to find," economist Claude Montmarquette, director of CIRANO, told me. "Louises are rarer... She is passionate, as are the researchers, that's what brings us together. Classical scientific models are no longer suitable; you have to solicit everyone's opinion to develop a project. And social media has changed the situation. Louise has the patience to make connections." Relayer, brewer of ideas, free thinker with contagious dynamism, the performer fascinated me at the last congress of economists of Quebec, where I was invited to joke about social networks. Louise Guay presented her Living Lab, a permanent construction site without orange cones, of which she is president in Montreal. In front of me, a formidable speaker, but also a radar for new things that has its entries everywhere, even at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), ten years ahead of its time. The Living Lab, an open-air laboratory Her playground resembles the city and life. "The complexity of today's world requires the use of socialized technology," she explains. She uses strange expressions: open source, open economics, open data, crowdsourcing (the wisdom of crowds), but also "green innovation" and "open innovation." She is surrounding herself with digital natives to develop her Bixiwiki multimodal trip planner, which would allow users to coordinate, for example, an incentive parking spot, their car at Communauto and/or the Bixi at their fingertips. And she is convinced that what sets the tone, well before TV, social media, cinema or books, is gamification, the key element of the concept. It is through gamification -- the transfer of game mechanisms to other areas, websites, work or social networks -- that we will probably solve the problem of nasal congestion on the road network. All those years of banning your children from the PlayStation, only to finally realize that they may be the ones who hold the solution in their hands. Her Bixiwiki pilot project is moving forward and is in its second phase: bringing together Bixi users to find solutions to problems such as the distribution of bicycles through virtual gaming. "We realize that we need to come together to solve the planet's problems. We are moving from an era where secrecy was the rule to an era of sharing. If the 20th century was one of competition, symbolized by Monopoly, the 21st will be one of collaboration, as in the online multiplayer role-playing game The World of Warcraft," she says, giving me the example of an Ontario gold mine that was supposed to close and found an additional eight million ounces by promising a $500,000 reward and opening up its data. 1,400 companies, universities and consultants participated in the real game. Tired of playing in their own corners, Équiterre, the Agence métropolitaine de transport, the Réseau d'innovation sociale du Québec and the City of Montreal are all partners of the Living Lab. Montreal has even been working for a year to open up its databases and make them accessible to everyone. “Let’s take the 5,000 Bixi bikes that leave from point A to clog up the stations at point B (usually downtown) in the morning,” Claude Faribault, research director at the Living Lab, explains to me. “How can we redistribute the bikes in the network without using trucks? The current system doesn’t make much sense from an ecological point of view! And New York will have the same problem with its 10,000 Bixi bikes!” Users who happily play Farmville, Smartville or The Sims would enter a large collaborative game to solve a real problem by being given missions, points, promotions and rewards. Taxis could turn the bikes over during their trips and kill two birds with one stone, for a bonus. “Let’s not forget that the gaming industry is bigger than the music industry,” Louise says. “When you grow up, you give up gaming to become a serious, working adult.” People who continue to play, explore while having fun and who have fun, tend to innovate." Playing to collaborate Louise has always played, she set up "My Virtual Mannequin" which allows you to try on clothes in 3D using your photo, without having to move. She surrounds herself with young virtual game programmers, social actors who redesign the city with her. And since the City of Montreal is open to citizen projects, the fluidity of ideas is much greater than that of the road network. "Imagination is a fundamental resource, totally ecological!" she marvels. Halfway between A Beautiful Mind, La belle verte and Inception, Louise's world gallops at the speed of a click. If she plays seriously, her love of movement allows her to be ahead of the fray. And to untangle the skein of wool for us. "I show most of my work to children," she admits. They really say what they think and are not complacent, in addition to being logical. Children are not afraid of answers or asking the right questions." Not everyone has his courage and few display as much audacity. Playing is not always child's play. \*\*\* cherejoblo@ledevoir.com Twitter.com/cherejoblo \*\*\* And the zests Recouru: to the site Zonecone.ca, the initiative of a citizen who gave us the immense gift of grouping together all the current road construction sites in Quebec to plan our trips and avoid traffic jams. Like GoogleMap, we enter point A and point B and the site takes care of informing us of the route to take. The data was already public, Stéphane Guidoin made it more fun. Contact: e-180.com, a brand new group of individuals who exchange their neurons for free, over a coffee, on a subject that fascinates them. From baby food to quantum cryptology, no interest is overlooked. Collaborative mentoring in the form of bartering and which calls upon the wisdom of crowds! Discovered: the Mur Mitoyen, a collaborative calendar that brings together all cultural and civic activities, scientific conferences in universities and which allows you, thanks to geolocation, to know what is happening near you. 500 organizers publish events in 700 locations in the Montreal region. And you can be informed according to your particular interests. www.murmitoyen.com. Liked: Omar m'a tuer, the excellent film that Odile Tremblay told us about on Wednesday, conducted in the form of an investigation by a writer. I wondered if we could have found additional clues and saved this North African gardener from prison, using virtual game methods... The true story of Omar Raddad is a real nightmare, rendered with great sensitivity by the actor Sami Bouajila. The film is a plea against racism, judicial laxity, even its errors and its double standards. At a time when Jacques Chirac and DSK are facing justice with a certain complacency, one can indeed come out of this film disturbed. \*\*\* The Angélil Bridge There are days, like that, when I dream of a new bridge to replace Champlain. A golden bridge. We could ask "Réné" to send us a billion? He finances medicine well (a chair in ENT oncology), why not PPP transportation? A bridge with pink neon lights that would shine at night like in Vegas. And it would be a toll bridge, with half of the "donations" going to financing infrastructure, and the other half to the Céline Dion Foundation. Do you have better ideas? Feel free to share them. http://blogues.chatelaine.com/blanchette

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:966

INTERNET Former vice president of PayPal, Reid Hoffman, 44, is a key figure in Silicon Valley. He was the first to invest in Facebook, alongside Peter Thiel, in 2004. His most recent investments include Ping.fm, Zynga and Grouply. LE FIGARO. - What is LinkedIn's founding project? Reid HOFFMAN. - I'm always looking for major trends. When I started thinking about LinkedIn, in 2001-2002, I saw two. The first is that the world of work is changing. All over the world, lifetime employment is disappearing and each individual is responsible for developing their own skills, in a connected world. The second was the rise of the Internet. As a result, LinkedIn is the platform that allows each person who needs to develop themselves to show who they are, who they work with, and to access other experiences and skills. We're still in the early stages of implementing this vision. Right now, people see LinkedIn as a way to connect with others and find experts. We're not at the point where people are thinking about how to invest in themselves, how to be more effective. Today, everyone Googles names and everyone can be found on Google. What people don't realize yet is that they can make their professional profile the first thing people see. How do you see the social media world evolving? The existence of other networks has been good for us. But people still think they're choosing to participate when we're already in a networked world. The question is, how are we going to navigate this world intelligently? Today, Facebook is the backyard barbecue. Twitter is the media. LinkedIn is the office. There is room for other networks, but the offering has to be both broad and unique. There are broad categories like religion or sports that are not occupied. I think there will be a big player that we don't know about yet that will have emerged within five years. Do you see Google+ as a potential competitor? Google+ is a good social product. The question is: how will it create differentiation? It is not yet a competitor to LinkedIn. It could go in that direction, but it is not certain. To serve the professional market, you have to be specialized. LinkedIn Today provides information from professional sources. A circle with your work colleagues does not allow you to go to that level of specificity. Also, context is important: what do you see on your screen? What do you think of the valuations of Internet companies today? Is there a bubble? Valuations are a tricky subject. It is about net worth based on what you think the future will be. My point of view is that social networks are fundamental phenomena that will change the world, yes. But as for the numbers, I let the markets decide. There is a bubble if the prediction is wrong, but I defend the idea that the change is very profound. These networks produce data and trade in it. Isn't that a problem? In the case of LinkedIn, the use of data turns to the advantage of our users. It is not a question of the location of Internet users or photos of their children but rather of knowing which skills are trendy, etc. Users cannot feel taken aback by this use of data. When we have a technological transformation, people are slow to recognize that massive transparency is good for them. Internet users will discover that moving towards more openness and transparency is beneficial for them. We are rarely questioned on our practices and always act quickly. We must maintain trust. LinkedIn allows companies to determine their strategy according to their recruitment. Can this pose problems with their competitors? When a company posts a job offer, it puts as much detail as possible to attract the best profile. We can already get a lot of information from this data. But we have to look at the counterpart: a company wants us to know in which sector it is recruiting to build the best teams. For its investors, it can also be good to know in which direction it is going. So there is more value in being open and transparent. Finally, for us, the interest of the individual will always come before that of the company. We want our users to have a positive experience. Personally, you invest in many start-ups very early on, including Facebook and Zynga. What is your strategy? I look at three things when I invest: marketplaces - which led me to invest recently in Airbnb -, networks - Zynga is a gaming network - and platforms - like Shopkick. It is also important that there is no conflict of interest with my activities at LinkedIn. For example, I am on the board of directors of Zynga, but not of Facebook. It’s helpful because I see common trends on both sides, parallels that are used in my investments as well as in my work at LinkedIn. Where do you see the next big technological breakthrough coming from? I’m keeping a close eye on the open source hardware space.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:967

A comfortable and anonymous building in the heart of Washington, a few blocks from the White House. In a row of offices at the back of the 5th floor, about twenty young people, mostly boys, work discreetly, in an atmosphere that is both studious and relaxed. This small team, made up of computer scientists, lawyers and sociologists, is in the process of realizing the supreme utopia of hackers and libertarian activists the world over: software that will allow the creation of 100% autonomous high-speed wireless networks that will operate on Wi-Fi frequencies, without relying on any existing infrastructure - no telephone relays, no cables, no satellites. They will be mobile, horizontal, entirely decentralized and will escape all surveillance, because the traffic will be anonymous and encrypted. This ambitious project - codenamed Commotion - is led by Sascha Meinrath, 37, a long-time activist for the free Internet and a pioneer of citizen networks - within the collective of online journalists Indymedia, then at the University of Urbana-Champaign (Illinois), one of the cradles of free software, and in various start-ups and social action NGOs: "I cobbled together my first autonomous network ten years ago. The antennas were made from tin cans." Since those heroic days, Sascha Meinrath has come a long way. In its current incarnation, Commotion is a very official project. It is hosted and funded by the Open Technology Initiative (OTI), the high-tech department of the New America Foundation, a prestigious organization dedicated to studying the major problems of American society, and chaired by Eric Schmidt, one of the bosses of Google. Thanks to this tutelage, Sascha Meinrath has an annual budget of 2.3 million dollars (1.6 million euros), to which has been added an exceptional subsidy of 2 million, granted by the State Department. Indeed, American diplomats are very interested in the technology of autonomous wireless networks, light and easy to install. They hope to deploy them soon on the ground in various emergency situations: in zones devastated by war or natural disaster; in the most deprived regions of the planet, where populations are deprived of modern means of communication; and, finally, as a "circumvention tool" in dictatorial countries, to help political dissidents communicate with each other and with the rest of the world, by thwarting police surveillance and censorship. "At the end of 2010," recalls Sascha Meinrath, "I learned somewhat by chance that the State Department had decided to support this type of research. We applied, in competition with other organizations, and we were chosen. Other projects relied partly on existing infrastructure, while Commotion bypasses it entirely." The federal grant wasn't enough to turn the Commotion team into civil servants. Josh King, 28, the technical manager, has kept his very rebellious look - dressed head to toe in black, with a chain, piercing and messy hair. His office is cluttered with all sorts of devices, which he does extensive testing on, because Commotion must be able to work with a disparate assembly. Its software transforms an ordinary Wi-Fi router, a simple PC or a smartphone into intelligent relays, capable of knowing in real time the configuration of the network, and sorting the data to send it to its destination, or to another relay, closer to the destination. Moreover, Commotion can be easily connected to the rest of the world: just one of the devices needs to be connected to the Internet and all the others benefit from access. "In fact," King says, "the only essential tool to bring into the field is a USB stick with the software, which must be installed on each device that will be part of the network." Since spring 2011, OTI has been offering parts of Commotion as a free download on the Internet. A full working version will be available in September, so that experts from all countries can study it and make suggestions. Sascha Meinrath is not sure who is downloading what, because he does not keep track of who visits the site: "If we kept a list of our visitors, our servers could be hacked by different governments - including our own." Recently, OTI has received messages from "Arab Spring" activists living in Egypt, Syria, Libya, Bahrain and Yemen: "They want to get Commotion, but we are trying to dissuade them. It is too early, it is not secure, it would be risky to use it against a repressive regime." That said, it may be that clandestine groups are already using provisional versions without telling us. Some of the people we talk to are perhaps agents in the service of dictatorships, but it doesn't matter, we're showing the same thing to everyone." Sascha Meinrath has given himself until the end of 2012 to produce a version that can be used by the general public. To move faster, OTI is appropriating systems developed by other teams. For security, Commotion will integrate the programs of the TOR project (The Onion Router), invented by a group of German and American hackers to circulate on the Internet while avoiding detection. TOR was notably used to protect the communications of the WikiLeaks site - which in 2010 disclosed masses of secret documents belonging to the United States government. One of the creators of TOR, the American Jacob Appelbaum, was very close to the WikiLeaks team for a time. Twice in 2010, he was arrested by the American police, who questioned him about his activities within WikiLeaks and seized his phones and computers. Jacob Appelbaum is also a personal friend of Sascha Meinrath, who called on him as an advisor for the development of Commotion. To explain this paradoxical situation, Sascha Meinrath speaks of the "schizophrenia" of the federal government: "Among the officials in Washington, there are still people trained during the Cold War, who dream of blocking and monitoring everything, but there are also young people who arrived with Obama, who are in favor of transparency and freedom of expression. In private, many State Department officials were angry to see their superiors criticize WikiLeaks so violently. According to them, the affair could have been an opportunity to show the world that the United States knows how to defend freedom of expression and transparency, in all circumstances. » Now, Jacob Appelbaum is involved in a large project called Freedom Box - a basic, inexpensive computer that has been transformed into an encrypted and secure server for the general public. Sascha Meinrath is considering integrating Freedom Box into the Commotion network, in particular to benefit from a so-called "delayed connection" function: "For example, during a demonstration that is repressed by the police, a demonstrator takes a photo with a smartphone connected to Commotion. The Internet was cut off that day in the neighborhood by the authorities, the photo cannot leave the country, but thanks to Commotion, it is stored safely on a local Freedom Box. Then, as soon as the Internet is restored, the box automatically sends the photo worldwide. » OTI is considering integrating other experimental devices, which will allow users to share large amounts of large files, to route phone calls made with ordinary mobiles over Commotion, to transmit data in all frequency ranges, and even to interconnect several neighboring networks: "In July," says Sascha Meinrath, "a team of hackers in a van set up an ephemeral network, covering an area of 60 km by 30, straddling Austria, Croatia and Slovenia. This is proof that you can provide an Internet connection to an entire border area, without being physically present in the country." Commotion is not ready for deployment in risk areas, but it can already be tested in the United States - for example, in poor neighborhoods of large cities, whose residents cannot afford a traditional Internet subscription. In Washington, Detroit, and on a Californian Indian reservation, OTI has made contact with neighborhood associations and activist groups that have undertaken to create wild wireless networks to offer residents free Internet access. With its expertise and its address book, the OTI team has provided these amateurs with crucial technical and financial assistance. This time, the potential enemies are the telecom companies, which could put pressure on the authorities to kill these citizen initiatives with laws and bureaucratic restrictions. Sascha Meinrath is aware of the threat: "Our technology will shake up a lot of things, including in the United States. If people start building their own networks, the business model of the telecom groups will collapse. We must expect them to counterattack brutally." Commotion will also have to face the hostility of the Hollywood majors, because it can facilitate the piracy of copyrighted works. Sascha Meinrath is both fatalistic and optimistic: "Whether in the United States, the Middle East or elsewhere, who will set up these alternative networks? Not old people, we know that. It's teenagers who will take hold of them. They will use them to challenge the established order and also to share their music and films. It may be negative for the rights holders, but the overall balance sheet will be very positive."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:968

GUIDE It's not easy to equip yourself properly with computer equipment when you're a penniless student. Especially in this period of austerity... So it's time to take advantage of promotions and special operations offered by sellers and manufacturers. But also to be smart about finding good deals, original and little-known. Computer miniprixThe student microportable operation, launched by the government in 2004, no longer exists. But other avenues are worth exploring. First, on the manufacturers' side. HP is offering its Pavilion g7-1 100 laptop at 399 euros (1). On the menu: 17-inch screen, 4 GB of memory, 640 GB disk, all running Windows 7. At Dell, the Student EPP program allows you to benefit from discounts. For example, the Inspirion 15R laptop (15-inch screen, Intel Core i5, 6 GB of memory) is at 599 euros. Apple has the same policy: the MacBook Air is less than 900 euros for students and the MacBook Pro starts at 1,079 euros. As a bonus, there is a "University Gift Card" that allows you to buy items for 75 euros on all Apple online stores. Distributors are also taking advantage of the start of the school year to lower the prices of certain models. On the Rueducommerce, Cdiscount, Pixmania sites, you can find a number of branded laptops (Toshiba, Samsung, Lenovo, Acer, etc.) between 300 and 600 euros. Finally, if the prospect of investing in reconditioned equipment does not scare you, you will find computers at unbeatable prices at the partners of the Ordi 2.0 program (www.ordi2-0.fr), launched under the aegis of the Ministry of the Digital Economy. Tablet on saleHP is doing badly. This summer, the manufacturer decided to separate from its IT division. As a result, it is selling off several products, including its flagship tablet, the TouchPad (2), which is going from 399 to... 99 euros for the 16 GB version! Fast and clever, this 10-inch tablet, which physically resembles the iPad, is aimed primarily at hyperconnected people with its direct access to Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. It plays Flash animations without any problem, offers a large-format Azerty virtual keyboard and recharges wirelessly, by induction. The only drawback: the absence of a camera on the back and a video player limited to MPEG4 files. Please note: the promotion only applies to current stocks, at Fnac, Darty, etc. There won't be enough for everyone! Cheap printerPrinters are getting cheaper and cheaper, but manufacturers are making up for it with ink cartridges, which provide them with a regular income. A good way to save money is to print as much as possible in draft mode and double-sided. The best deal right now is the Epson Stylus SX130 (3), which is a printer, scanner and photocopier, sold for only 39.24 euros on Pixmania.fr. The same site also offers the Canon Pixma MX410, which is more photo-oriented and can be used as a fax, for 69 euros. At Rueducommerce, the HP OfficeJet Wi-Fi multifunction printer is back at 29.90 euros with a refund offer... Free softwareIn most cases, computers come with some more or less useful software, but rarely with software that is used for work. Rather than spending hundreds of euros to equip yourself, adopt free software that is at least as effective as paid software. At the top of the list, the LibreOffice suite (like OpenOffice.org) for Mac, Windows and Linux, available for download on fr.libreoffice.org, provides the same functions as Microsoft Office. No complicated registration procedure and full compatibility with Word, Excel and PowerPoint. To create PDF files from any Windows application (standard on Mac), download PDFCreator from pdfforge.fr. To play any video format on Mac, Windows and Linux, install VLC for free from videolan.org. To organize your photos on PC, use Picasa (picasa.google.com). And to edit them, download PhotoFiltre for Windows (photofiltre.com) or Seashore for Mac (seashore.sourceforge.net). Choose Audacity to edit and convert audio files on Mac, Windows and Linux (audacity.sourceforge.net). Finally, on PC, think about cleaning and security utilities like Ccleaner, Cobian Backup, avast!, SpyBot Search&Destroy, ZoneAlarm, etc. All free and easy to use. Accessible accessoriesTo complete your equipment, you can go for inexpensive peripherals and accessories. For example, an external hard drive, such as the Freecom Mobile Drive XXS 640 GB, sold for 59.30 euros on Cdiscount, the Kingston DataTraveler G3 16 GB USB key for 17 euros at Pixmania or the Altec Lansing BXR 1221 2.1 speakers for 19.90 euros (4) on Rueducommerce. Also a good deal on the same site, the pack of two Netgear AV+ 200 Mbps CPL adapters (5) for 49.90 euros instead of 129 euros. ¢

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:969

It was at 4:35 a.m. US time on Monday, August 15, that Google announced the acquisition of American mobile phone manufacturer Motorola Mobility. Larry Page, co-founder and CEO of Google, announced the news on the Mountain View company's blog: "I am excited to announce that we are acquiring Motorola." While Mr. Page did not specify the cost of the operation, Motorola will take care of it: $12.5 billion (€8.6 billion), or $40 per share. A premium of more than 63% compared to Motorola's stock price before the announcement and a record amount for Google, which is more accustomed to acquiring small, promising start-ups, and is thus making its first foray into hardware. "We are going to significantly increase our patent portfolio," rejoices Olivier Cimelière, director of communications for Google France. With this acquisition, the Internet giant will get its hands on more than 17,000 patents. Some 7,500 others, awaiting authentication, will fall into its hands later. Patents are the lifeblood of the war between the players in the sector. Owning as many as possible allows you to protect yourself from possible attacks and protect your innovations. Above all, they are a significant source of income since to use a patent, you have to pay a license to its owner, generating significant royalties. "Strong response" This is the shepherd's response to the shepherdess, they joke at Google, referring to the battle lost at the beginning of July. The new technology giant was then unable to complete the purchase of some 6,000 patents from the Canadian equipment manufacturer Nortel, won by the association of its main competitors, Apple and Microsoft in the lead. "It's a strong response, but of course, the operation wasn't decided in one day," confirms Mr. Cimelière. This surprise acquisition also allows Google to consolidate its position in the mobile operating system market. Android, its in-house system, is already the leader, since it is found on nearly half of the smartphones in circulation on the planet, compared to around 18% for Apple, thanks only to its iPhone. "It's a market where there is a lot of competition. We are going to continue to strengthen our position. This will allow us to give new impetus to the Android ecosystem," says Mr. Cimelière, before recalling that Motorola was the first manufacturer to have bet on this platform, back in 2008. This allowed it to regain market share, particularly in emerging countries. Despite this merger, other manufacturers will still be able to offer the open-source (free of rights) Android platform on their devices. A decision that leaves experts in the telephone market skeptical. They find it hard to see how Google could not favor Motorola in the long term. Especially since Google has already tried to sell its own smartphone models, the Nexus, manufactured by subcontractors. Will this series survive? "The question is not current," says the communications director of Google France. Acquisition is not merger, and the two companies remain separate entities. "Motorola's operational management will not change. It will remain an autonomous company," assures Mr. Cimelière, before promising that there will be no social consequences to this merger. Taken by surprise, Apple, the world leader in the smartphone market, and Microsoft, which wants to improve the distribution of its mobile operating system, have remained silent, despite Mr. Page's ad hominem attacks. The operation should be completed by the end of 2011, if regulators and Motorola shareholders approve it.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:970

Roundup and its active ingredient, glyphosate, are once again at the center of controversy. In a report published by Earth OpenSource (EOS), a small British non-governmental organization (NGO), a dozen researchers criticize European authorities for their reluctance to re-evaluate the world's most widely used broad-spectrum herbicide in light of new data. The text, which has been circulating on the Internet since June, gathers together evidence that Monsanto's flagship pesticide is potentially teratogenic - that is, responsible for foetal malformations. The authors of the report cite in particular a study published in late 2010 in Chemical Research in Toxicology, according to which direct exposure of amphibian embryos (Xenopus laevis) to very low doses of glyphosate-based herbicide causes malformations. Led by the team of embryologist Andres Carrasco, from the University of Buenos Aires, this work also identifies the biological mechanism underlying the phenomenon: exposed to the phytosanitary product, Xenopus laevis embryos synthesize more tretinoin, whose teratogenic effect is well-known in vertebrates. Monsanto refutes these conclusions, specifying that direct exposure, "unrealistic", would also allow one to conclude that caffeine is teratogenic... "Glyphosate has no harmful effects on the reproduction of adult animals and does not cause malformations in the offspring of animals exposed to glyphosate, even at very high doses", adds Monsanto on its website. However, the latest assessment report on glyphosate by the European Commission, dated 2001, which is based at least in part on toxicological studies commissioned by the agrochemist himself, specifies that at high toxic doses, glyphosate causes in rats "a lower number of viable foetuses and a reduced foetal weight, delayed ossification, a higher incidence of skeletal and/or visceral abnormalities". According to EOS, Andres Carrasco's observations coincide with suspected effects on the human populations most exposed to Roundup. That is to say in the regions where genetically modified crops resistant to glyphosate (known as "Roundup Ready") have become established and where the herbicide is therefore most widely spread. A review of records in the Argentine province of Chaco showed that in the town of La Leonesa, the incidence of neonatal malformations in the decade 2001-2010 had quadrupled compared to the decade 1990-2000. According to Mr. Carrasco, the commission that conducted the count recommended that the authorities launch a proper epidemiological study. “That recommendation was not followed,” says the researcher. “That there is a problem in South America with plant protection products is likely, but it is very difficult to say that it is linked to glyphosate in particular,” says a toxicologist who works in the industry and criticizes the EOS report for “amalgams” and “misleading comparisons of figures.” “Furthermore,” he adds, “aerial spraying is the norm there, while it is generally banned in Europe.” » For the European Commission, the indices gathered by EOS do not constitute sufficient grounds for changing the current schedule. The last evaluation of Roundup dates back to 2002. The re-evaluation was scheduled for 2012, but the delay accumulated by Brussels will push back this new examination to 2015. This delay is not the main reason for the NGO's protests. "New rules for evaluating pesticides, potentially more restrictive, are currently being finalized," says Claire Robinson, who coordinated the drafting of the EOS report. But the re-evaluation that will be made in 2015 will still be based on the old regulations, to give manufacturers time to adapt." This is something the Commission does not deny. The new rules - which, according to industry sources, should be "finalized in the fall" - provide for a mandatory review of scientific literature, in addition to the studies presented by manufacturers. The work published in scholarly journals by public laboratories will therefore have to be systematically taken into account, even if "this does not mean that they are systematically ignored today, far from it", tempers Thierry Mercier, from the French National Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health Safety (Anses). For EOS, however, the difference is significant. "Under the old rules, it is likely that glyphosate will obtain a new authorisation," says Ms Robinson. "We will then probably have to wait until 2030 for this product to undergo a serious re-evaluation, in accordance with the new regulation. While we already know today that it poses a problem." Studies commissioned by manufacturers must meet certain criteria concerning the animal species enrolled in the tests, the nature and duration of exposure to the products tested, etc. University laboratories - like Mr Carrasco's - have greater latitude. And the differences in conclusions are sometimes considerable. An example cited by EOS is that of bisphenol A (BPA). In a review of the scientific literature published in 2005 in Environmental Health Perspectives, Frederick vom Saal (University of Missouri) estimated that 94 of the 115 academic studies published on the subject concluded that BPA had a significant effect on organisms, even at very low doses. At the same time, none of the nineteen studies on the same subject commissioned by manufacturers highlighted such effects. In France, BPA was banned in baby bottles in 2010. In the case of glyphosate and its main degradation product, aminomethylphosphonic acid (AMPA), several studies published in recent years highlight their toxicity for certain aquatic organisms. "Glyphosate or AMPA are not very problematic molecules in themselves, at least less than others," explains Laure Mamy, a researcher at the National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA) and a specialist in the fate of these compounds in the environment. "The problem is the quantity. It is the dose that makes the poison." However, while glyphosate degrades relatively quickly, "AMPA can persist in the soil for several months." In France, according to the French Institute for the Environment (IFEN), this molecule is now the contaminant most frequently found in surface water. Its success is therefore the main problem with Roundup. Especially since resistance has appeared in recent years. On the American continent in particular, where associated genetically modified crops have allowed massive use of Roundup, weeds are starting to be less and less sensitive - or even completely resistant - to Monsanto's flagship herbicide. "However, when these resistances begin to arise, we are sometimes tempted to increase the quantities spread," says Laure Mamy.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:971

Attention bounty hunters! At the annual Black Hat computer security conference, which brought together experts from American government agencies and industries as well as the world's most advanced hackers from Saturday, July 30 to Thursday, August 4 in Las Vegas (Nevada), Microsoft announced the launch of the Microsoft Blue Hat Prize Contest. This new prize will offer $200,000 (140,000 euros) to the person who develops anti-piracy software capable of resisting computer attacks. With an estimated global market share of 87.66%, the American computer giant - and its Windows system - reigns supreme on the computer world. It is therefore the most exposed to attacks by hackers, who have made it their main target. The competition is open to researchers, computer security professionals and even young geeks, provided they are at least 14 years old. Their proposals must be sent to Microsoft by April 2012. "This prize is designed to imagine new ideas for defensive approaches to computer security," Microsoft explains on its Web site. "As part of our commitment to a safer computing experience, we hope to inspire security researchers to develop innovative solutions to address serious security threats." After receiving and reviewing the applications, which must provide a prototype running on Windows and developed using the Windows SDK, a panel of Microsoft experts will award the prizes at the Black Hat 2012 conference. In addition to the first prize, the Ridmond firm will award a second prize of $50,000 and will offer a subscription to Microsoft services worth $10,000 to the third-place winner. "The value of this prize goes far beyond money," said Katie Moussouris, the group's chief security strategist, in an interview with AFP. We want to make it more difficult and more expensive for criminals to exploit vulnerabilities by encouraging researchers to focus their expertise on defensive security technologies." Ms. Moussouris emphasizes that the winners of the competition will retain the intellectual property of their invention, but that they will have to license it to Microsoft without receiving royalties. The group also gives itself the right to use it in its products, conferences or communications. Detecting the flaw This is not the first time that new technology companies have offered money in exchange for detecting flaws in one of their software programs. Since the beginning of August, the social network Facebook, which now claims 750 million subscribers, has been offering $500 to Internet users who are able to detect any flaw in its security. The sum can be increased significantly if this weak point is deemed "critical". Internet browser publishers also do not hesitate to introduce such "incentive" measures. Mozilla now offers up to $3,000 for discovering security flaws in its Firefox search engine. For its part, since 2010, Google has awarded a bounty of at least $500 for detecting bugs in "Chromium," the group's open-source web browser project.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:972

The time has come to return this space to its usual occupant. Before taking my leave, I sorted out some papers, put away my bookmarks, put my personal memories in order, which had been in great demand for a month. And found a lost note. I had scribbled down two or three ideas in advance with which I intended to cobble together chronicles. And then, you know what it's like. The alternating current of inspiration and the hypnosis of the nights led me down other paths. I have only a few lines left. They will be for these lost subjects, these abandoned destinations. And first and foremost, for the mission of Creative Commons (http://fr.creativecommons.org/), a non-profit organization run exclusively by volunteers. Creative Commons offers copyright contracts - inspired by Opensource and free software - that allow the sharing of knowledge, works, data, universal access to culture, education and research. To find out more, the beautiful album The Power of Open , published for the organization's 10th anniversary, is available for download at http://thepowerofopen.org. It is royalty-free, of course. In another genre, I had also noted to mention the activities of the French Association for Internet Naming in Cooperation (www.afnic.fr), which manages domain names in ".fr" (France) and ".re" (Reunion Island). A work in the shadows, often austere, but essential to the proper functioning of the network. In April, the milestone of 2 million domain names in ".fr" was reached. Finally, as a credits, know that the original soundtrack of these chronicles could have been downloaded here, in this rich bank of sounds and sound effects: http://fr.kay-soundcollection.com. Or in this one, http://www.sound-fishing.net/ where I let you find for yourself the recording of the final whistle.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:973

"We commissioned two studies that recommend acquiring the Microsoft suite because of the higher integration costs if we were to consider free software," Marianne Rouette, spokesperson for the STM, told Le Devoir yesterday. The analyses in question were led by CGI, in collaboration with the transit authority, for one, and by the Centre de recherche informatique de Montréal (CRIM), for the other. "For the moment, the new call for tenders has not been launched, but it could target only this [proprietary software]," she added. Pressure Last September, the STM suspended its call for tenders for the acquisition of 2,577 licenses for the Microsoft Office 2010 office suite following pressure from the Association pour l'appropriation collective de l'informatique libre (FACIL). In essence, the lobby group deplored the bias of the call for tenders favouring a specific product and especially the absence of real competition with so-called open IT solutions. Microsoft products are associated with so-called proprietary IT formats that induce a dependence on the American multinational. In June 2010, the Quebec courts established the illegality of this type of call for tenders in a case opposing the Régie des rentes du Québec and the free IT consulting firm Savoir-Faire Linux. The awarding of a $723,000 contract for Microsoft products without an evaluation of an equivalent in open format was at the heart of the dispute. While claiming to have adopted free software in other areas of its administration, the STM is nevertheless preparing to resume its call for tenders for the replacement of office suites where it left off. The call, in its Microsoft-centrist form, was cancelled last April. A new call could be launched this fall. Note that at the beginning of June, Quebec adopted the Act respecting the governance and management of information resources of public bodies and government enterprises—that's its title—which aims to promote the proliferation of free software in the government apparatus. Broadly speaking, the law calls on "public bodies" to "consider free software in the same way as other software," we can read. And this, in order to ensure "the sustainability of government digital heritage." To date, several governments, including that of Barack Obama in the United States, have made this type of decision in order to make more room for open computing, as opposed to closed proprietary software. The reduction in acquisition costs, greater IT flexibility and better security of government data are also put forward to explain this call for IT transformation and the broader adoption of free software.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:974

It looks like an ordinary suitcase. Inside, however, there is a laptop loaded with new technologies that can be transformed into a real Wi-Fi transmitter, in order to connect to any satellite Internet network. There are dozens of young developers working on this project in Washington, but the most astonishing thing is that they are doing it thanks to funding from the American State Department. The latter intends, in the very near future, to make said suitcase available to all political opponents on the planet who see their access to the Web blocked by the power in place. This could be called the secret war of the Internet. Or how America has decided to finance many projects aimed at allowing anyone who wants to be able to circumvent censorship in authoritarian regimes. Last week, the New York Times revealed that the State Department plans to spend no less than $70 million (49 million euros) on this effort in 2011. "We are seeing more and more people around the world using the Internet, mobile phones and other technologies to make their voices heard, as they protest injustice and try to achieve their aspirations," commented the head of diplomacy, Hillary Clinton, in an email sent to the New York daily. "This is a historic opportunity to have an impact on all of these changes." Crucial. This new American battle against censorship has largely intensified in the wake of the revolutions shaking the Middle East, during which the Internet and social networks have played a crucial role. Hillary Clinton had been one of the first to speak out against the network cuts carried out in Egypt by Hosni Mubarak. "It's a response to criticism that America hasn't been quick enough to support the uprisings that we've seen," said Bruce Hoffman, director of the Center for Peace and Security Studies at Georgetown University and a former CIA official. "In some ways, it's also an extension of the kind of technology that was used during the Cold War when the Voice of America [international radio, editor's note] was used to get 'the message of freedom' across Eastern Europe." This time, the State Department has gone a step further and, somewhat unusually, has enlisted the services of Internet players who have long been advocates of open source and free software. The famous suitcase, for example, which is funded by a $2 million grant, is being developed under the direction of the New America Foundation, a nonpartisan organization whose mission is to "bring new ideas into the public debate." messages. It uses a technology known as "mesh networking" that turns computers or cell phones into transmitters. You just have to configure the device correctly to create an alternative Internet and connect, even if a government has cut off its citizens' access to the Web. Josh King, one of the engineers working on the project, says: "It may come as a surprise, but we realized that the State Department's goals and ours were the same: to facilitate communication between activists abroad and guarantee them freedom of speech. And to see dictatorships suddenly collapse all over the world, with Twitter or Facebook actively participating, reinforced our motivation." In fact, Washington is multiplying initiatives. In a dozen countries, the State Department has asked its diplomats to contact opponents and dissidents, to assess how best to use these new technologies. In Afghanistan, for example, the United States has already developed a telecommunications network independent of the national network, by installing telephone towers on military bases. This makes it possible to communicate by mobile phone without fear of messages being intercepted. For the moment, the State Department has taken care to specify that these projects are intended to "promote democracy where it is being mistreated", and not to facilitate the overthrow of authoritarian or autocratic regimes. The suitcase, however, could be operational as early as summer 2012 and "tested" in several countries. "It's a slippery slope," continues Bruce Hoffman, nevertheless, because even if we don't want to say that we are directly participating in the fall of a government, we are giving both the tools and the means to a popular uprising to achieve its ends."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:975

According to the Business Software Alliance's (BSA) 2010 Global Software Piracy Study, the value of PC software theft was nearly $1.1 billion in Canada in 2010, and more than $59 billion worldwide. Twenty-eight percent of the software deployed on PCs that year was pirated. The vast majority of computer users value the legal use of software, but many clearly do not distinguish between legal and pirated software. The BSA, which tracks the global piracy situation, notes that the piracy rate in Canada is at an all-time low of 28 percent, a 6 percent drop since 2006. Michael Murphy, chair of the BSA Canada committee, said in a statement that there is still work to be done with businesses and consumers. "The more we can reduce software piracy," he said, "the better off the Canadian economy will be." This is the eighth study of global computer piracy conducted by the BSA, using a methodology that includes capturing 182 discrete data points from 116 countries or regions around the world (http://portal.bsa.org/globalpiracy2010/index.html). The study also includes a user survey. Canadians rate licensed software as better than pirated products in terms of technical support (92%), security (83%) and reliability (81%). And 68% of respondents say inventors should be rewarded for their creations to encourage more technological advances. Globally, the survey found that support for intellectual property rights is strongest in markets with high piracy rates. Half of the geographic markets surveyed in 2010 had piracy rates of 62% or higher, with the global average piracy rate at 42%. Piracy rates in emerging countries are 2.5 times higher than those in developed countries, and the commercial value of pirated software ($31.9 billion) represents more than half of the total global value. The 2010 BSA Global Software Piracy Study covers piracy of all PC software, including desktops, laptops and small appliances. It covers operating systems, core software such as databases and security suites, and application software. Legitimate freeware and open source software are also included in the study. ytherrien@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:976

Quebec City web company Libéo has won two prestigious OCTAS awards for the creation of TouchBox, a complete online movie ticketing system developed for the IMAX theatre at Galeries de la Capitale. At the annual gala held recently in Montreal, Libéo took home the honours in the Consumer Electronics - B2C and Business Solution - Free Software categories. Libéo's creation of TouchBox now allows IMAX customers to book online and on their smartphones, in real time, as if they were at the box office, using a quick and easy transaction. Two interactive terminals are available to the public in the IMAX lobby, allowing them to scan a "QR Code" and validate electronic tickets directly from a smartphone or from the printed virtual ticket.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:977

The bill on the management of government IT, led by Treasury Board President Michelle Courchesne, was amended to require public bodies to consider open source software in the same way as other information technology solutions. Earlier this year, the Treasury Board President unveiled a framework policy on the governance and management of information resources, which advocates the use of open source software. However, Bill 133, tabled in the wake of this policy, did not contain any specific reference to this type of software. During the detailed study of the bill in parliamentary committee, which has just ended, opposition representatives Marie Malavoy and Sylvain Simard convinced their colleagues to amend the law, which now provides for "taking the necessary measures to ensure that public bodies consider open source software in the same way as other software." Cyrille Béraud, one of the leaders of the Association professionnelle des entreprises en logiciellibres (APELL) is pleased with this addition, but points out that a court judgment, rendered in 2010 in the case of his company, Savoir-Faire Linux, already recognized the equivalence of free software. APELL has also just given its agreement to create the Table de concertation sur le logiciellibre, which will include representatives of several public organizations, including the health, education, Treasury Board and Emploi-Québec networks, as well as five representatives from APELL. The sustainability of digital heritage Finally, Bill 133 has also been amended to include a new concept in its objectives: "ensuring the sustainability of digital heritage". The idea was defended by Daniel Pascot, director of the organizational information systems department at Université Laval and president of FACIL, an association that promotes free computing in Quebec. Almost all information will sooner or later be digitized, he reminds us. "That means that software is needed to create digital information, and to access it. Since we're talking about heritage, we have to make sure that this software doesn't hinder access. And the best way is to use free software, which allows access to its source code."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:978

Caméléon, here is the program that has been the focus of all the attention in the small world of information technology in recent months. At least, in the French-speaking market. "We said to ourselves that there was a business opportunity on the market to launch a product entirely in French, if we consider that the French-speaking world is made up of several countries and a very large area in the world," continues Mr. Perreault. We don't necessarily tell the classic story... We didn't get into this because French is in danger, adds Jean-François Rioux, president of Alogient. French is simply our competitive axis in the content management system market and that's a message that got across well to the two juries of these competitions." A content management system, or CMS, is a program designed for designing and updating websites or multimedia applications. Lozeau, Desjardins, CN, TD Insurance and more than fifty other companies or associations use Caméléon today. For its reliability, for its simplicity, for its use of the French language, no doubt a little too. But surely also for its free nature. "When we look at the trends," says Jean-François Rioux, "we see that more and more companies want to move towards open-source software. We hope that, among people who are attracted to this type of software and who are in the French-speaking world, the Octas prize will bring us a gain in notoriety and popularity, that they will implement our software but also that they will continue to develop it." Open source Because that's the whole point of a free-source program. Alogient produced Caméléon and put it on the market: developers who wish to do so are then free to program modules that will complete the product, making it ever more efficient. "The Alogient team, which is walking around the corridors with its head held high today, is working hard on the evolution of the product, but other people can work on this evolution, depending on their needs," explains Patrick L. Perreault. And the business model in all this? "Basically, people choose your product because it's free, there are no licensing fees, so they save a lot of money," says Jean-François Rioux. For our part, we make our income by developing specific support plans for people who use our product. We ourselves create sites with Caméléon for certain clients. Not to mention the customized training programs that we can deliver to developers, service providers or even companies, particularly the public service, which often has very specific needs." Alogient also wants to take advantage of the visibility offered by these two awards to reach new clients, and the public service is one of its targets. Individuals too, if they know a little bit about web programming. "The problem with consumer software," says Patrick Perreault, "is that they always offer the same designs... Caméléon allows you to go further in customizing your site's interface." The Montreal company celebrated its tenth anniversary last year and now has about fifty employees. Its specialty: e-commerce, Intranet and turnkey solutions, from web strategy to hosting. Caméléon is in its fifth version and its development cost about half a million dollars. "The awards represent a lot on a commercial level," concludes Mr. Rioux, "but it is above all a great source of motivation for all our employees." Employees who have reason to be proud, because one of their clients also won an Octas award on Saturday night: Computers for Quebec Schools (Opeq), which distinguished itself in the category of information technology serving society. \*\*\* Contributor to Le Devoir

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:979

- Excellence DH International Axon Integration & Development MoneyCell - an innovative mobile payment method - Personality of the Year Robert Walsh, President of Forensic Technology - Electronic Business SYS-TECH Technologies Imax des Galeries de la Capitale TouchBox cinema ticketing system - Online learning (500 employees or less) FORAC research consortium of Laval University Le jeu du bois - Online learning (more than 500 employees) Air Canada Ellicom Promoting the brand promise - Web environment Ministry of Tourism Bell Canada Contributory site Destination Québec - IT project management Desjardins Group Technological migration of the Property and Casualty Insurance sector - Infrastructure Desjardins Group Technological migration of the Property and Casualty Insurance sector - Innovation (100 employees or less) DH International Axon Integration & Development MoneyCell - an innovative mobile payment method - Innovation (more than 100 employees) Vidéotron illico Web - Games and animation Beenox Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions - French in technology Alogient information Caméléon 5 content management system - IT at the service of society Computers for Quebec schools (OPEQ) Not ordinary computers! - IT in the cultural, educational or media sectors (100 employees or less) Society for Arts and Technology Breaking the ice - telepresence and virtual reality - IT in the cultural, educational or media sectors (More than 100 employees) Musée de la civilisation Idéeclic Place Royale d'aujourd'hui à hier - Student succession Arnaud Boré, Gabriel Girard, Olivier Vaillancourt Université de Sherbrooke NeuroPlanning Navigator: software for neurosurgical planning - Business success SherWeb - Business solution - In-house development Vidéotron illico Web - Business solution - Open source software SYS-TECH Technologies Imax des Galeries de la Capitale TouchBox cinema ticketing system - Business solution - Software packages Institut national d'optique (INO) COVEO Solutions COVEO, cornerstone of access to information for INO researchers - Process transformation Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec Sphinx system - processing of intervention files - Special youth award Gabrielle Julien and Valerie Reid Youth City High School (Vaudreuil-Dorion) The Scout 451

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:980

As you read these lines, Sylvain Carle is in California, more precisely in Silicon Valley, the birthplace of the now famous Facebook, Google and Twitter, looking for investors for his new baby. Sylvain Carle is one of the 50 entrepreneurs invited as part of the 48hrs activity, a two-day event organized by a group of Canadians who work in the Valley and who want to encourage Canadian entrepreneurship and creativity. Thanks to the C-100 initiative (that's the name these exiles have given themselves), Carle and his associates could perhaps land the investment that will get their project off the ground, Needium, a search engine that suggests good addresses based on questions asked on social media. In the Montreal web world, there are few people who don't know Sylvain Carle. He's been working his butt off for about fifteen years and would undoubtedly deserve the Palme d'Or for his efforts to put people in touch. At 39, this worthy representative of the Atari generation is among the designers of the first Quebec websites and remembers the birth of Wired, that's saying something. "I'm a self-taught geek," he says. "I was interested in the web and communications even before universities offered such training. Very early on, I worked to integrate the two. In a new job, when I was asked where I wanted my office, I would answer: just give me a chair with wheels and a laptop. I want to walk between the different departments and connect everyone." Like many forty-somethings who work in the web and technology world in Montreal today, Sylvain Carle is a spinoff of Public Technologies Multimédia (PTM), the company that had enjoyed great success in the 90s with its virtual mannequin. Silicon Valley In 1999, when he had three young children, he decided to take the leap and leave Montreal to settle in California. "I told myself that if I wanted to win the Stanley Cup, I had to go where the best were, in Silicon Valley." He stayed there for less than a year. Seeing that all the projects were slowing down, a sign that the tech bubble was going to burst, he returned to Montreal with a good list of contacts, many projects and the blog he had started to write to tell his experience, A Frog in the Valley. The name stuck. The blog too. It was during a participation in the Web 2.0 Expo, in San Francisco, that he attended for the first time a "BarCamp", a concept created by Tim O'Reilly, a true internet guru, the previous year. These hallway discussions that are also called unconferences or anticonferences, in which there are no speakers, only participants, seduced this champion of networking. Back in Montreal, Sylvain Carle therefore organized his first BarCamp. It was 2006, the French-speaking community was not really organized and it was mainly English-speaking geeks who participated. Since then, the concept has spawned offspring and several camps have been held. Last weekend, for example, the second MediaCamp attracted a hundred people within the walls of UQAM's Coeur des sciences. "I knew that this unconference concept would work," observes Sylvain Carle. "In Quebec, we like to discuss. Today, we can attend dozens of events of this type in Montreal, the Pecha Kucha in design, the Ted conferences, etc. It's a movement that is gaining momentum." Montreal excitement In fact, Sylvain Carle senses a real excitement on the Montreal techno scene. "I hear more and more people outside the country talking about Montreal," he says. "There is more cohesion, more communication within the community. The problem, as with many things, is money. The first Quebec tech investors, Daniel Langlois, Serge Godin and Alexandre Taillefer, did not reinvest in Montreal start-ups like they did in California, for example. Money is harder to find to start a business, although some investment funds have been set up in recent years. All it would take is a really big success for it to really take off." In the meantime, Sylvain Carle is not giving up and is participating in all the projects that can help put Montreal on the map. Among other things, he sits on the board of directors of Osmo, a foundation that wants to transform the magnificent Notman house on Sherbrooke Street to make it a must-see address in the world of the web. Financing is being organized and the house, which currently rents its premises to web workers in addition to hosting several geek community events, would like to open a café on Clark Street within the next year or two. Another exciting project: the Montreal Startup Festival, which will take place next July, in the middle of the Just for Laughs Festival, to attract web entrepreneurs from outside Montreal during the summer. "I dream of Montreal becoming a reference in techno as it is for alternative music," says Sylvain Carle. "We just need our equivalent of Arcade Fire..." Sylvain Carle's blog: afroginthevalley.com For more information: On the Osmo Foundation: osmo.org On the C-100: thec100.org On the Startup Festival this summer: startupfestival.comp

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:981

Highrise (37signals) 37signals is known for BaseCamp, a collaboration tool that is popular with many North American SMBs. Highrise takes that same simplicity and applies it to the customer relationship management industry. Whose turn is it to contact a client, where are the documents associated with a specific project, who is the lawyer handling the company's files? These are the kinds of questions that Highrise solves. Maximizer RM Live One of the oldest CRM software, Maximizer has recently moved to the cloud, offering a slightly slower version of its software to companies that want the same tools, without having to invest in infrastructure. It only takes a single monthly payment. Microsoft Dynamics CRM Microsoft recently announced that Dynamics CRM, a customer relationship management tool that integrates particularly well with Office business software, will be included in the online version of the popular office suite, Office 365. This is likely to attract a good number of companies used to managing everything on Outlook or Excel. Salesforce Salesforce is undoubtedly a heavyweight in online customer relationship management. It is expensive, but it is very popular with large companies. The recent acquisition of Toronto-based Radian6 now allows it to closely monitor what is happening on social networks. Sugar CRM Sugar CRM is based on open source software that can be downloaded and installed in the company, or that can be used as a web application. It is also offered in two versions, a basic version intended for small and medium-sized companies, and the other, more expensive, designed specifically for large companies. Zoho CRM The Zoho cloud suite has slowed down the pace of its new software in recent months, but that doesn't stop it from offering its own CRM solution, derived from the free software Sugar, which integrates particularly well with applications from the Google Apps suite, from the giant of the same name.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:982

The Rennes Opera is one of the most innovative cultural structures in terms of new technologies. After broadcasting a retransmission of Mozart's Don Giovanni in high definition and 3D in 2009 - techniques that were still experimental at the time - this institution launched into virtual worlds. Since November 2010, performances of the opera season have been captured and offered live on Second Life and its equivalent in free software Opensim. "I wanted to take the opposite approach to shows broadcast in streaming on the Internet, which offer a mode of consumption that is too individual. In virtual worlds, we can recreate a community around the show, with avatars exchanging with each other as the real audience does," observes Alain Surrans, director of the Rennes Opera. This project, called OpéraBis, was carried out with the Bibliothèque francophone du Métavers (an association working for the development of the French-speaking world in virtual worlds) and received support of 14,000 euros from the Ministry of Culture. This assistance has notably made it possible to carefully reconstruct the architecture of the Rennes Opera, from the exterior façade to the main hall, including the foyer, where avatars can enjoy a glass of champagne during intermission. The shows, which are free, have all been sold out so far. "In order not to slow down the server, only a hundred spectators can register at a time," explains Hugues Aubin, information technology officer for the city of Rennes. "We have already welcomed Internet users from very diverse backgrounds, from Senegal to Argentina, including Eastern Europe, not to mention children in sterile conditions at the Trousseau hospital in Paris. » Next performance: The Abduction from the Seraglio, by Mozart, on June 3.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:983

"SOFTWARE COUNTERFEITING is prosecuted civilly and criminally," emphasizes Éric Beaurepaire, member of the BSA. The Intellectual Property Code provides for up to three years of imprisonment and a fine of 300,000 euros. This is generally calculated based on the number of fraudulent copies, the cost of the software and the duration of use. "However, there are alternatives to copying," reminds Éric Beaurepaire, "in particular with free solutions or software." These are also increasingly numerous. The development of on-demand computing also encourages the payment of software per use or per duration of use, which limits the financial impact, especially when it comes to very expensive technical solutions. EB

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:984

"There is no such thing as isolated creation." Gilberto Gil, Minister of Culture of Brazil from 2003 to 2008 Modern Western thought is based on the belief that economic prosperity depends on productivity and competition. The globalized world, based on continuous growth and increased consumption, is nevertheless reaching its limits. It is a way of life that jeopardizes its own sustainability through excessive use of natural resources. For some, this logic is inevitably at stake. However, alternative currents are making themselves heard. Many citizens are expressing their fears and proposing alternatives to the dominant thinking. In our research on citizen creativity, two movements capture our attention for their potential to produce wealth and knowledge based on humanist thinking, where collaboration and sharing are the key words. The first movement is that of collaborative platforms for open innovation. We list concrete applications in several areas: crisis management (Ushahidi), science (Personalgenomes), health (Patientslikeme), volunteering (Sparked), microfinance (Kiva, Zopa). The platform www.patientslikeme.com is an example of "mass collaboration" proposing a new way of thinking about medicine. Created in 2004 by three MIT engineers, it has become a very active web community. More than 80,000 members (patients, doctors, researchers, etc.) share their experiences and knowledge, particularly around chronic diseases. All have access to a wealth of aggregated data that allows them to know and compare treatments, to be more informed, active and responsible in the management of their health. The second movement is based on new business models based on the concept of Creative Commons (www.creativecommons.org). These are intellectual property rights licenses inspired by the principle of free software. Instead of protecting copyright, it is freed by allowing users of the work to copy or modify it to create new ones. It is therefore no longer a question of piracy, but rather of sharing knowledge and creation. The areas where Creative Commons has been adopted as a guiding principle abound: education and knowledge (www.wikipedia.org), cinema (www.kassandre.org), video (www.flickr.com), music (www.jamendo.com). This allows the emergence of independent creations, based on decentralized collaboration. New models Do you think that India (Bollywood) is the world's leading film producer, after overtaking the United States? You are wrong, because it is Nigeria (Nollywood). The Nigerian film industry now produces more than 2,000 films per year. Every day, two to three new films are launched in an industry estimated at 250 million per year. The Nigerian model, bottom-up and decentralized, is a huge network of small theaters, producers, directors and local actors who come from all walks of life and offer films from a local perspective. The film industry is now the second largest employer in Nigeria and exports these films throughout Africa. In music, we see the emergence of independent peripheral players: hip-hop (Baltimore, Texas), grind dubstep (England), coupé décalé (Côte d'Ivoire, France), kuduro (Angola), kwaito (South Africa), funk and techno-brega (Brazil). In Quebec, the group Misteur Valaire offers its albums under a Creative Commons license, based on a voluntary contribution from the user. In Belém, a city of 1.5 million people located at the entrance to the Amazon rainforest in northern Brazil, the "techno-brega" phenomenon is booming. It is estimated that over 4,300 DJ and band shows take place per month. About 7,000 jobs are created directly by this industry, including about 1,600 for artists. This is a market of 3 million per month with over 400 new CDs and 100 new DVDs per year. The main characteristic of this open model is that everything happens independently of the dominant publishing houses. At the heart of Nigerian cinema and Brazilian techno-brega, we find an "open" business model where remixes and mashups are combined with original creations and where production costs are very low (in the case of Nigerian cinema, on average $20,000 per film, minimal compared to the $60 million of a typical American production). Are these models to copy? Perhaps not. However, it does make you think about the power of open, decentralized and sharing-based platforms. Without major producers and thanks to few intermediaries, small productions with modest budgets promote the local co-creation of content where a greater number of artists and citizens find their place. Marlei Pozzebon is a professor in the international business education department at HEC Montréal. marlei.pozzebon@hec.ca Thierry Gateau is a musician and a master's student in management at HEC Montréal. thierry.beaupre-gateau@hec.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:985

Sherbrooke - There are good employers. There are even some that are remarkable because they have been able to optimize all the factors that allow them to thwart the spectre of labour shortages, hire the best candidates and retain the best employees. Remarkable employer, explained Pierre Bernier, is a concrete improvement process that is certified by the Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ). An employer who obtains certification, at the end of a process that can take only three or four months, can display it loud and clear. They can boast of having a competitive advantage in HRM (no longer human resources management but human scarcity management). Pierre Bernier was speaking yesterday to the hundred or so participants at the luncheon of the Groupe d'action pour l'avance technologique de l'Estrie (GATE). He is the president of Groupe Ambition, specialists in demography and organizational development. "The ISO auditors come from outside the company. With the Remarkable Employer certification, the auditors are the company's employees. It is through their responses to a questionnaire that the BNQ can determine whether the company is eligible for certification," he explained. Linux Revolution There are remarkable employers in Quebec. Here, in the Sherbrooke region, there is Linux Revolution, a company specializing in free software. When you work in this field, explained its president, Benoit de Ligneris, the competitors are called Yahoo, Google. And the work can be done from anywhere in the world. To attract and keep employees, you have to be bold and original. He cited the example of a 19-year-old Swiss man hired by Linux who, today, works mainly for a competitor. The young man, however, devotes one day to Linux and his office is still within the walls of the Sherbrooke company. "He's the kind of flexibility you need in this field. It was important for us to keep in touch with this young man because, we don't know, in two or three years, we could work together more," reported Mr. de Ligneris. The company Groupe EMS, from Magog, does not have the certification, explained its spokesperson, Jean-Pierre Lavallée. However, it is registered in the process. Groupe EMS (for Electro Mécano Services) specializes in custom manufacturing of industrial machinery. "We decided to do this in two stages. We are at the first stage. We registered in this process in order to react to the leveling off of our profits despite constant growth in sales. We want to give ourselves a distinctive niche," declared Mr. Lavallée.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:986

DE(berlusconi)ZER is a web tool that blocks access to anything related to the Italian Prime Minister. The first part of the project, developed by a group of artists and programmers, simply consists of crossing out texts and images mentioning him with a big yellow line. The next phase is to replace the spaces thus freed up with works by Italian and international artists. A first exhibition brought together Claudia Rossini (who replaced the minister's botoxed face with a cute kitty), Aram Bartholl and the Alterazioni Video collective. DE-ZER subverts the media machine created by Berlusconi and gets rid of his invasive presence, maintained by sex scandals, trials and bad jokes... Soon, users will be able to propose their own content. Everything is open source and can be adapted to modify any text or image online. For example, replace Berlusconi with... let's see... www.de-zer.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:987

"I stole a million Facebook profiles republished on a dating site, digital books from Amazon that I redistributed for free. I created networks of robots to defraud Google's advertising service. I manufactured and distributed thousands of credit cards, counterfeiting virtual money." These are some of the crimes claimed by the Italian hacker artist Paolo Cirio, Robin Hood of the network, regularly threatened with prosecution. "These are not malicious hacks, sabotage viruses, funny hoaxes or just slogans, but proposals to provoke political changes," Cirio defends himself. After an attack against three web giants and their monopoly (Libération, February 5), he is attacking Visa. Or rather the banks. His project, P2P Gift Credit Cards, proposes an alternative economy, based on a peer-to-peer architecture, for a fairer sharing of wealth. Viral. The principle is simple: enter your email or a telephone number on the project website. In exchange, you become the owner of a virtual credit card with a number, expiration date and security code, all free of charge. You can also order a laminated copy that is more real than life. To be credited with 100 pounds (111 euros), all you have to do is provide a friend's email: sharing thus creates value. Each new member will earn you additional credits, just to make it all go viral. "Banks are allowed to create virtual money out of nothing by granting loans that exceed the amounts they have on deposit," says Cirio, referring to the recent crisis. He believes that everyone should have the right to lend money that they do not have: "In 'gift finance', it is about transferring power from the banks to the population, the economy would be democratically stimulated by the community instead of private financial institutions." Unlike other projects, this is not about creating a fictitious currency, even if financial exchanges are not possible. P2P Gift Credit Cards uses standard money and relies on existing infrastructures. "The 16 digits of the card are obtained with the official algorithm that codes all the cards in the world, and the first six digits are the identifier of the bank that issued them," explains Cirio, who created an independent non-profit organization, the Basic Credit Network - unauthorized - that issues credit cards that can be read by any electronic system. "It is really a counterfeit of money that could possibly be spent," says Paolo Cirio, specifying that it is an artistic project. Of course, he admits, to use these cards in shops or ATMs, the project would have to be authorized, but "it would already be possible to trade within the community of cardholders." More than a thousand have been issued, the goal being to reach a critical mass of users that would allow this utopia to be transformed into a real alternative system. Futur.Paolo Cirio will present his project on June 19 (1), on the occasion of the Mal au Pixel open source culture festival that begins on the 9th in Paris, and is looking specifically at the future of money imagined by artists (Dyndy de Jaromil, Afro, the first pan-African currency by Baruch Gottlieb and Mansour Ciss Kanakassy, or the Bijlmer Euro, local currency by Christian Nold). http://p2pgiftcredit.com (1) http://plateforme.tk

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:988

Whenever the Internet is mentioned, the majority of French parliamentarians display a lack of knowledge that would make Jacques Chirac and his field mouse look like Mark Zuckerberg. To prevent MPs from voting for laws that are at best archaic and at worst dangerous, the National Digital Council (CNN) was created with the mission of "giving opinions and formulating recommendations in favor of the development of the Internet in France," Nicolas Sarkozy said yesterday. This Council had been planned since 2008 as part of the France Numérique 2012 plan, led by Eric Besson. All that remained was to find the right casting. In a report submitted in February, Pierre Kosciusko-Morizet, head of Price Minister, recommended that the members of the CNN be elected by professionals in the sector. It was a waste of time: the 18 wise men were all appointed by the Elysée, which kindly allowed the Council to elect its president. It will be Gilles Babinet, founder of e-commerce companies. A choice that should delight creators and rights holders, since he declared to the Owni website: "I think that the traditional music industry is blind, they don't see the new models at all." Nicolas Voisin, founder of the said Owni, is also part of the CNN. A well-known opponent of Hadopi, he nevertheless accepted the challenge, believing that the CNN "could indeed serve as a forum for consultation and guidance of public policies applied to digital technology." He will head the Liberté commission, while François Momboisse (head of new technologies at Fnac.com) will oversee the Croissance group. Giuseppe Di Martino, secretary general of Dailymotion, inherits the Accès workshop. Around them, representatives of operators (Orange, Bouygues, SFR, Free) and large groups. No elected representatives of the Republic as Kosciusko-Morizet recommended, and even fewer consumers. Called the "Medef of the Net" by many, criticized by the pro-software, the CNN could, according to Sarkozy, lead to the creation of similar councils abroad, or even to a "CNN of CNNs". This will be discussed at the G8 of the Internet scheduled for May 24 and 25 in Paris.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:989

If the vitality of a community is measured by its ability to attract people from outside, Montreal techno can be pleased to see Mark O'Sullivan getting involved. At 35, this Saskatchewan native runs Vanilla Forums, a young company that is working on software to build discussion forums on the Internet. The business is run from a huge basement in the Griffintown neighbourhood shared by a dozen start-ups. In a corner, hoods over their heads and sunk into armchairs, four guys from Vanilla Forums are typing code on computers. The company currently has seven employees, including a sales representative in Los Angeles. "By December, we should be 20," says Mark O'Sullivan. To justify such a forecast, Mr. O'Sullivan opens his computer and points to his company's web page. A counter indicates that the product created by Vanilla Forums has been downloaded more than 450,000 times since its launch. "I never thought it would get this big," says the boss. A late-stage company What would become Vanilla Forums began about ten years ago, when Mark O'Sullivan was having fun programming small software programs in his spare time to create online discussion forums. A great believer in the philosophy of free software, Mr. O'Sullivan made his work available on the Internet so that it could be taken up, improved and modified by other programmers around the world. His idea: to provide a base that allows a discussion forum to be easily integrated into any website. According to their needs, users can then add all sorts of features. It's a bit like Mark O'Sullivan providing vanilla ice cream to ice cream lovers. They are then free to add syrups, fruits and other candies of their choice. Hence the name, you guessed it, Vanilla Forums. At the time, however, O'Sullivan had no intention of going into business with his software. "I was doing it for fun," he says. It was only as the downloads skyrocketed over the years that he finally realized that his hobby might have bigger potential. "It took me a while to really appreciate the hype," he says. "And when I finally did, I was busy doing all sorts of programming jobs for all sorts of companies that I had to finish." It wasn't until 2009 that he finally started Vanilla Forums with Todd Burry, a former colleague from Toronto. Things took off quickly. A mutual friend introduced the two new partners to David Cohen, a man every entrepreneur dreams of having on their side. Cohen is the founder of Techstars, a U.S.-based "business accelerator" network that aims to propel young companies. Mark O'Sullivan and Todd Burry were accepted into the program and headed to Boulder, Colorado, where they met tech whizzes who helped them refine their product and business strategy. It was during a presentation to investors organized by Techstars that Vanilla Forums unknowingly embarked on the path that would lead it to Montreal. For the occasion, Mark O'Sullivan took to the stage of an amphitheater to engage in an exercise well-known to young entrepreneurs: selling his salad in the hopes of interesting financiers. "There must have been 400 to 500 investors in the room," recalls Mr. O'Sullivan. At the end of the session, several investors spoke to the young entrepreneur to learn more. Among them was John Stokes, partner at the Quebec venture capital fund Montréal Startup. "He asked us what we thought about the idea of moving to Montreal. Honestly, we had never thought about that," says Mark O'Sullivan, who at the time was thinking more about staying in Colorado or heading to Silicon Valley. Startup Montréal invited Vanilla Forums to visit Montreal. Then the fund led a round of financing that also included American funds eonBusiness, Norseman Capital (Colorado) and Klein Venture Partners (Silicon Valley). Vanilla Forums landed half a million dollars and moved its headquarters to Montreal. Profitability For this company that still offers its products for free on the Internet, the thousand-dollar question remains: how to make money? Mark O'Sullivan and his team answered this question with a dual website. On the first, computer whizzes can still download the most recent versions of the company's products and tinker with them as they please. On the other, the company offers turnkey solutions for building and hosting discussion forums... for a monthly fee. "The advantage of having a product offered as open source software is that it allows you to build better paid products. There is a whole community of programmers around the world working on it that I don't have to pay for!" says Mark O'Sullivan. Over the years, no fewer than 1.5 million features that can be added to Vanilla Forums have been created, some by the company's employees, but most by other programmers. In the meantime, Mr. O'Sullivan does not regret having set up his company in Montreal... and even having started a small family here. "We didn't know it, but the startup community is really vibrant here. In the end, that's what convinced us to come."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:990

On June 21, 1966, at around 11 p.m., Oliver Smedley, the boss of Radio Atlanta, which broadcast pop, jazz, and rhythm and blues music from a boat anchored off the coast of Britain, shot and killed his main rival, Reginald Calvert. Calvert, enraged, had burst into Smedley's country home in Wendens Ambo, a small town about forty miles from London. He had reason to be angry. A few days earlier, Smedley's men had stormed the old sea forts of Shivering Sands from which Calvert broadcast Radio City, another pirate station also devoted to music, DJ ramblings, and advertising. The incident did not go unnoticed, and is the focus of Death of a Pirate, the book by British historian Adrian Johns. Pirate radio had been playing on the nerves of the BBC and politicians for many years. It had the support of a large section of the youth, who had been given freedom by the transistor to choose how they listened to the radio. But this kind of settling of scores reinforced the idea that it was time to restore order on the airwaves. The government soon closed down all pirate radio stations, and the BBC developed a dedicated music and record channel, for which it recruited former pirate DJs. Pop was suddenly "nationalised", as Johns notes wryly: "The pirates had to be silenced, an acceptable substitute had to be provided, and the public had to sell this sleight of hand." Calvert and Smedley were, at the time of the fatal brawl, actors in one of the most profound changes in popular culture. Adrian Johns, a professor at the University of Chicago and also the author of a history of intellectual piracy from Gutenberg to Bill Gates, has taken advantage of the opening of the archives of the trial that followed the murder to place this case in the history of the commerce of ideas and culture. In a style often closer to a detective story than to academic history, he delivers a fascinating reflection on the nature of mass culture and on the phenomenon of intellectual piracy that is so strongly attached to it. Rebel listeners Calvert and Smedley were not very similar. They embodied two faces of piracy. The former had arrived at it "from below". He was continuing an old tradition of technical resourcefulness that went back to the first pirates of "the ether", as they were called in the 1920s to designate the Hertzian waves. These rebel listeners circumvented the BBC's monopoly by tapping into foreign stations and refusing to conform to the model of serious, collected listening that the public service promoted. A producer of dubious bands, Calvert had seen in radio a way to extend his taste for entertainment. "A resourceful and imaginative entrepreneur, opportunistic, ambitious and rather young, he made grandiloquent speeches, but his enterprises were improvised adventures, underfunded and as likely to flourish as to fail," notes Johns. Smedley, on the other hand, came from a different background, having entered piracy "from the top": "Privately educated, urbane and well established, he saw himself as what he had almost been: a player in the world of the nation's political and cultural affairs. He now had ambitions to contribute to a reshaping of the creative industry." By sounding the death knell for the BBC monopoly, he hoped to pave the way for a reinvigorated and uncompromising individualism." For this activist for economic liberalism, pirate radio was a kind of last bastion against communism and collectivism. Savage capitalism It is in this regard that Adrian Johns' investigation is most instructive. Because we discover through him all that piracy on the airwaves owed - beyond the image of "counter-culture" that it conveyed - to free trade and savage capitalism, including tax havens. Smedley's doctrine was deeply rooted in the history of the contestation of the monopoly granted to the BBC in 1927. Had not its inspirations, the ultra-liberal economists Friedrich Hayek and Ronald Coase, castigated the typically Keynesian and interventionist model of organisation of the BBC, in particular the lack of confidence it showed in the freedom of choice of listeners? The question was in any case at the heart of the political debates of the time. Thus, the history of the piracy crisis inaugurated by the murder of Wendens Ambo does not only shed light on a part of the history of mentalities in the 1960s. It can also be read as the history of the "moral postures" through which we envisage the production and circulation of information or knowledge in a society irrigated by mass media. The "pop pirates", each in their own way, invented a typical mix of "rebellion against intellectual property monopolies, a provocative attitude towards bureaucracies deemed obsolete, and a pseudo-libertarian obstinacy in wanting to give priority to artistic creation over the rules of the community". Free software and illegal downloading, Linux and BitTorrent, were born at the mouth of the Thames.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:991

The documentary is worth a look. The food and financial crises have shaken the planet too much in recent years for us not to be interested in this 90-minute film, directed by Alexis Marant and broadcast on April 19 at 8:40 p.m. on Arte. But there is another reason to pay more than close attention to the channel's schedule that evening: as with Notre poison quotidien, scheduled for March 15, Planète à vendre will be broadcast using Pop Corn technology. A computer tool that allows the film to be linked to different resources on the Web. Depending on the images and subjects, the screen displays information and links that allow you to delve deeper into the issue. The tool is called OpenSource and comes from the Mozilla Foundation, which means that anyone can obtain the source code and modify it. Pop Corn is therefore set to evolve thanks to contributions from the Mozilla community. One of the special features of this software is its ability to launch queries on the fly on Google News, but also on Wikipedia and Twitter. Explanation: a link associated with an image is usually fixed. If you watch the documentary twice, it will offer you the same link twice. With Pop Corn, it's different. The links offered are updated as they go along. It remains to be seen whether these windows that open during the broadcast will not risk annoying the viewer. "We will surely have to find writing formats - during certain moments, for example - that adapt to the process," admits Alexandre Knetig, editorial manager at Arte.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:992

Rather than surfing porn sites alone, the prOn site proposes to transform what is too often considered a shameful and reprehensible practice into a social experience based on sharing. PrOn is a Firefox extension exclusively dedicated to porn, which not only allows you to browse without leaving any traces on porn sites (since once the pink bar is activated, no browsing history, search, download and cookies will be saved), but above all to share your discoveries, to tag them (anal, amateur, spanking, masturbation, mature women, hardcore, etc.), to recommend them anonymously, and to enjoy the sites found by other Internet users. And if your boss catches you, a simple click makes everything disappear. The extension is open source, to allow everyone to improve the tool and the erotic experience.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:993

It's all well and good, the dematerialization of content, but the laptop screen is less fun than the HD TV. And what's more, after an episode of Dr. House, it starts to burn your thighs. Instead of connecting the laptop to the TV (it's a pain, those cables to plug in, and where's the remote control, we're not going to get up either), the solution is to adopt a "media center". These boxes have been around for a while, but, whether in terms of interface or compatible formats, few have really proven to be up to par. Except for tinkerers. XBMC, a free software created in 2004 to run on Microsoft's first console, the Xbox, was made compatible with Windows, Mac OS and Linux in 2008. With a long experience and a responsive community, it quickly established itself as the best media management solution. The only small problem: you still need a computer, and even a mini-PC remains an investment and a technological barrier. Five members of the community then decided to launch the Boxee project, based on XBMC, but adding a whole series of social features and interfaces with online content, whether it comes from sharing sites like YouTube, legal streaming platforms like Hulu.com in the United States or video on demand. Boxee was first released in the form of software comparable to XBMC, but the idea was to go further by offering a dedicated, stylish and rather inexpensive box (less than 250 euros). The Boxee Box was released at the end of last year. It looks like a very sober little black cube. All you have to do is plug it into the television, connect it to the network, and that's it. Once you have indicated where all the multimedia files are stored (legally acquired of course, but who do you think we are?), the Box takes care of classifying everything by series, season, artist, album, film genre, etc. You can also access everything that the Web offers in terms of videos (with a few exceptions for copyright reasons). In addition, a small keyboard is located on the back of the remote control. Clever, but not ergonomic enough to hope to do much more than a search. Even 140 characters on Twitter is an ordeal. Ultimately, the connected TV keeps its simple role of broadcasting moving images. Boxee Box, D-Link, 229?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:994

In September, Bluetouff and a few hacker friends "visited" six French ministries, without disturbing anything. Just to show that these fortresses are made of crepe paper. Others have stored personal files... on the server that houses French patents! Since humanity became computer-based, individuals have had the power to break into the heart of the system. Keyboard virtuosos, they can defy administrations, large companies, infiltrate the most closely guarded computers. And they find themselves almost on equal terms with States. This unprecedented power is frightening. "Anything can be hacked," summarizes cybercriminologist Laurence Ifrah. "It's a question of time and means." Potential demiurges, hackers are scary. And yet, most of them work in computer security! Because "hacking" is above all a talent. Everyone then chooses how to exercise it. Behind the scenes of the Net, we come across real pirates, spies, "hacktivists", many geeks of all kinds that Bluetouff compares to "Vietnamese peasants capable of drawing an M16". But also, and they seem to be more numerous, enthusiasts, who compare themselves to "top athletes". They are between 16 and 40 years old. The most talented form an elite that recognizes itself. They are driven as much by the love of art as by the taste for challenge. And often the defense of a "free" Internet. From the outside, it is difficult to understand their long nights of vigil, their hours devoted to probing computer walls, to detect a flaw, an entry... Most work without seeking to monetize their dexterity. But all can be attracted one day by the lure of gain, assures Bluetouff, who sweeps aside the traditional categories of white, gray and black hats, supposed to distinguish sheriffs from bandits, to conclude: "On the Internet, everything is blue, hackers too." Concretely, their training courses are chilling, like a journey to the land of virtual disasters... "I took control of the heating and ventilation system of the University of Taiwan in ten minutes," says Jean-Marc Bourguignon, alias fo0, member of Telecomix, a group that duplicates sites threatened with censorship, notably in Tunisia, but also that of WikiLeaks. This engineer found out which company had installed this system, identified its technique. Before entering the computer program that controls the heating... The temperature could have risen. But Jean-Marc Bourguignon is one of those French hackers who circulate behind the scenes of the Net like an explorer. He observes and sneaks in, where the meshes of the network seem loose. For the prowess, for the expertise. "I wrote to the University of Taiwan to report the problem... but they didn't react," regrets this 37-year-old hacker, still steeped in libertarian ideology. Hacked ticket machines Hacking is a form of mind. Where everyone looks at an electronic sign to know how long the bus will be arriving, the hacker sees a computer system that can probably be hijacked. A few wacky messages were sent by Alexis. He was also interested in the information signs in the city of Paris or those installed on the highways... also weakly defended. "The goal is not to attack them, just to see how it works," explains Alexis, a member of the French hacker team Nibbles, who recently won the Insomniak competition in Switzerland. Bluetouff took control of the machines that issue tickets at a large Parisian train station. Navigo cards can also be modified, recharged... while the RFID chips installed in passports do not seem impregnable. "All systems that manage machines, such as the energy distribution system, red lights or oil pipelines are proving to be very vulnerable," they warn. Companies remain just as fragile. "But it is difficult to report flaws without getting into trouble," they explain. Because French companies do not like their systems being probed. And when a hacker reports a problem... he risks being arrested himself for illegal intrusion into a computer system. The fate of engineer Serge Humpich, who managed to break the protection of the Carte Bleue in 1997, and wanted to negotiate his know-how with the GIE des cartes bancaire (bank cards economic interest group) remains in the annals. In February 2000, he was found "guilty of falsifying bank cards and fraudulently introducing them into an automated processing system" and sentenced to ten months in prison, suspended. "The Chaos Computer Club France (CCCF) affair also left its mark and extinguished vocations. It was a fake hacker group created in 1989 at the request of a DST officer to monitor the French hacker community at the time," recalls journalist Jean-Marc Manach. Many hackers then left the country or moved towards free software, which is very developed in France. "But for the past two years, we have observed a revival of hacking," according to Jean-Marc Manach. State security services are hiring more and more of these computer scientists every day. Because attacks are constant: ministries suffer several every day, recognizes the National Agency for Information Systems Security. They often come from abroad. But it is difficult to trace an intrusion. Hackers often use paths, software, viruses, created by others. It is a world where we glean a huge amount of information everywhere, techniques too. Virtual chat rooms in French, a sort of ancestor of instant messaging, bring together hundreds of hackers. Artists and mercenaries alike. They mainly talk about code... When a hacker has found a new flaw that concerns a widely distributed software, he has real power. This is called a 0Day. Like a postman's key that would allow you to enter through a back door that no one has yet spotted! These 0Days are rare. Companies buy some of them for tens of thousands of euros. They also resell them to IT security companies specializing in "pen testing", intrusion testing, etc. Still in its infancy in France, this market is exploding elsewhere. Most of the French virtuosos have left France due to a lack of prospects to settle in the United States or even Switzerland, like Paul Such. In a few years, his company has grown and now has 19 employees, all hackers and without criminal records. They work for Swiss banks, large companies, regions, etc. Often, their mission is kept secret. Only the director is notified. They must try to enter the computer system from the outside or from the inside "in a so-called Chinese intern test", jokes Paul Such. They are sometimes put in front of a computer, to see what they could collect from a simple terminal. But they are also asked to enter by their own means... Sometimes, all it takes is "delivering a pizza" to gain access to the personal data of the clients of a large French bank, suggests Paul Such. Dropping an infected USB key is still just as effective. It generally ends up in a computer, opening the way to spies. You can also make phone calls pretending to be an IT specialist for one of the software programs used by the company. "The weak link remains the human", summarizes Paul Such. We often ignore it, but hacking is as much about technique as it is about cunning. "Social engineering" as the Anglo-Saxons say. We approach the target, we guess their password... the names of the children, the dog. We go to the same gym, we write down the name of a friend, to perfect a credible email. Many plunder Facebook. "Without difficulty. It's a goldmine. You can find everything you need to approach someone." The new hackers, far from the image of autistic geniuses, combine the keyboard and cunning. The young man from Auvergne who had entered President Obama's Twitter account had used almost exclusively psychology, to guess a series of passwords. Hacker Croll wanted to show that account protection is just a mirage. A subtlety that did not move the FBI. I took control of the heating and ventilation system of the University of Taiwan in ten minutes JEAN-MARC BOURGUIGNON, HACKER

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:995

A toolbox and free software. This is how the Socialist Party's program is presented, from which each declared or future candidate will be able, if they wish, to pick and choose as they please and remake it in their own way. Its strength: to outline another society by proposing, sector by sector - on education, housing, taxation, security, ages of life, globalization, etc. - both specific measures and an overall philosophy. It must be recognized that the PS worked during its years of opposition, at least the last two, and that profound revisions, even mutations of doctrine, appear here and there on points that are far from negligible. Who could have imagined, even if the final proposals are behind the vigorous debate that agitates economists and intellectuals, that the PS would advocate a moderate form of protectionism? Or that, on the school, it would endorse the democratic failure of the institution, incapable of reducing social inequalities, except by finally tackling them by the root, from a very young age, and making teachers work differently? As for the overall philosophy, it could be summed up in a few words: respect, protect, get moving again a country and individuals paralyzed by globalization and who are struggling to see their future. Now, and it will be much more perilous than arriving at a summary text, it remains to decide the question called for by the logic of institutions and of this very special election that is a presidential election: which candidate?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:996

A computer company dedicated to the medical world and based in the United States, Medrium has offices in Quebec City in the Saint-Roch district, since the vice-president of research and development is a native of Quebec City. Rémi Beaumont had already worked at iXmédia in Quebec City, but by a twist of fate, he found himself in Silicon Valley to negotiate a game project. One thing led to another, he was hired by a company to implement everything, but the company was sold and the management offered his services to other companies. He then moved to Visigenic. But the adventure was only just beginning. He met Prasad Mokkapati, who would become the founder of Medrium and with whom he continues to work today. Prasad Mokkapati's sister asked him for a hand for her medical clinic in order to resolve the manual claims system with insurance companies. Two systems existed on the market, but one was overpriced and the second, cheaper, was not reliable. She wanted a reliable and affordable solution. They decided to work on a centralized prototype with Web access, so that doctors' offices would not have to modify all their equipment. The average time for processing manual billing, which takes between 70 and 90 days, was reduced to 15 days, with a 10% rejection rate for claims, which was a giant step forward compared to the previous situation. "That's when Medrium was born, in 1999, to create an administrative management solution for doctors' offices to manage schedules as well as settle the billing of fees to insurance companies." The Web-accessible platform was designed with open source software, so that, Mr. Beaumont points out, bits of code can be rewritten as needed to obtain the desired performance. And while business is going well in the United States and there are about 15 employees in the Saint-Roch offices, Medrium does not do business in Quebec. Worse still, since the company makes no sales in the country, it has been scrutinized from every angle, with government authorities fearing that it is a front for money laundering. "Even though it was located in the new technology development center, the company was not eligible for subsidies, because the intellectual property of the work was not here, even though this is where we do all the research and development of our billing." Bel Avenir And with developments in the United States for the creation of electronic medical records for patients, Medrium has obtained government approval for its system, which will be implemented in the coming years. With the system for medical clinics and services for doctors under contract in hospitals, Mr. Beaumont sees the future as bright. "We should double our revenues every year over the next three years," he adds, "and create other jobs here." So Rémi Beaumont left Quebec City for Silicon Valley in order to better return to Quebec City and create jobs there. "Whether it's California, New York or Boston, the work is interesting, but the quality of life in Quebec is incomparable," says Mr. Beaumont. "With today's technologies, from Quebec, we have access to the entire planet." Nevertheless, to keep up with the latest technological developments, Mr. Beaumont still travels a lot. ytherrien@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:997

The first change, and it is a major one, is that Quebec will no longer only talk about the Health Record (DSQ). The reason is simple: a 100% digital network is not just a database, however complete it may be, explained Health Minister Yves Bolduc. Quebec has therefore decided to take control of the computerized clinical records (DCI) of hospitals as well as the electronic medical records (EMR) of clinics. This is a major step forward, notes Lise Denis, Executive Director of the Association québécoise d’établissements de santé et de services sociaux (AQESSS). “This is the first time that we have recognized that these three files are convergent and complementary and that one cannot function without the other.” According to her, the arrival of Lise Verreault at the head of the computerization governance office is also likely to reassure the health sector, which was starting to seriously worry. And for good reason. The Auditor General noted a number of inconsistencies in this project, which was launched in 2006 with a view to a full deployment in January 2010. In his last of three devastating reports, he concluded that the costs and the planned timelines were completely "unrealistic." This week, Minister Bolduc agreed that the 100% digital network he dreams of will not be ready before 2016. "Computerizing a health network is complex. We need to return to a more realistic timeline of five to ten years," he admitted. Last fall, the DSQ's poor management was on everyone's lips in the health network, when a fourth boss decided to leave a ship that had apparently gotten out of control. Lise Denis summed up the general feeling in a heartfelt cry. In 2009, "we wondered if there was a pilot in the plane. Today, the plane no longer even appears on the radar screens." The list of grievances that were circulating at the time was long: delays, lack of vision and cohesion, computer bugs, serious governance deficit, problem of aligning the DSQ with the DCI and DME developed haphazardly, without consultation. By the minister's own admission, the change of direction announced this week is intended to be a response to the many criticisms made in the past, especially those expressed by the Auditor General. The choice to bring the DCI and DME under ministerial control, after years of more or less successful local and regional management depending on the region, also confirms -- but without saying it bluntly -- that the parallel development of the various systems, software and other platforms was a mistake that cost taxpayers time and money. Suppliers and open source software Developing software is indeed expensive. So is purchasing it. This is also what weighs the heaviest in the hefty bill for digitizing the health network, which will reach 1.4 billion, or 563 million for the DSQ and 800 million for the DCI and the DME. It must be said that the Minister of Health wanted to give institutions and clinics a certain latitude in choosing platforms. He therefore authorized the development of several different software programs at once, thus multiplying the duplication of all kinds in order to respect the regional specificities of each. The interested firms and organizations nevertheless had to respect two imperatives, namely to develop an open system, therefore adaptable, and fully compatible with the DSQ developed in particular by Bell xwave. For clinics, the MSSS has so far selected four suppliers, all from Quebec: Omnimed.com, Purkinje, KinLogix and Soft Informatique. Four major computerized clinical record (CCR) systems have been selected for hospitals: Ariane, Purkinje, Oacis and Cristal-Net. Only the latter is free software, a choice that many have questioned. Supporters of free software, i.e. without constraints, argue that this software is distributed free of charge, if not at a very reasonable price, and that it therefore does not come with costly licenses to renew, a major advantage that Quebec should have taken advantage of for a contract as ambitious as this one. Be careful, retorts the Ministry of Health, free software is not freeware, since it provides for the payment of several associated services including creation, development, deployment or support. There are costs to be assumed with both formulas and it has been established that, in this case, one is not necessarily worth more than the other, confirms Karine Rivard, press attaché to Minister Bolduc. "Even when the software is free, there are amounts to be paid to make adjustments; the difference is that they are paid on a case-by-case basis whereas, for regular software, payments are made automatically when the license is renewed." It was impossible to know how much the licenses will cost once the network is deployed. Firstly because we do not know which suppliers will be selected by whom, but also for reasons of competition. Nevertheless, these will certainly colour the next step, which consists of deploying the selected digital solutions throughout Quebec by ensuring their interoperability with the DSQ, which can be compared to the warehouse where the data will be stored. Deployment, one step at a time “We were in a development phase in which companies were developing systems,” explained Minister Bolduc. “Now that the structure is robust, we can move on to deployment, which will be done gradually, region by region.” Tangible results have indeed ended up emerging from these five years of development in silos. Thus, radiology, laboratories and medications are already completely computerized at the local level. Several hospitals have also started to use one of the DCIs selected by Quebec, notably the four major university hospitals. In Montreal, the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM) and the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) have pooled their efforts in Oacis, an ICD developed in partnership with Telus. In operation for a few months, it has greatly simplified the work of clinicians, says Dr. Luc Valiquette, clinical director of technological transition at the CHUM. Thanks to this tool, it is now possible for a doctor to see all the patients in a department at a glance, consult their clinical notes, check their examination reports or even monitor and compare the evolution of their vital signs (pulse, temperature, blood pressure). All the laboratory data concerning them is also compiled and, since there are often several, abnormal data is marked in red so that it can be spotted quickly. From a clinical point of view, the gains are already remarkable, notes Dr. Valiquette, who is also a urological surgeon. In addition to all the time saved by rummaging through paperwork or getting results, staff can count on a therapeutic advisor or prescriber to keep an eye on things. If one medication interferes with another, for example, an alert message appears. In terms of security, the software is rock-solid. Professionals have access to it using biometric identification based on their fingerprints. Each time they log in, the system notes it and stores the information added or corrected. It has never been easier to trace a patient's history. In short, "the system is fully functional, even if it still has room for improvement," notes Dr. Valiquette. In this regard, the clinical director of technological transition at the CHUM also advocates caution and warns against rushing to deploy tools too quickly in the network. "From a clinical perspective, I am very eager to have access to a 100% computerized network, but at the same time, I am aware of the difficulties that arise in ensuring data security. I think we need to take the time to do things right." For now, the CHUM's data is only accessible within its three constituents: Notre-Dame, Hôtel-Dieu and Saint-Luc. The same goes for the MUHC. The reason is simple: the law prohibits the sharing of data between institutions. That is set to change. But to do so, the law will have to be amended, Minister Bolduc said Tuesday. The tools themselves are constantly evolving and will be required to change over the months, Yves Bolduc promised. "The beauty of the Quebec system is that it is open, which will allow it to adapt." Provided that professionals follow, notes Lise Verreault, who will lead the deployment starting April 18. "You know, computerization comes to computerize what someone does, but it's what that someone does that is sometimes difficult to change."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:998

The West produces nearly 50 million tons of electronic waste per year (of which only 25% is recycled in Europe), dumped in Africa, India and China. These countries are transformed into digital trash cans, as evidenced by these smoking mounds of dismembered and toxic computers in Ghana, captured by Pieter Hugo's lens in his series Permanent Error. The question of recycling is at the heart of Benjamin Gaulon's work. Whether it's giving a second life to digital files that we no longer have any use for or reorganized computer hardware. "One person's trash is another person's treasure," says the author of Digital Recycling, a sort of online garage sale that allows you to exchange discarded files, "a bit like an object abandoned in a street that becomes public property." A graphic designer, Benjamin Gaulon trained in electronics and programming to be able to master his own tools. Because "using software is living someone else's dream," according to one of his teachers. The hip-hop and video game fan began to dismantle and tinker with obsolete game consoles, transforming Nintendo's NES into a RES (Recycling entertainment system), a musical installation for six players, equipped with a controller connected to software that allows you to play one of the instruments (bass, percussion, synthesizer, etc.) and turns solitary play into a collective experience. A RES-mini version now exists, to be built yourself from A to Z, thanks to an online manual, with open source software and the Arduino platform. Bric-a-brac. "Initially, recycling was imposed for stupidly financial reasons," admits the artist who has made it his hobbyhorse. He is interested in the planned obsolescence of consumer goods, but also in those products (iPhone, etc.) that we throw away even though they still work, simply to have the latest fashionable design. Rather than long speeches, he confronts the public directly with these outdated technologies, which he diverts into new devices, as in ReFunct Media, a long chain of hacked and interconnected televisions, cameras, MO5 computers and other Gameboys. Or invites them to get their hands dirty during e-waste workshops, in which participants are invited to imagine a personalized creative object from a bric-a-brac of dusty scanners, printers and other electronic toys. "People realize all that can be done with this waste. This electronics from the 70s to 90s is relatively easy to hack. Today, it's more complicated. Often, it's a single chip that controls the whole thing, covered in glue to prevent manipulation." Like most people of his generation (he is 31), Benjamin Gaulon navigates between online and offline, parasitizing cyberspace with his image corruption software, or investing the walls of the city, with his augmented Pong that allows you to play against a building, the ball ricocheting off the roughness of the architecture. Psychogeography. Sometimes, the installations straddle the two, like Hard Drivin', a revisited version of the first racing game in a 3D setting, where Internet users can remotely control small electric cars that run on tweets. Based in Dublin, he has made the city his playground, organizing curious psychogeography workshops. Equipped with a 2.4 GHz receiver, an electronic gadget purchased on a Chinese site, participants scan the city for signals from private wireless surveillance cameras. The images intercepted on the screen highlight a strange paradox, that of the guard being watched, "they allow you to see from the street what is supposed to be protected, a child's bed, a changing room, etc." www.recyclism.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:999

There's no doubt about it: spring has arrived. The sun is setting, the sparrows are chirping and on the Internet, a baby red panda (no, it's not a fox) is poking its nose out... Indeed, today sees the release of Firefox 4, the latest version of the most widely used web browser in Europe. A near monopoly. Who would have imagined that the little software from the Mozilla Corporation would end up supplanting the Internet Explorer (IE) from the great Microsoft? When it was created in 2004, the mission seemed impossible. With IE being pre-installed on all new computers equipped with Windows, Microsoft enjoyed a near monopoly. But over the years, the IT giant has been caught up by its competitors. Each of them had the opportunity to stand out with its own philosophy, technical innovations or aesthetic developments... Opera, the Norwegian outsider, launched many features, subsequently taken up by competitors and which became essential (tabs, the search box, etc.). Safari took over mobile browsing thanks to the success of Apple's iThings. The new-born Google Chrome, launched with great fanfare, stood out for its lightness and speed. Firefox invented extensions and developed a real browsing ethic by campaigning for free software. As for Internet Explorer, it has lagged behind in innovation but intends to catch up with its brand new version 9, which hopes to appeal beyond corporate computer systems. Race. Over time, all have adapted to the content of web pages as well as to new browsing practices, in a spirit of competition and a race for modernity. As the preferred interface between the Internet user and the Web, the browser is at the heart of current issues in the Internet ecosystem. Exploring the five characteristics of a next-generation browser. Illustration by Jessy Deshais

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1000

In everyday English, BYOB means "Bring your own booze". Diverted by the Net-artist Rafael Rozendaal, the acronym can also mean "Bring your own beamer". This new format of ephemeral exhibition breaks with traditional modes. Its principle is in the title. The artists come with their video projector under their arm, plug in in the exhibition space and project their works there. After Berlin, Athens, New York, Mexico, or London, Paris is hosting a new edition of BYOB, this Sunday, at the Plateforme gallery, initiated by the artists Cécile Babiole, Marika Dermineur and Nicolas Maigret as part of the monthly meeting dedicated to digital creation User\_Friendly. An improvised happening consisting of one evening dressing the space with artistic projections and performances by around twenty artists. “I work with moving images,” explains its instigator Rafaël Rozendaal. “For this reason, I have exhibited a lot with projectors. Projection gives freedom and flexibility and I thought it would be interesting to see what would happen if a lot of people got together and everyone brought their own video projector. I was looking for a way to organize a one-night exhibition, both imposing and easy to set up.” The first edition was held in Berlin on June 20, in a huge studio, with twenty-six artists, most of them from the Internet. “We were surprised how easy and fun it was,” continues Rafaël Rozendaal. “There was a very special feeling of community that night, a lot of energy and spontaneity. Immediately, Angelo Plessas, who was there, offered to organize a BYOB in Athens and everything got going. I wrote a manual on the dedicated site and, following the New York edition, many people took it up and BYOB spread everywhere." The reason for its success can be summed up in one word: "because it's fun above all." BYOB is an "open source" format that anyone can take on, a bit like the Speed Show (Libération, June 26, 2010), imagined by Aram Bartholl, which consisted of renting all the workstations in an Internet café to exhibit Net art works for a few hours. "Any artist can start a BYOB, and do it as they wish. I don't need to be involved," says Rozendaal. "The organizers can select the participants or open the system to all the artists who come and project what they want. What matters to me is that BYOBs are all very different." It’s also a way to infuse the hacker and do-it-yourself spirit into the art world. “Artists take charge of their own equipment, there’s no control, everyone is their own decision-maker,” says Rozendaal. BYOB also allows “to show things that are not normally seen in exhibition spaces” and to materialize the Internet in the physical world. “BYOB is a celebration of the new world we live in and a taste of what computing could look like in the future. The Internet is now confined to screens, tomorrow, information will be all around us, composing our surfaces, defining our spaces, getting tangled up with the ether.” In Paris, the space will be open to invited artists, but also to “anyone who would like to join the event, if possible,” says Nicolas Maigret. www.byobworldwide.com BYOB Paris, Sunday March 20 from 6 to 9 p.m., at Plateforme, 73 rue des Haies 75020 and at 78. www.plateforme.tk

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1001

The Quebec Auto Show Preview Cocktail Party is being held tonight (by invitation) at the Hôtel de Glace in Quebec City, from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. This benefit evening, at $150 per ticket (at 418 624-2290), will be followed, starting at 9:30 p.m., at the same location, by the D-Frost Party open to all. Admission: $10. The proceeds from this evening will go to the Mobilis Foundation, which will donate the majority of this sum to the Quebec City Memory Walk and the Ronald McDonald House. www.salondelautodequebec. co Mr. Donald L. Gilbert, the new President and CEO of Infoglobe, an ICT company in the Quebec City region, announces to me the acquisition of all of the company's shares by a group of ten (10) employees of the company. This acquisition is part of a strategic repositioning of the company, which began in August with the arrival of Donald Gilbert as CEO of the company. Founded in 2002, Infoglobe specializes in business solutions based on open source technologies. This acquisition will allow us to refocus our activities, particularly on the development of consulting services, the implementation of a product/service portfolio that meets customer expectations in terms of added value for their organization, security and functionality, while integrating into the new reality of the market, particularly with the new Quebec policy on the governance and management of information resources of public bodies, Donald Gilbert tells me. www.infoglobe.ca. More than 500 participants took turns at the Form-Action Centre in Pont-Rouge on February 5 to take part in the 3rd Spin-Don for the benefit of the Canadian Cancer Society. The fundraising event, which took place over two days for the first time, raised a record $52,000, more than double last year's total. In addition to Minister Yves Bolduc, who rode a stationary bike, several celebrities also pedaled alongside coach Caroline Jackson. Among them were former Nordique Alain Côté, football players Bruno Prud'homme and Marc-Antoine Beaudoin-Cloutier, and Dominique Picard (Rouge et Or and Toronto Argonauts). Mario Larue, kinesiologist and owner of the Centre Form Action, thanks all the participants and volunteers who got involved and invites them to the 4th Spin-Don in February 2012. Brigitte Duguay and Hocine Amouchi will celebrate the first anniversary of their restaurant, Le Guilliss Grill, located at 1039, 3e Avenue in Limoilou, on Saturday, March 26. Fans of smoked meat and AAA Angus-certified grilled meats will also be delighted with home-cooked food. Information: 418 977-4754. The Choeur de Québec will present Karl Jenkins' masterpiece Le Stabat Mater during its annual Good Friday concert on April 22 at 8 p.m. at Saint-Charles-Garnier Church in Sillery, under the musical direction of Guy Bélanger. Guest artists will be CatherineÉlizabeth Loiselle, soprano; Marie-Josée de Varennes, mezzo-soprano; Guy Lessard, tenor; and Pierre Rancourt, baritone. Information: www.choeurdequebec.org or 418 681-8191. CITY ECHOES BIRTHDAYS Jean Cournoyer (photo), Quebec politician, Minister of Public Service (1969-1970, 1972-1973), Labour and Manpower (1970-1975), and Natural Resources (1975-1976). 77 years old. Christian Bégin, actor (Vice caché) and host (Télé-Québec), 48 years old. Jean L'Italien, role of Bernard Paré in the series Virginie on the CBC, 53 years old. Isabelle Huppert, French actress (8 femmes) and producer. César Award for Best Actress in 1996 (La cérémonie), 56 years old. Erik Estrada, American television (CHiPS) and film actor, 62 years old. Ghislaine Paradis, Quebec singer and actress (Quelle famille!), daughter of actor Gérard Paradis. 63 years old. Richard Desjardins, singer-songwriter, director and producer 63 years old. MISSING May 16, 2001. Juliette Huot (photo), 89 years old, actress, whose career spanned more than sixty years in theatre, radio and television. Knight of the National Order of Quebec. 1999. Gratien Gélinas, 89 years old, actor, playwright and director. 1992. Roger Lemelin, 73 years old, writer. "Les Plouffe", published in 1948. 1979. Jean-Guy Cardinal, 54, Minister of Education under the Union Nationale government from 1967 to 1970. IN MEMORY March 16, 1961. Sixteen years after Maurice Richard, Bernard Geoffrion (photo), of the Montreal Canadiens, became the second player in the history of the National Hockey League (NHL) to record 50 goals in a season. His victim was Cesare Maniago, the goaltender for the Toronto Maple Leafs. The mark set by Maurice Richard in 1944-1945, 50 goals in 50 games, nevertheless remains intact since Geoffrion needed 64 games to record his 50 goals.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1002

If it's called a "Trojan horse", it's not for nothing. Like the Greeks, in Homer's work, who hid in a large wooden horse and then went to open the gates and allow the entire army to come and pillage the city, the hacker uses a computer program that seems harmless, even innocuous. A meeting summary, an important schedule or even the latest very funny cat video circulating on the Internet... Its name and description should make you want to open it and thus make the same mistake as the Trojans. In the case of Bercy, it was a PDF document, attached to an email usurping the identity of a trusted person. Once the program is executed, not much happens for the user. At best, he will actually be able to admire a cat playing the piano. But, it is in fact just a decoy, the real activity of the Trojan horse is invisible: it will quietly install a remote control program for the computer, sometimes basic and dedicated to a single task, sometimes much more sophisticated. Zombie. The first case is very widespread, it is the creation of what are called "botnet networks", or zombie, where thousands of computers are controlled by the same program. This can be used, for example, to send mass spam of all kinds. The BredoLab botnet, controlled from Russia and dismantled in November, controlled more than thirty million computers and could send up to 3.6 billion spam messages per day. But Trojan horses can also install complex remote control software. These then operate in a hidden manner on the infected computer. An informed user will be able to spot its existence by checking the list of programs currently running, but for ordinary mortals, it is more complicated. If the program in question is specifically developed and is not listed by antiviruses, it is almost impossible. And the hacker, from his computer, will then be able to access practically everything that is stored on the machine, as well as everything that passes through it. For example, he will be able to see in real time what is happening on the victim's screen, and know which keys are used on the keyboard (useful for recovering passwords), recover all the contents of the hard drive, or even control the mouse pointer. The most famous takeover software that can be used by a Trojan horse is called Back Orifice (or Back Orifice 2000, its evolution), developed by the legendary hacker group Cult of the Dead Cow (cDc). Back Orifice is presented by its creators as being a completely respectable remote administration program. This type of software is very common and allows, for example, an IT department to come to the aid of users without having to physically walk around everywhere. But the members of cDc have equipped their creation with rather suspicious features, such as disappearing from the eyes of the operating system, or bypassing the protections set up by a firewall, by using the communication channels of a web browser. If Back Orifice is a free software that can be downloaded very easily, it is also recognized (and banned) by the most common antiviruses. Needle. This is not the case in the case of Trojan horses developed specifically for particular operations, such as the one that took place against Bercy and the Elysée. Which makes them, suddenly, much more difficult to detect. In fact, IT teams must closely and permanently monitor all suspicious communications on their network and to the Internet. But what is a suspicious communication? Not easy to determine in an automated way. It is, roughly, like trying to spot a needle in the annual global production of hay. Hence the absolute necessity for security services to share their information on a global level. Once a program is spotted in one place, it must disappear from all the networks on which it has installed itself. Just so as not to be overtaken. Well, not too quickly.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1003

The Internet has become, in the space of a few weeks, a new battlefield. Social networks play a strategic role in the popular uprisings of the last few months, but it is a weapon that can be turned against the population, according to Eben Moglen, professor of law at Columbia University. This American lawyer has worked alongside Richard Stallman since the early 90s as legal advisor for the FreeSoftwareFoundation. He played a key role in developing the legal foundations of free software. If the events of the last few months have revealed the strength of the Internet, they have also exposed its main vulnerability: the centralization of data. The more information becomes centralized, the more the powers that be risk controlling it. In a recent interview with the New York Times, he states that the time has come for free software to get involved in politics, by creating a tool to decentralize the Internet. He announced his project in early February in Brussels, on the occasion of the annual conference of free software in Europe (FOSDEM 2011). On this occasion, he announced the creation of the Freedom Box Foundation, in order to raise the necessary funds to implement his project. In a few weeks, his new foundation has already raised more than $75,000, with a goal of half a million dollars. The technology he wants to use already exists, it is mini-servers (plug-servers), barely larger than a cell phone, similar to the small transformers that power our electronic devices. Devices that cost less than a hundred dollars. Eben Moglen's project is to make Freedom Boxes by adding software that will allow each user to manage their own social network, to control access and the diffusion of their own data. While large social networks are structured around a single central core, mini-servers would make it possible to create a multitude of mini-networks, meshed with each other, and which would thus escape central control. "We need to keep our data in our homes, where it is protected by laws against physical search," he says. An opinion shared by Daniel Pascot, director of the Department of Organizational Information Systems at Université Laval. "A server is essentially a central point that manages access. The centralization of servers makes us vulnerable because the moment we control the server, we control the traffic. With mini-servers, it would be like Facebook, but I would be the one controlling access to my data." It would even be possible, in theory, to create wireless cores that could operate outside the Internet. Control In recent months, we have seen several attempts to control these networks. On January 27, on government orders, Telecom Egypt and the four main Internet service providers shut down their servers. In just five minutes, 93% of Egyptian users had lost their service. This did not prevent the fall of Mubarak, but several countries will certainly learn from it. Last year, even before these uprisings, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, India and Indonesia had already forced RIM to allow access to data sent on BlackBerrys. In February, after the fall of the governments in Tunisia and Egypt, we saw India and Pakistan return to the charge and demand even more surveillance powers over these same devices. Even in the United States, a bill has been under consideration since June to give greater powers to the president in the event of a "cyber emergency." According to Eben Moglen, the greatest danger of centralized networks is that states will use them to identify the leaders and make them disappear. Moreover, during the Egyptian uprising, protest leaders had asked citizens not to spread information via social networks. Traditional media are not immune either. The CBC announced this week that it was stopping broadcasting interviews with Libyan citizens after Gaddafi supporters disappeared people who agreed to speak. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1004

Trois-Rivières - "The world has no borders!" That's the only conclusion Mathieu Lahaye could draw, a young entrepreneur from Trois-Rivières, president of Inventis who, thanks to an invitation to tender, has just obtained a prestigious contract from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). His mandate is to design a custom business intelligence solution, integrating textual and geographic data... more concretely, a unique working tool of breathtaking precision, allowing humanitarian aid organizations to be much more efficient and sometimes even anticipate the future. The young man admits that the thing may seem complicated to the uninitiated. It is actually quite simple if you know the Google Maps application. It's what it allows you to achieve that makes your head spin. "What we are going to do is a bit of high-flying technology," admits Mathieu Lahaye with a laugh. "There are not many companies that can do this kind of combination of geographic information and database information. We start from the principle that a picture is worth a thousand words. A geographic map is a tool that allows us to synthesize a very complex situation and make it very clear." The UNHCR currently has an impressive database that contains information on displaced populations - age, sex, country of origin - on several continents, the infrastructure of the camps under its responsibility or the services accessible in urban or rural areas, as well as an elaborate map of refugee or internally displaced person camps, explains Mr. Lahaye. The High Commissioner hopes that these various databases will be able to "talk to each other" in order to be able to know with great precision where budgetary resources are allocated and to make more informed decisions. Mr. Lahaye confides that the Trois-Rivières firm was invited to submit a bid simply because it has its own website and the High Commission found it. On the other hand, if it was chosen, it is undoubtedly because it already has experience in what is called the field of free software. Inventis has indeed acquired international experience in Europe and Africa, particularly during mandates - just as complex - carried out for UNICEF and the UN Food Security Programme, which has produced a tool capable, among other things, of anticipating future droughts. "This is an element that worked in our favour," he says. When the mandate is completed, the UNHCR will have an application accessible via the Web, thanks to which its staff will have access to precise and up-to-date cartographic information on the evolution of the situation on the ground. It is also Inventis that will train the UNHCR staff on the use of the application developed. Mr. Lahaye said he was proud of this new contract awarded to a Trois-Rivières firm... which fully intends to remain in Trois-Rivières even if it also hires contractors from outside.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1005

The organization asks its potential collaborators to submit "unavailable" documents that have not yet been in the hands of investigative journalists. Québec-Leaks also asks that opinions or allegations not be provided without formal supporting evidence. QuébecLeaks is a site inspired by WikiLeaks, "made by Quebecers for Quebecers," which aims to be a more local platform where individuals with privileged access to sensitive documents can make them public anonymously. A simple process QuébecLeaks offers two submission mechanisms. Thus, it is possible to submit documents via a secure HTTPS connection or via the free software Tor. From the secure HTTPS connection, any Internet user with the slightest bit of skill can submit Microsoft Word and PDF files. Once you have agreed to browse a site whose security certificate is problematic, that's it, as The Canadian Press noted. In short, the submission process is disarmingly simple. The HTTPS process is secure, since banks use the same protocol, according to a professor in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering at Université Laval. "If QuébecLeaks' goal is to ensure the anonymity of its sources, that's fine, but if the information affects national interests, then we're in a grey area. Sometimes, government intelligence services allow themselves a certain latitude," explains Béchir Ktari. Questions When the documents start to flow in, one might wonder how the organization -- whose number of members is unknown -- will manage the continuous flow of information and how it plans to sort the data obtained. Just as one might wonder where Québec-Leaks gets its financial and human resources. In an email sent to The Canadian Press yesterday, the organization's spokesperson explained that container and content analyses would be carried out for each document received. Once the system and security administrators have determined that the documents are safe and that there are no more traces of the bidder, the information will be transmitted to "several collaborators from different fields" that QuébecLeaks says it can count on -- lawyers, accountants, professional journalists, computer scientists and political scientists. The latter will ensure that the documents are admissible and will erase "all traces of innocent victims." And as for the financing aspect of the adventure, QuébecLeaks has mentioned the possibility of setting up a structure to collect donations from the public in order to finance, "if necessary, the 'full-time employees' part of the project." The organization has also claimed to have been approached by donors and investors. Noam Chomsky But all these details will be specified on March 9, maintained the mysterious spokesperson for QuébecLeaks, who signs all his emails with the name of the famous linguist and activist Noam Chomsky. The Québec-Leaks contact once again refused yesterday to grant a telephone interview to The Canadian Press, arguing that the organization prefers to "maintain anonymity and therefore a certain legal security for the members of the group." "We understand very seriously the need to conduct telephone and in-person interviews, but for the moment we must stick to email exchanges," wrote "Noam Chomsky." But unfortunately, this is what was proposed to us by our lawyers and advisors." In short, a veil of mystery surrounds QuébecLeaks, which has still not announced the name of its spokesperson, the Quebec "Julian Assange." His identity was to be revealed at the official launch of the site, but it was postponed from February 16 to March 9.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1006

Internet users will be able to submit their first sensitive documents on the whistleblower site QuébecLeaks starting Wednesday, even if they still don't know exactly who they are dealing with. The organization is asking its potential collaborators to submit "unavailable" documents that have not yet been in the hands of investigative journalists. QuébecLeaks is also asking that you not provide opinions or allegations without formal proof to support them. QuébecLeaks is a site inspired by WikiLeaks, "made by Quebecers for Quebecers", which aims to be a more local platform, where individuals with privileged access to sensitive documents can make them public anonymously. QuébecLeaks offers two submission mechanisms. Thus, it is possible to submit documents via a secure HTTPS connection or via the free software Tor. Like banks From the secure HTTPS connection, any Internet user with the slightest skill can submit Microsoft Word and PDF files. The HTTPS process is secure, since banks use the same protocol, according to a professor in the computer science and software engineering department at Université Laval. "If QuébecLeaks' goal is to ensure the anonymity of its sources, that's fine, but if the information affects national interests, then we're in a gray area. Sometimes, government intelligence services allow themselves a certain latitude," explained Béchir Ktari. Once the system and security administrators have determined that the documents are secure and that there are no more traces of the submitter, the information will be transmitted to "several collaborators from different fields" that QuébecLeaks says it can count on - lawyers, accountants, professional journalists, computer scientists and political scientists. They will ensure that the documents are admissible and will erase "all traces of innocent victims."

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Montreal - Since yesterday, Internet users have been able to submit their first sensitive documents on the whistleblower site QuébecLeaks, even if they still don't know exactly who they are dealing with. The organization is asking its potential collaborators to submit "unavailable" documents that have not yet been in the hands of investigative journalists. QuébecLeaks is also asking that you do not provide opinions or allegations without formal supporting evidence. QuébecLeaks is a site inspired by WikiLeaks "made by Quebecers for Quebecers" that aims to be a more local platform, where individuals with privileged access to sensitive documents can make them public anonymously. QuébecLeaks offers two submission mechanisms. It is possible to submit documents via a secure HTTPS connection or via the free software Tor. From the secure HTTPS connection, any Internet user with even the slightest skill can submit Microsoft Word and PDF files. Once you agree to browse a site with a problematic security certificate, that's it, as The Canadian Press found. In short, the submission process is disarmingly simple. The HTTPS process is secure, since banks use the same protocol, according to a professor in the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering at Université Laval. "If QuébecLeaks' goal is to ensure the anonymity of its sources, that's fine, but if the information affects national interests, then we're in a grey area. Sometimes, government intelligence services allow themselves a certain latitude," explains Béchir Ktari. When the documents start pouring in, one might wonder how the organization - whose number of members is unknown - will manage the continuous flow of information and how it plans to sort the data obtained. Just as one might wonder where QuébecLeaks gets its financial and human resources. In an email sent to The Canadian Press yesterday, the organization's spokesperson explained that container and content analyses would be carried out for each document received. Once the system and security administrators have determined that the documents are secure and that there are no more traces of the submitter, the information will be transmitted to "several collaborators from different fields" on whom QuébecLeaks says it can count - lawyers, accountants, professional journalists, computer scientists and political scientists. The latter will ensure that the documents are admissible and will erase "all traces of innocent victims". And as for the financing aspect of the adventure, QuébecLeaks mentioned the possibility of setting up a structure to collect donations from the public in order to finance, "if necessary, the 'full-time employees' part of the project". The organization also said it had been approached by donors and investors. But all these details will be specified on March 9, maintained the mysterious spokesperson for QuébecLeaks, who signs all his emails in the name of the famous linguist and activist Noam Chomsky. The QuébecLeaks contact once again refused yesterday to grant a telephone interview to The Canadian Press, arguing that the organization prefers "to maintain anonymity and therefore a certain legal security for the members of the group." "We understand very seriously the need to conduct telephone and in-person interviews, but for the moment we must stick to email exchanges," wrote "Noam Chomsky." But unfortunately this is what was proposed to us by our lawyers and advisors." In short, a veil of mystery surrounds QuébecLeaks, which has still not announced the name of its spokesperson, the Quebec "Julian Assange." His identity was to be revealed at the official launch of the site, but it was postponed from February 16 to March 9.

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## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1010

Montreal - Internet users have been able to submit their first sensitive documents on the whistleblower site QuébecLeaks since yesterday, even though the platform has not yet officially launched. QuébecLeaks offers two submission mechanisms. Documents can be submitted via a secure HTTPS connection or via the free Tor software. Using the secure HTTPS connection, any Internet user with the slightest bit of skill can submit Microsoft Word and PDF files. Once you have agreed to browse a site with a problematic security certificate, that's it, as The Canadian Press has noted. In short, the submission process is disarmingly simple. One might wonder how the organization - whose number of members is unknown - will manage the continuous flow of information and how it plans to sort the data obtained. Just as one might wonder where the organization, whose domain name is registered in Arizona, gets its financial and human resources. Because a veil of mystery surrounds QuébecLeaks, which has still not announced the name of its spokesperson, the Quebec Julian Assange. His identity was to be revealed during the official launch of the site, but this was postponed from February 16 to March 9. Correspondence between the media and the organization is still signed in the name of the famous linguist and activist Noam Chomsky. On its website, the organization asks its potential collaborators to submit "unavailable" documents that have not yet passed through the hands of investigative journalists. QuébecLeaks also asks that opinions or allegations not be provided without formal supporting evidence.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1011

From bakery attacks to protest robotics, from clown armies to guerrilla gardening, from exorcism sessions to the credit card of the Church of Life After Shopping to the media impostures of the Yes Men, via the poster corrections of the Billboard Liberation Front and other cyber sit-ins... a collage book paints a panorama of this disobedient international, at the crossroads of art and activism (1). A nebula that the authors, Stéphanie Lemoine and Samira Ouardi, group together under the somewhat pompous label of "artivism", immediately rejected by those mainly concerned, defiant of any attempt at institutionalization. "We are aware of the contradiction in bringing together under yet another "ism" a galaxy of very heterogeneous practices," the authors readily acknowledge. There is no coherent movement, no formal or generational unity, but these people are all trying to articulate art and political action. That is what characterizes this house that has no walls," they explain, trying to sketch out a necessarily incomplete map of these creative forms of struggle. "Resistances." Some more artistic, others more militant, they emerged in the mid-90s, in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall and globalization, then September 11, which established the era of surveillance, or the announced ecological apocalypse. "These are stories of resistance. To the savagery of financialized capitalism, to its consequences on nature, work, human relations, life as a whole..." they write, attempting to trace the genealogy of this "artistic anti-discipline", which is also the subject of a series of meetings, entitled "Art [space] public", offered by the master's degree in Cultural Projects in Public Space, at the Sorbonne, every Friday, starting this evening, until April 1st. Among other guests, the photographer JR, the pie thrower Noël Godin, the graphic designer Gérard Paris-Clavel, author of the slogan "General Dream", or the Insurrectional Imagination Laboratory. "Artivism" draws as much from the avant-gardes (Dada, the Surrealists, and especially the Situationists, Fluxus or Provo, a Dutch anarchist movement) as from the old carnival traditions, is inspired by the counter-culture (diggers, yippies, punks, graffiti, raves...) as by the traditions of civil disobedience and direct action. "The modern artist no longer paints, he protests," said Tristan Tzara. These artists share with Dada a taste for play and caustic derision; but not its nihilism, convinced that it is possible to transform the world if we give power to the imagination. "Do it!" according to the slogan of the American activist Jerry Rubin, co-founder of the yippie movement, a credo of autonomous thought updated by "Do it yourself!" punks, and today by hackers, whose "role is to explore the limits of the possible", according to the definition given by Richard Stallman, father of free software. Sit-in. From the reconquest of public space to virtual sit-ins on the Internet, activist art is a prefiguration of another possible world, where "the market gives way to free and exchange, individualism to the collective, disillusioned commentary to concrete struggle, the spectacle to participation and dialogue, describe the authors. These practices bring a positive and potentially transformative view of ways of being together". The two young women, one a feminist activist, the other passionate about urban art, began to explore these forms when the Black Thursday, the BAC (Activist Clown Brigade) and other Antipub appeared (late) in France. By pulling the thread, they discovered a multitude of initiatives "little known in France", which they wanted to share. Since then, some practices have become dulled, assimilated by the market, others have become radicalized. It is the nature of these forms to constantly reinvent themselves. (1) Artivism, art, political action and cultural resistance, Stéphanie Lemoine and Samira Ouardi, éditions Alternatives.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1012

On May 1st, the sunflower stole the show from the sprig of lily of the valley. Seeds were sown all over the cities of France and the world by the soldiers of guerrilla gardening. Launched in 2004 by Richard Reynolds in Great Britain, the movement now unites an international armada of amateur gardeners who are replanting abandoned urban spaces, wastelands or sidewalk edges that could accommodate a bulb. The goal? To make the urban landscape more pleasant, but also to reclaim public space, confiscated by local authorities and commercial areas. The same "do it yourself" credo is used in the open source project Re:farm the City, which aims to allow the average person to create their own apartment vegetable garden and to encourage the production and consumption of local products. This community of urban farmers is spreading to New York, Madrid, Barcelona, Buenos Aires and Paris. The "terreau-ristes" of Coloco, landscape architects, advocate for the reintroduction of biodiversity and the return of wild nature to the city, by bombarding roofs with their green bombs, balls of locally harvested seeds, mixed with soil. Valentin Lacambre, pioneer of the independent Internet, has just launched Seedsburo.org, which invites everyone to pick seeds and flowers, common goods present in public spaces, and to document their provenance to prevent private companies from appropriating the living.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1013

Bromont - Yesterday, the machine triumphed over man on the legendary American quiz show Jeopardy. Since Monday, Watson, an IBM computer designed largely in a Bromont plant, has been facing off against two of the greatest players in Jeopardy history, Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter. In Watson's head: 200 million pages of encyclopedias, dictionaries, books, newspaper articles, movie scripts and all that. Monday, Tuesday and last night, 200 IBM employees in Bromont stayed after their work day for a little popcorn party and, most importantly, to watch their protégé Watson's performance on television. "We follow it like a hockey game," says Raymond Leduc, chief manager of the IBM plant in Bromont. "For us, it's not quite a machine: it's the fruit of our labor." And they took this game very seriously. During the 30 minutes of yesterday's show, apart from a few murmurs at Watson's wrong answers and a few rounds of applause at his good moves, you could have heard a pin drop. The plant has been working for four years to develop Watson, a computer made of 90 IBM Power 750 servers, which together cover 9 square metres. Some 2,000 components of the computer were designed in Bromont, including all of its microprocessors. Watson is obviously not connected to the Internet. Like a grown-up, he can press a button and answer in an almost human voice. Better yet, Watson has a heart: his winnings - a million last night - were donated to a charity. The most stressed of all yesterday? Probably Éric Paradis, chief computer scientist. "I was very, very, very nervous!" he admitted. "I still had confidence that he would come out on top." Monday night, the showdown ended in a draw. Tuesday, the computer handily beat its bipedal competitors. And last night, it was still all fired up: it knew The Simpsons, the nickname given to South Dakota (the Coyote State) and Laura Bush's memoir. Major mistake When Watson correctly answered the final question, the employees jumped to their feet. What did go viral yesterday - and in English Canada, in particular - was Watson's small geographical error, which he said Toronto was an American city. "The Americans teased me about it, and asked me if we did it on purpose!" said Raymond Leduc. "Watson learns from his mistakes, and he'll never make that one again." The question was actually to identify a city - in the "American city" category - whose two main airports are named after a hero and a battle of the Second World War. The answer was Chicago. According to David Ferrucci, Watson project manager at IBM, the error may come in part from the fact that the categories in Jeopardy can sometimes seek to mislead participants. As a result, the computer has learned to minimize the importance of these categories. Other possible reasons for the error: several American cities are named Toronto, and the Blue Jays play in the American League. This misalignment of the stars may have tripped up Watson. By participating in Jeopardy, IBM pulled off a good marketing stunt, but the underlying idea, says Raymond Leduc, "is that future generations of Watsons ultimately help doctors make difficult diagnoses, or help cities with the difficult management of traffic." On Monday, more than 14 million people watched Jeopardy. On Tuesday, the show reportedly reached its highest ratings in six seasons. Video of the event can be viewed at cyberpresse.ca/watson

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1014

For Valentine's Day, thrill your other half by giving them Body Heat, an iPhone app that's supposed to raise their body temperature. Connected to a "personal massager" (a euphemism for vibrator, a word that's probably banned from the prudish Apple Store), Body Heat, banned for those under 17, lets you control the machine with your fingertips, sensually stroking the smartphone's touchscreen: from top to bottom to vibrate faster, from left to right to vibrate harder. If you put two fingers in, you can create more sophisticated vibration patterns and save the ones that will have the most effect, from the subtle "Deep and steady" tickle to the wild gallop ("Galloping horses"). An infinite variation of pleasures, tailor-made, far from the on-off binary. Body Heat was designed by a woman, Heather Kelley, a digital artist, feminist and designer of experimental games (including the famous Lapis, a DS game aimed at helping women perfect their masturbation technique to achieve orgasm, via the stimulation of a cute little rabbit). The designer seduced the sex toy brand OhMiBod, which specializes in musical dildos, dildos connected to MP3 players that allow you to vibrate to the rhythm of your favorite hits, also available in a club version (a small embedded tampon that reacts to ambient sound, in concerts and nightclubs). If the iPhone application is cheap, the little toys to plug into it will cost you from 50 dollars to three times more for the wireless version. Fortunately, generous hackers have taken things in hand. Among them, Kyle Machulis, aka qDot, a robotics engineer, expert in sex toys and more generally in "teledildonics", meaning remote-controlled sex, is an activist for pleasure for all. A supporter of open source, he lists and dissects all the technologies with an erotic vocation on his blog Slashdong. From Microsoft's Kinect that allows you to feel an avatar's virtual breasts, to the Mojowijo that transforms Nintendo's wiimote into a remote stimulator, to the t-shirt that vibrates when you send a text message or the sofa that quivers according to the activity of a Twitter account. In other words, gadgets but also augmented reality research projects like iFeel\_IM, a harness capable of reproducing embraces via the Internet. Machulis regularly organizes "Do It Yourself" workshops to learn how to hack products from the sex industry, or to make your own customized toys. Cheap and open source computer equipment (Arduino), some basic electronics and programming, and a little imagination are enough. "The goal is for individuals to develop their sex toys based on their own needs and to explore new sensations," says the author, who believes that adult toys of the future will integrate more biometric data (heart rate, pressure, temperature, etc.). Heather Kelley and Kyle Machulis are both regulars at Arse Elektronika, an annual conference organized by the Viennese collective Monochrom, which takes stock of the future of our technologized frolics and other fucking machines, exploring the impact of sex on technological innovation. At the last edition in October in San Francisco, they organized the Six Feet Under Club, inviting a volunteer couple to lock themselves in the promiscuity of a coffin to give free rein to their libido, broadcast on a big screen, via the prying eye of a surveillance camera. The call for contributions for the next edition has just been launched. The theme "Screw the System" will address issues of sex, technology and class struggle. www.ohmibod.com/bodyheat www.slashdong.org www.monochrom.at/arse-elektronika

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1015

This is the story of an exciting adventure that ends badly. That of the rise of WikiLeaks experienced from the inside by Daniel Domscheit-Berg, close to Julian Assange for three years. That of the break-up between the two men in September 2010. Number 2 describes in a book the kitchens of the site that hit the headlines worldwide against a backdrop of emotional turmoil. Perfect ingredients for a novel. Inside WikiLeaks, behind the scenes of the most dangerous website in the world, is released today in Germany by Econ Verlag. And next week in ten countries including France, by Grasset. This highly anticipated story was surrounded by a thousand precautions to prevent leaks. No interviews before publication. No proofs entrusted to journalists. Reading at the publisher. However, as of Sunday, small excerpts were circulating on Cryptome.org. Ironically, it was through this site, which also publishes sensitive documents, that Daniel Domscheit-Berg heard about WikiLeaks in September 2007. At the time, he says, he lived in Wiesbaden and worked in computer security. Alerted by a link, he connected to the site's chat. Julian Assange quickly gave him "jobs". Involved in open source and a member of the Chaos Computer Club (CCC), Daniel was delighted to have him come to their conference in Berlin in December 2008. It was their first meeting. He was attracted to the character, he was "cool". Then it was Mendax, the famous computer hacker, co-author of the cult book Underground (see page 4). His conference at the CCC, with twenty people in a basement, was a flop. A year later, same place, same Assange, 900 listeners. In 2009, the scenario repeated itself, Assange triumphed. In the meantime, WikiLeaks has distinguished itself with its explosive revelations. MODUS OPERANDI In January 2008, WikiLeaks published the accounts of the Cayman Islands subsidiary of the Swiss bank Julius Bär. The first leak for Daniel Domscheit-Berg. The test by fire. Public pressure pushed the institution to withdraw its complaint. "That's how we were propelled to the forefront in the space of a few days, at the beginning of 2008. Without Julius Bär's complaint, it would never have happened so quickly." It's David versus Goliath. For a long time, Daniel writes, there were "almost" only two of them behind the scenes, juggling pseudonyms night and day (Daniel signs "Schmitt" or "Jay Lim", from the "WikiLeaks Donor relations" service). Their lawyer is a volunteer, like the collaborators scattered around the world. There will be no salary, even after the influx of donations. At the end of the story, there will be only two permanent people: the "technician" and the "architect". The single server is soon no longer enough. The two men and "an old computer" embark in a Mercedes Estate for a 24-hour, 2,100 km tour to install them in various locations in Europe. The duo is refining their method. After attacking the banking system, it is the turn of the sects with pieces on Scientology, provided by the "Anonymous" (Internet activists). Distrust becomes the order of the day. Contacts are made in telephone centers late at night. Assange arranges to meet in incongruous places. They will soon be juggling with encrypted mobiles and deliberately evading details in front of journalists who do not dare to admit that they do not understand everything ("This is the principle of terrorism, but also of bureaucracy: without elements, the adversary cannot attack.") "We wanted our structure to remain secret and to surround our team with a thick mystery, on the model of Scientology." The initial principle obeys an ideal of transparency: to publish everything that reaches them "provided that it has a minimum of relevance" (which they manage to do until the end of 2009) like all the emails of the imprecators ("the attacks stopped very quickly"). Not to try to find out where it comes from. "We could not and did not want to know who our sources were." The arrest of soldier Bradley Manning in May 2010 after the broadcast of the video "Collateral murder" (American blunder in Baghdad) will be a cold shower. THE MEDIA WikiLeaks quickly decided to collaborate with newspapers to attract attention. The target was initially the popular press and journalists identified in editorial offices. "For us, the important thing was not so much to know how true a piece of information was, but to know how to sell it." At first, Daniel continues, journalists were only given part of the resources, then all of them. But the media also served as leverage to serve WL's ideals, such as the short-lived project of a political movement to fight against Internet censorship in the world. "We had also learned that to make things happen, it was essential to cross a certain threshold of perception at the media level. And it worked all the better when someone could embody the problem, give it a face and a personal inflection." But the number of whistleblowers grew, the site was overwhelmed with documents and the partnerships did not always go as planned. The strategy went up a notch with the publication of the Afghan war logs in July 2010. "We wanted to involve the media at the right time and stay in control. We needed good partners. We agreed on the New York Times. For strategic reasons, we wanted an American media outlet, why not the biggest one while we were at it." The Guardian and Spiegel were also brought into the loop. No way to hire more. "But journalists behave like dogs who show their teeth to defend their bone as soon as they fear that a scoop will be taken away from them." Assange, Daniel says, was becoming more and more uncontrollable at the same time, giving journalists a meeting alone in London. "More and more imprudent about the confidentiality of the documents," he passed the cables to an Icelander who passed them on to the press. The circle of inducted newspapers would nevertheless expand with the publication of the Iraq Warlogs, then the diplomatic cables in the fall of 2010. Five exclusive partners decide what is worthy of public attention, regrets Daniel. "The current publication strategy has already strayed enormously from the basic principles of WikiLeaks. Too much, I think." Julian ASSANGE But Daniel was no longer part of it. His relations with Julian had deteriorated since February 2009. Julian, who could not bear to see him presented as a co-founder, called him a "media whore". The opacity of the finances and the fragility of the site also weighed on him. Their stay in Iceland at the beginning of 2010 where they planned to create a paradise of freedom of the press turned into a nightmare. The rest of the time where the four of them lived together was a smelly "mess", strewn with moldy food. Assange reprimanded him. Later, he would threaten to "hunt" and "kill" him. This is their last meeting, they will only speak to each other via chat. Daniel returns to Berlin, meets his future wife. He is a wounded man, who has given his all to the point of having half of WL's hourglass tattooed on his back, a portrait of his former muse. For him, Assange is a mythomaniac, "capable of telling three different stories about his past" like claiming that his hair went white at 14 because of gamma rays. "Julian reinvented himself every day, like a hard drive that is reformatted daily, as if he were going back in order to start over again." Selfish, eating up other people's share: "Julian's behavior was often similar to that of a person raised by wolves." A personality that he sometimes "hates": "Free thinker, energetic, brilliant. Paranoid. Power-hungry. Megalomaniac." For his part, Daniel thought with the "architect" about an "optimal mode of operation of a leak platform", more transparent, more neutral, without the pitfalls experienced at WikiLeaks. On January 27, he opened OpenLeaks. Because on September 15, 2010, at 2 a.m., the last message had fallen: "You're suspended", "you are emptied".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1016

After free love and "Vive le Québec libre!", there is linux.fm, a web radio where you can listen to the source code of a free software. The radio randomly broadcasts the source code of the latest stable version of linux, file by file, read 24 hours a day by a synthetic voice! And if, after a few seconds of listening, you don't find it geeky enough (or unbearable), we suggest you open the radio in two tabs of your browser at once! http://linux.fm

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1017

Here are some tips and features that will help you use Facebook more securely and protect your personal information. CREATE LISTS To prevent your coworkers, parents (or kids!) from knowing all about your drinking excesses the night before, just create groups. When you want to update your profile, just click on the little padlock to decide who you want to share with (or not)! (Account Menu - Edit Friends List - Create List) CHECK WHO IS VIEWING YOUR ACCOUNT This option lets you see in which city and with which internet browser the last connections to your account took place. If you see that someone is connecting from a computer other than yours, hurry up and change your password! You can also activate an option that lets you receive an email each time someone connects to your account from an unknown computer. (Account Menu - Account Settings - Account Security) AVOID DUBIOUS FRIENDS A pretty stranger wants to become your Facebook friend? Her slightly sexy profile pictures are a dream? When it's too good to be true... It's more likely that she's a fraudster trying to obtain your personal information and will probably try to get money from you with wild stories! KEEP YOUR DATA Did you know that you can download a copy of your data (your photos and videos, the posts on your wall and all your messages) at any time? Very practical if you have lost the original photos, but also for those who want to close their account; you can keep the messages you have sent! (Account Menu - Account Settings - Download your data) USE FACEBOOK EMAIL It will soon be possible to receive messages on Facebook with an address like yourname@facebook.com. The service is being rolled out little by little: when you receive the invitation, follow the instructions to validate your address; do it quickly to have the best address, especially if several people have your name! You will be able to receive emails sent by your Facebook friends in the Messages section of your profile; other emails will be in the "Other" section. An effective way to filter spam and other unwanted messages, in addition to no longer having to consult your Facebook page and your email account to receive your messages. ACTIVATE SECURE BROWSING Another option that is not yet available to all users: the HTTPS connection, which allows you to transmit your personal information with a level of security similar to that recommended for banking transactions or online purchases. This function could prevent certain games and functions from working; but it prevents anyone from intercepting our exchanges with Facebook servers. A good thing in internet cafes... \* \* \* + Finds RUSSIAN GROCERY Nostalgic images of advertising for Russian food products. Often more exotic than appetizing! http://bit. ly/dKNT71 \* \* \* Behind the miracle + We relive Those who have followed with emotion the saga of the collapse of the San José mine in Chile (and who hasn't?) and who want to know more will want to download the iPad application "Behind the miracle" which complements and enhances the documentary of the same name directed by Orlando Arriagada. The application is available in three languages, in the App Store and contains videos exclusive to the iPad. The application is free. Search for Behind the miracle in the App Store \* \* \* Fax without fax + We fax You absolutely need to send a fax, but you don't have a fax machine? faxZero can help you out. The service allows you to send two faxes of less than three pages per day for free to Canada and the United States, with an ad on the header page; you can send a Word or PDF file. For a few dollars (payable by PayPal), you can eliminate the ads, send faxes to other countries, and send more pages. Don't forget to respond to the confirmation email! http://faxzero.com \* \* \* Bad rap + We do rap YouTube is full of excellent videos. But there is also some terrible stuff. A funny site offers a collection of videos of white people rapping badly. You don't have to understand the lyrics to laugh or feel a strange unease. You have to see the angry guy whose video is filled with images of his dog to understand that not everyone can be Eminem. Making good rap is an art that is not easy! http://bit. ly/eDtDZr \* \* \* Music broken down + We listen to Brett Domino and his sidekick Steven Peavis have fun reinterpreting trendy songs with an impressive array of instruments: kazoos, iPhone, cowbell, theremin, stylophone, ukulele and many others. Visit the Videography section for the very deadpan music videos that let you see how each song is put together. Don't miss the hip-hop medley or the chart-topping one (from Ke$ha to the Black Eyed Peas to Justin Bieber). My favorite video is Justin Timberlake's medley: watching Brett read the lyrics is hilarious! www.brettdomino.com \* \* \* The geekiest radio + We don't listen to After free love and "Vive le Québec libre!", there's linux.fm, a web radio where you can listen to the source code of free software. The radio randomly broadcasts the source code of the latest stable version of Linux, file by file, read 24 hours a day by a synthetic voice! And if after a few seconds of listening, you don't find it geeky enough (or unbearable), we suggest you open the radio in two tabs of your browser at once! http://linux.fm

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1018

Every second, a staggering number of digital files are downloaded from the Internet. Ben Baker-Smith's Infinite Glitch automatically generates a constantly changing audiovisual stream from this exponential mass of files. This automatic program, made entirely with free software, fragments, degrades and recombines images and sounds, in a chaotic landscape of data made unreadable. "A representation of this media deluge that overwhelms us and from which we can retain very little." http://infiniteglitch.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1019

What are the most popular free software? Free, efficient and regularly updated, free software is increasingly used by businesses and individuals. The site CommentCaMarche has drawn up a list of those most often recommended by universities and major schools. First surprise: the software that comes out on top of the top 10 of this survey is not an office software but an audio editing tool, Audacity. This software, mainly used to retouch sounds or clean up music files digitized from a vinyl record, is frequently used in language courses and in the introduction to music on the computer. The OpenOffice.org office suite naturally comes in second place. A free alternative to Microsoft Office, it offers a word processor, a spreadsheet, presentation software, drawing tools and data management. It can also read and save files in Office formats. Third place on the list is occupied by VLC, probably the most powerful video file player of the moment: it recognizes all file formats, including those of DVDs and subtitled films and can retrieve and save all kinds of video streams. Second surprise: Apple's software QuickTime and iTunes appear in 4th and 6th position in the top 10 while they are not strictly speaking free software, even if they are free... The rest of the list obviously includes the Firefox web browser (5th) but also the photo editing tool PhotoFiltre (7th) and the image conversion utility XnView (10th). Finally, note the presence of two very useful utilities on PC: 7zip (8th), which allows you to compress and decompress files, and PDFCreator (9th), which adds the function of converting a document to PDF to the printing options.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1020

For three weeks, an unprecedented media effervescence has been catching up with two decades of silence, lies and ignorance about the nature of the Tunisian regime. The January revolution has opposes a scathing denial to all the speeches of complacency or complicity that it is useless to list here: a wall of shame is currently being built on Facebook to archive the succession of shameful declarations by French officials since Ben Ali took power in 1987. How can we explain that so many Tunisian voices, for nearly twenty years, have alerted public opinion without being heard? How can we understand that after so many reports from the Tunisian League for Human Rights relayed by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders, Tunisia has continued to pass for the friendly country vaunted by advertising slogans? Ben Ali first succeeded, within the country, in reducing authorized public speech to a level of mediocrity rarely achieved. As a child, I experienced the “medical coup d’état” of November 7, 1987 in Tunisia and grew up under the Ben Ali regime. Like all the relatives, spouses, and children of human rights activists, journalists, and opponents—Sihem Ben Sedrine, Hamma Hammami, Radhia Nasraoui, Taoufik Ben Brik, among many others—I was, more than the rest of the Tunisian population, and perhaps earlier than them, exasperated by the regime’s perverse prose because we were confronted with the gap between public discourse and the price that these opponents of the regime paid individually—hunger strikes, imprisonment, harassment of all kinds, arbitrary trials. In 1992, after leaving Tunisia, where I grew up, to study in France, each return was first and foremost the shock of contact with the language of the dictatorship. With all due respect to Frédéric Mitterrand, Ben Ali's Tunisia was indeed the least ambiguous of dictatorships, for those who took the trouble to open their eyes and not cover their ears. From arrival at the airport to the most miserable of shops, in the glitzy hotel lobbies, on the roads, posters of Ben Ali adorned with slogans glorifying the "Artisan of Change": "Together behind Ben Ali" or "Ben Ali, we love you". In taxis, it is impossible to avoid the omnipresent RTCI, Radio Tunis Chaîne Internationale: between the thousandth rebroadcast of a cheesy Western pop hit - Whitney Houston or Elton John - and a distressing exchange with a listener, the news flash: tirelessly, before the paltry briefs of international news, a series of communiqués read by the "journalist" mouthpiece of the regime, such as: "President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali constantly encourages national associations and organizations to adhere with total responsibility and efficiency to public life and the global development process. "We have not only stifled a people by depriving them of any space for speech and protest, but also by producing an unprecedented newspeak, a monstrous hybridization of technocratic verbiage, pompous lexicon, and a delirious use of capital letters: the "Era of Renewal", the "Path of Development", the "Promotion of Change" have blackened thousands of pages of official newspapers that no Tunisian has bothered to read for many years. It would be urgent to archive all issues of La Presse, the Ben Ali propaganda organ where one could read stylistic feats such as: "Tunisian journalists highly praised President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali's constant concern to further promote the Tunisian media landscape, in line with the qualitative change in the communications sector, in the world, in order to serve the ambitions of Tunisian society, preserve its civilizational identity and further increase Tunisia's influence, on a regional and international scale, within the framework of the commitment to credibility, objectivity and allegiance to Tunisia." How could we have thought for so long that the symptoms of dictatorship were only political assassinations in the street? The Tunisian case testified with a form of genius of the baseness that dictatorship also manifests in the instrumentalization of the speeches that Western opinions and leaders want to hear. Thus, at a time when more and more voices, Tunisian and Western, began, in the 1990s, to warn about the human rights situation, the Tunisian regime invented a mind-boggling propaganda in favor of human rights, promoting freedom of expression at all costs in a country where almost no Western news newspaper was available in the hall of an international airport, where Libération and Le Monde entered in dribs and drabs, regularly banned for several months. On the other hand, Tunisians were subjected to pathetic, even comical, prose on a daily basis. Even as all opposition newspapers were gradually being crushed, while the right of association was being suppressed, while no demonstration was ever authorized, while political opponents were being harassed, one could read in La Presse in 2010: "Tunisian journalists celebrate this holiday in the commitment to fulfill the role that is theirs in the consecration of the attributes of a modernist and open society based on the principles of freedom, democracy, dialogue, pluralism and acceptance of opposing opinions." This determination draws its strength from the political will of the president who continues to give the information and communication sector special attention and constant support and who works tirelessly to further strengthen the role of this sector in driving the pluralist democratic process, through the consecration of free, pluralist and objective information that meets the aspirations and interests of the citizen and that interacts with his concerns and ambitions, on the basis of the principle that responsibility is the corollary of freedom. I also have the surreal memory of a Free Software Festival held in the marina of a tourist town: empty plastic chairs topped with white banners with slogans, a few guys in Bermuda shorts and flip-flops, slumped behind a computer, screen off, and tourists in shorts strolling in front, indifferent. The women's cause, an extraordinary guarantee to Western public opinion, has also been totally manipulated by the Ben Ali regime. Here is what we could read for example in La Presse in 2003: "Opening the work of the congress, chaired by Chadlia Boukhchina, president of the National Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT), Mr. Kamel Haj Sassi, Secretary of State to the Minister of Culture, Youth and Leisure, stressed the interest that young Tunisian girls have enjoyed since the change and the strategic place that they occupy in the scale of priorities of the social project of the Head of State, noting that young women are pioneers in the action led by women's associations in terms of supervision, rooting the values of Change and raising awareness of the challenges of modernity. "Even the environmental cause has also been recuperated: while the development of mass tourism in the hands of the ruling clique has accelerated an unprecedented destruction of the coastline, all Tunisians have had the opportunity to be graced, even in the most modest town, with a Boulevard de l'Environnement, a sinister avenue, vaguely decorated with three miserable palm trees and a few withered laurels. This absurd and empty language imposed within the borders of a padlocked country has been echoed, outside, and particularly in France, by the discourse of many political leaders, communication agencies and influential editorialists. The lexical quibbles about the nature of the Tunisian regime are the glaring symptom of the Franco-French inability and refusal to distinguish the signifier from the signified. Ben Ali's Tunisia served up on a golden platter all the democratic signs that the West wanted to see: women with their hair down, beaches welcoming tourists allowed to show off in monokinis, full supermarkets, businesses welcomed with open arms, a liberalization of services, active cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The history of Franco-French relations over two decades is one of willful blindness, of an acceptance of all the flashy signs of democratic tinsel. It is an example of complacency with regard to the discourse of communication, of the capacity of democracies to remain fixed on a set. The end of the Tunisian dictatorship is a grotesque image of what could have been called a "operetta dictatorship" if so many men and women had not paid the price of real oppression for nearly a quarter of a century. A slicked-back despot fleeing by plane, a regent of Carthage taking refuge for a few days in a cardboard hotel in Disneyland with a ton and a half of gold under her arm: when the signs of the end of the old regime became so glaring, it became impossible for France, the media and political leaders to keep their "talking points" on Tunisia.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1021

Whether we love them or fear them, we must admit that alter-globalization ideas have renewed contemporary politics. The criticism of free trade, the idea of a global tax in favor of the South, the recognition of environmental constraints, the fight against free software, the rejection of junk food, the questioning of productivism, the renewal of direct democracy, the struggle of landless peasants, undocumented migrants, victims of finance or climate refugees, all these themes, all these words, all these fights have been put on the agenda by this informal international that has challenged triumphant liberalism, challenged governments, made international organizations move and shook up the traditional left. In some twenty years of existence, through continuous work punctuated by major popular events such as the protests against Davos, the G8 or the social forums inaugurated in Porto Alegre, the alters have imposed their agenda and advanced their demands on all fronts. What is their record, where are they going, what do they want? Economist, activist, former vice-president of Attac, Gustave Massiah offers them a roadmap for the beginning of this century. The awareness of the finiteness of the planet and the harmfulness of unbridled finance, he explains, opens new perspectives for the movement. Contrary to what their enemies sometimes want us to believe, the alters are not the umpteenth version of old leftism, steeped in Marxism and military-revolutionary dreams. The logic of the movement, explains Massiah, is the demand for rights for all. Far from the historical materialism of sad memory, the alters extend, two centuries later, the great promise of 1789 and the Declaration of Rights. With these only differences: instead of only concerning public freedoms, the rights claimed touch on all areas of life, politics, work, gender, ethnicity or the environment, and apply to everyone, from the Parisian bobo to the first peoples of the Amazon. Essentially democratic - and therefore anti-authoritarian - alter-globalization finds before it an adversary and an ally. The liberalism that still governs globalization is a clearly identified enemy; the progressive movement that Massiah calls the "Green New Deal", which designates the social-democratic policies mixed with ecology defended by the parties of the institutional left, is itself a potential ally. Massiah explores the avenues of a critical but productive dialogue between these two forces. The French left, which is preparing its presidential campaign and which must renew its discourse, will not find its way without reading this manual of green and pink strategy.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1022

It was ten years ago, on January 15, 2001. Two Americans, Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger, laid the foundations of Wikipedia. A slightly crazy project: to design a free online encyclopedia, written by Internet users, to which everyone, experts or novices, could contribute, by creating, completing or correcting articles using a tool inspired by free software, the "wiki", allowing collaborative work. Initially improbable, Wikipedia has prospered. Today, it is the fifth most visited site on the Web. In the United States, more than one in two adult Internet users consult the online encyclopedia, according to a Pew Internet survey. The number of articles exceeds 17 million, in 270 languages. However, the encyclopedia remains a UFO. It is the only Web service of this importance that has not "monetized" its audience through advertising. It is non-profit, and still relies on the enthusiasm of hundreds of thousands of volunteers to grow. "It is part of the culture of sharing and free of charge of the Web's opinion leaders," according to Pierre Chappaz, one of the main French entrepreneurs of the Net. "The company founded in parallel by Mr. Wales, Wikia, financed our first servers. But in 2003, we sorted things out and created a foundation, the Wikimedia Foundation, which owns the machines, the domain names and the brand," says Florence Devouard, president of the foundation between 2006 and 2008, a "Wikipedian" from the very beginning. "We started calling for donations at the end of 2002. At the time, there were only a few dozen of us contributing to the articles," she explains. The hierarchy remains barely perceptible. The founders were sidelined. "Mr. Sanger wanted a priori control of the articles," according to Ms. Devouard. Mr. Wales remains in high demand by the media, but "only has a representative role," she adds. The current president is a rather discreet German of Chinese origin, Ting Chen. The project is decentralized. Around the foundation gravitate around thirty national "Wikimedias", fairly autonomous, responsible for animating the community of contributors, raising funds, etc. "At the beginning, there was Anglo-Saxon governance. Now, everyone lives their own life," notes Ms. Devouard. This operation has its cumbersome features. "A contributor can contest a vote by our board of directors. Hence sometimes lengthy decision-making processes," notes Adrienne Alix, president of Wikimedia France. Tensions exist: "We want to be welcoming to contributors whatever their opinions. It's not always easy," adds Ms. Devouard. Investing and convincing Wikipedia still has its flaws, highlighted in the media: errors, articles that are not objective enough, those that announce the death by mistake of personalities... "Wikipedians have developed software to track down slip-ups. If there is a risk of defamation, a regular contributor can delete the article. If the contributions are far-fetched or advertising, we discuss them among ourselves. But there are things that slip through the net, especially in biographies of little-known people, less "monitored" by the community", recognizes Rémi Mathis, former student at the Ecole des Chartes, major contributor in French on the history of Europe in the 17th century. To avoid slip-ups, German and American Wikipedians have established an a priori validation procedure for bibliographies of living people, as long as the contributor who modifies it is a "newbie". There are also the risks of recovery, such as these books "copy-pasted" from Wikipedia articles, which are supposedly on sale on Amazon. "It's all the more deplorable because they are poorly made. There's nothing we can do about it: Wikipedia content is royalty-free; it can be reused by anyone," says Ms. Devouard. But Wikipedia is changing, becoming more professional. Following the call for donations launched at the end of 2010, the 2011 budget doubled to 16 million dollars (12 million euros). A large part will go to the third server center that is to open in the United States, with the hiring of IT specialists. As the audience increases, it is necessary to invest in infrastructure. Wikimedia France also hired a person in accounting in 2010, to relieve the volunteers. Attracting contributors, if possible specialists, is also a priority, particularly in France. With others, Mr. Mathis is trying to convince cultural institutions to entrust Wikipedia with part of their wealth (photos, texts) or to write articles. An agreement was signed in April 2010 with the National Library of France, to make available to Internet users 1,400 texts that have fallen into the public domain. "Now, we are taken seriously," says Mr. Mathis, who says he has contacts with the National Archives and the Château de Versailles. "The reluctance is at the management level, who are worried about the risks of exploitation by third parties of their content thus put online," acknowledges Ms. Devouard.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1023

After free Quebec and free software, long live free books? Framabook offers French e-books on free software, free of charge and without any catch. You can download books like a beginner's guide to the Ubuntu operating system, a biography of Richard Stallman (the inventor of free software) and other more technical computer books. Don't want to read on screen? Paper books are on sale in good bookstores. Do you like the project? Here again, you are free to make a donation! www.framabook.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1024

Naked as a worm, you end up on Pluto, the city of a thousand delights, the Las Vegas of the solar system, ruled by Elastic Versailles, a corrupt artificial intelligence. Naked on Pluto is a text adventure game on Facebook, integrating the personal data of the player and his "friends" as elements of this thrilling interactive fiction. To participate, all you have to do is register with your Facebook account. After buying a decent outfit (cowboy hat, diving suit, etc.) with the chips won at the casino, the player sets off to explore this paradise of consumption and entertainment, strolling through its palace, its fountains, swaying in a shady club, making friends with the sycophantic bartender, chatting with insipid robots or characters who will seem strangely familiar to him, without knowing whether they are computer programs or human beings. The atmosphere of the place, only suggested with the help of textual descriptions, contributes to this disturbing strangeness. He will have to find a key to unlock the toilet door, steal the identity of one of his Facebook friends by donning a moustache, get lost in the maze of inhuman shopping centres, at the risk of getting lost in the dark and abandoned corners of this "brave new world". The player is alone, but he can invite his friends to join him to perform certain actions. The combination of fictional elements with private data and the manipulation of information extracted from the Facebook account makes the game both immersive and very destabilizing. Naked on Pluto examines the limits and nature of social networks from the inside, questioning the way in which these interfaces shape our relationships, the commodification of friendly ties, advertising targeting, and especially the "phenomenal quantities of information" that we provide to these databases, literally exposing ourselves. "This fact is known to Facebook users, but we found that there was a difference between being aware of this situation and experiencing it outside the closed gardens of this software," explains Aymeric Mansoux, creator of the game with Dave Griffiths and Marloes de Valk. With this playful metaphor, the three artists want to confront the user with the functioning of social networks, and the problem of sharing data, whether voluntary or not. A process that is often opaque, especially since Facebook launched the "connect" function, which allows you to log in to more or less intrusive third-party services with your Facebook identity. Naked on Pluto makes a point of explaining in complete transparency how the player's data is used. The game, which is open source, does not store any information on its servers, with the exception of your Facebook ID, and the data generated during the game can be deleted upon simple request. Rather than a radical act, such as the virtual suicide advocated by the Seppuku or Web 2.0 Suicide Machine projects, Naked on Pluto seeks to reveal the mechanisms of Facebook, by operating from within the system. The text adventure game, an outdated literary form, lends itself ideally to the subject. It was already used, according to Aymeric Mansoux, "to convey various forms of contemporary satire, such as Hampstead which addressed the economic and social conditions of the London suburbs, or Bureaucracy, which transformed a simple mission into a Kafkaesque adventure." http://naked-on-pluto.net http://pluto.kuri.mu/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1025

New electronic tablets, electric cars, other social networks, cell phones transformed into credit cards, the year 2011 is likely to be fertile in new products for consumers. La Presse Affaires has listed 11 consumer products that are likely to attract attention. Consumers on the lookout for trends, get your wallets ready! 1- The Daily iPad Daily Media mogul Rupert Murdoch wants to launch the first major daily available only on iPad. For several months, his team of about a hundred journalists and experts on Apple's electronic tablet has been preparing the release of the Daily, which would be sold for US$0.99 per day and US$4.99 per month. To carry out this project, NewsCorp is working closely with Apple - to the point where some rumors have it that the Daily and the second version of the iPad will be launched simultaneously at the beginning of the year. Other sources are talking instead of a solo launch on January 17 for The Daily. Some of the content of the first 100% iPad daily will be supplied by the other media of NewsCorp, the media conglomerate of Rupert Murdoch which notably owns the Times of London, the Wall Street Journal and the Fox News television network. Vincent Brousseau-Pouliot 2- Facebook Stock market After the silver screen in 2010, the stock market in 2011? The social network Facebook has resisted the siren song of the stock market for several years now. And it plans to do so again until 2012, according to the techno investor Peter Thiel, one of the first backers of Facebook. But rumors of an IPO in 2011 resumed last October when Facebook split its shares by five - a decision that often suggests an IPO. According to estimates, Facebook is worth US$50 billion. Facebook more than doubled its revenues in 2010, which went from around US$800 million to US$2 billion. Facebook's IPO is the most anticipated in the tech sector since Google's in 2004. However, the company is not short of funding: it has just obtained US$500 million from Goldman Sachs and a Russian investor, which could delay Facebook's IPO until 2013, according to the New York Times. Vincent Brousseau-Pouliot 3- Google Me Social network Does Google want to compete with Facebook? Its CEO, Eric Schmitt, swears that it does not. But for the second year in a row, Google will launch its own social network. After the failure of Buzz in 2010, Google Me should be launched in March or April, according to the specialist website Mashable. If Google is so interested in social media, it is in particular because of the meteoric growth of Facebook, which has become the busiest site in the world after its own. Facebook increased its traffic by 55% in the United States over the past year, which has forced Google to respond in the social networking arena. On the stock market, Google is hoping to have a better year in 2011. Last year, its stock depreciated by 4.2%. Vincent Brousseau-Pouliot 4- Diaspora Social network Do you want to share your moods and photos on a social network without giving up your privacy like on Facebook? Four math students from Columbia University in New York may have found the solution. On Diaspora, all users are masters of their server and give access to it to their friends. Diaspora, which launched an initial experimental version last November, should be available to the general public in 2011 and will operate in open source code. The site is already being presented by the media as the anti-Facebook of social networks. Its co-founders Dan Grippi, Maxwell Salzberg, Raphael Sofae and Ilya Zhitomirskiy had the idea to create a decentralized social network in February 2010 following a lecture by a Columbia law professor on the dangers of Facebook in terms of privacy. In a few weeks, the four students raised more than $200,000 through the Kickstarter funding site. Among their donors: a certain Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder of Facebook. Vincent Brousseau-Pouliot 5- GM Volt and Nissan Leaf Hybrid and electric cars Is 2011 the year of the electric car? Two highly anticipated models will hit the roads of Quebec this year. The GM Volt will be on sale in Montreal, Quebec City and Gatineau during the summer. How much will this plug-in hybrid electric car cost, which has a range of 580 kilometres and consumes only 1.02 litres of gasoline per 100 kilometres? GM has not announced a Canadian sale price, but the car costs $41,000 US in the land of Uncle Sam. Nissan will respond by launching its Leaf, an all-electric car, between September and December 2011. Communauto subscribers will be among the first drivers of the Nissan Leaf. The car-sharing service will buy 50 cars at a unit price of approximately $34,000. Vincent Brousseau-Pouliot 6- Nintendo 3DS Video games and 3D technology After the big screen and the small screen last year, the 3D craze will invade video games in 2011. Nintendo will launch its long-awaited 3D portable console on February 19 in Japan, then on March 20 in several countries including Canada. For $299, players will be able to enjoy a 3D environment without the hassle of the glasses that usually accompany it. Will the Nintendo 3DS have the same impact on the video game industry as the Kinect, the controller-free console launched by Microsoft last November? Only time will tell. Nintendo executives are at least hoping that the launch of their new portable console - the event of 2011 in the video game industry - will shore up the company's finances. For the last six months (April and September 2010), the Japanese company has seen its revenues drop by 34% and its profits fall by 48% compared to the same period in 2009. Vincent Brousseau-Pouliot 7- The telephone/credit card Banking services Gone are the days when you had to take your credit card out of your pocket to pay for groceries. Soon, a cell phone will suffice. In 2011, most new cell phones on the market (notably Nokia) will adopt near field communication technology, which allows you to pay by passing your cell phone over a terminal at the checkout. Financial institutions will also get in tune with this new technology, which only allows transactions of less than $50. "We will definitely have things to announce on this subject in 2011," says Nathalie Genest, spokesperson for the Mouvement Desjardins. Petro-Canada, Cineplex, Tim Hortons, Loblaws and soon Walmart are ready to accept payments by cell phone. "The big challenge with this new technology will be acceptance at points of sale. Will merchants be ready to adopt it?" says Éric Paquet, Senior Director of Personal Transactional Solutions at National Bank. Consumers should be aware that they will have to learn how to lock their cell phones. Otherwise, the bill could quickly mount up without the owner knowing. Vincent Brousseau-Pouliot 8- Renewable natural gas Energy On December 21, Quebec company EBI-Environnement announced that it will power its garbage collection trucks... with garbage. EBI transforms biogas from landfills into natural gas. And it wants to start fueling its trucks with it this year. EBI is far from alone in the sector. "Renewable natural gas," which is cheaper than solar and wind energy, is likely to provide fierce competition to other renewable energies in 2011. Many companies may be willing to pay a premium for "green" natural gas, which can also be transported in existing pipeline networks. "Follow the scientific innovations in natural gas in 2011 and the political support it will receive," warns clean technology analysis firm Kachan&Co, which predicts that natural gas produced from biogas will create a buzz this year. Philippe Mercure 9- iPad 2 vs. PlayBook Tablets With sales forecasts of 50 million units, digital tablets will be one to watch in 2011. The BlackBerry PlayBook is among the most anticipated. Jim Balsillie, co-founder of RIM, believes, not very humbly, that it "will redefine what digital tablets should be used for", upon its release in late March-early April. Its cutting-edge technical specifications, QNX software, low retail price and increased interaction with BlackBerry phones will appeal in particular to the business community. A threat that Apple takes seriously: Steve Jobs, its CEO, should present a second generation of the iPad that is more affordable and better equipped in terms of hardware. Alain McKenna, special collaboration 10- Groupon Group purchases on the Internet What was just a start-up in November 2008 is now the Internet phenomenon of the hour. Groupon, which turned down a $6 billion takeover bid from Google last fall, could go public in 2011. This would be the crowning achievement of group buying, which offers Internet users discounts of 50 to 90% on packages offered by local merchants. For a few weeks now, Groupon has also been available in the Montreal area. With sales estimated at $500 million in 2010, Andrew Mason, its founder, compares Groupon's potential to that of Amazon and eBay in their early days. This explains its accelerated expansion strategy: 33 million subscribers and 3,000 employees, spread across 35 countries. Alain McKenna, special collaboration 11- Google Chrome OS Dematerialized ultraportables After the web, mobility and TV, what does Google have left to reinvent? Personal computers! In January, Google will test 20,000 Cr-48 ultraportables powered by Chrome OS. It’s a 30-year-old industry dream: Everything from office suites to communications tools is stored online, on remote servers. These ultraportables carry only the bare minimum: a browser and a handful of device drivers. Acer and Samsung will follow next summer with the first consumer models, equipped with Wi-Fi and 3G connectivity. The potential: For a fraction of the price, 60 percent of the world’s desktops can be replaced by a Chrome OS product, according to Linus Upson, Google’s vice president of Chrome OS. Alain McKenna, special contributor

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1026

The iPad is said to have been a flop at Christmas. The noise has invaded the Web since Orange announced that it had sold only "nearly 30,000" internet tablets in December, including a little over 20,000 of Apple's latest toy, and the rest for the Galaxy Tab from Korean Samsung. The operator may well say it is "rather satisfied", but it has not convinced many people. Especially given the incredible media hype (yes, including Libération) which predicted a flood of tablets under the Christmas trees. Gadget. So, top or flop? "It's a good start, but not excellent", summarizes Jean-Philippe Illarine, at Samsung. According to the GFK institute, "around 100,000" tablets were sold in December in France and "around 450,000" in 2010 (excluding mobile operator stores), the vast majority of which were iPads. A score in line with forecasts. And very honorable for a product that is so young (seven months), confusing (at the same time computer, internet browser, e-book, games console, etc.) and especially very expensive (550 euros on average last year). In short, a gadget initially acclaimed by urban and rather well-off technophiles. "After the buzz, we have to calm things down!" they say at GFK. The craze is there, but it is not the heist of the century. It takes 15 million pieces sold for a technological product to represent a mass market. We will get there, but it is not yet the case." On the other hand, the flop was definitely there for mobile operators. They were hoping to hit the jackpot by transposing their miracle recipe inherited from the telephone: subsidizing the device (the price of the iPad at 600 euros went down to 279 euros), on condition of subscribing to a mobile Internet subscription that allows you to surf anywhere thanks to 3G technology. Not very tempting when you want to offer the object for Christmas. "It's a poisoned gift," mocks an expert. "It amounts to offering the obligation to pay 30 euros per month for two years." That is more than the price of an unsubsidized iPad. Consumers were not mistaken. "Orange's 30,000 copies is clearly not a lot," mocks a competitor, who has nevertheless also noted the absence of "exceptional enthusiasm" for tablets. It must be said that the iPad, because of its large size, is mainly used at home or in cafés, where you can surf for free via Wi-Fi. Which limits the interest of a 3G subscription. The exorbitant rates of the operators have not helped matters: with the exception of the SFR discovery offer (8.90 euros per month), the packages cost between 25 and 39 euros per month, in addition to the mobile phone bill. Not easy to swallow in times of crisis. Especially since Orange, SFR and Bouygues have been much heavier handed than in the United States, where the biggest tablet packages do not exceed 19 euros per month. Price breakers. Samsung has been the victim of this policy, since its Galaxy Tab, very compact and equipped with a telephone function, was sold exclusively by the operators. "There is work to be done here and there," says Jean-Philippe Illarine very diplomatically. The Korean company will also launch larger models next month, which will this time be available "naked", without a mandatory subscription. These youthful mistakes should not, however, hinder the growth of these strange connected objects. Firstly because consumers will finally have a choice (there were only four brands of tablets at Christmas). Several dozen new products are expected, including the luxurious iPad 2 and the Blackberry tablet, planned for spring. But above all, the mass arrival of price breakers, including the Taiwanese king of computers, Acer. Like most of Apple's competitors, they are banking on Android, Google's free and open source software. And they intend to accelerate the democratization of tablets, already started last year by the French Archos and its 250 euro models. GFK predicts that sales will double in France this year with 960,000 units sold and 420 million euros in turnover. Not bad for a start.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1027

Who would dare deny the importance of social media today? They seem to us to be essential, constantly fueled by viral contamination. We run between MySpace, YouTube, Facebook, Classmates, Twitter, etc., anxious to be present everywhere. The founder of LinkedIn (70 million users), Reid Hoffman, was able to state that "MySpace is the bar, Facebook is the barbecue at the bottom of the garden, and LinkedIn is the office". These social media have multiplied: Flickr, Myheritage, Trombi, Last.fm, Plexo in the United States, Viadeo in France, Xing in Germany, Jobssip in Spain, Renren Xiaonei in China (an imitation of Facebook which translates as "people on campus"), and even in Africa, on mobile phones: iYam.mobi, launched by Fritz Ekwoge. Facebook, which is just six years old, is increasing its number of users by a million per quarter, according to the huge and unverifiable figures that are announced, reaching 600 million at the end of 2010. Its revenues, nearly 635 million in 2009, are expected to reach a billion by 2010. According to the American institute Hitwise, Facebook could boast 3% more unique visitors than Google and more page views. At the same time, the announcement of the Google Me network has been postponed once again. Facebook is said to constitute 25% of Internet traffic in the United States. While the desire to socialize is unlikely to diminish, nor is the feeling of solitude of our individualistic masses, how can we announce today the predictable decline of Facebook? There are many reasons. Facebook is first and foremost a network of teenagers looking for friends - it has become a kind of competition to display more and more of them - and like all the fads with which successive generations of young people identify, with clothing trends, musical groups or dances, the Facebook generation will grow old and pass the baton. We can already hear younger people declaring that Facebook is uninteresting. We observe the same ephemerality in the succession of fashions for digital tools. Thus, digital watches, which had rightly invaded the market, have almost disappeared. Fashion has returned to large hands on large dials. We hardly talk anymore about the game Second Life, which was so successful three years ago, with its land speculation, and which minted its own currency, convertible into dollars. Everyone wanted to create their avatar there, while large institutions and multinationals invested in it to open shop windows and shops. Despite the current taste for transparency and authenticity, networks of friends such as Facebook are increasingly arousing distrust. It is true that by exhibiting their private lives in this way, many young people naively do not care about themselves, and that this personal data can immediately be used for better or for worse. A recent survey conducted by Iligo, a French agency that analyzes consumer behavior, reveals that 80% of Internet users do not trust the privacy policy of the social media they use. In the case of Facebook, the most prominent, numerous controversies have forced its leaders to back down and make apparent concessions. The fact remains that it is complicated to get out of it and that if you manage to do so, the site "reassures" you by telling you that if you change your mind and want to re-register later, you will immediately find all the personal data that you have put there - precisely the ones that you have just tried to permanently erase to protect your private life and your future! These two sides of Facebook, one of friendly friendliness, the other of underhanded commercial exploitation of this private data, are terribly contradictory. Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the Web, just twenty-five years ago, has just published an insistent warning on the "closed nature" of the Facebook platform. We will add that despite Facebook's recent announcement to now offer an easy, fast and user-friendly mode of exchange that would make the "old email" obsolete, this network offers little innovation in its functionalities. In addition, it lacks depth, dedicating itself to superficial exchanges without content. Finally, I can't see how this platform will overcome for much longer the obvious contradiction between the naive relationships of adolescents and adult corporate or professional uses, such as political, commercial, humanitarian campaigns, literary, scientific, historical, academic debates, etc. Yet another two sides of Facebook that don't match. The clienteles are not the same, nor are the activities, and this platform is clearly too large not to soon appear fragile and irrelevant. In addition, the commercial abuse of exploitation of personal data, which encourages many users to leave Facebook, has given rise to an alternative initiative, that of Diaspora in New York, in May 2010, which offers a free software platform with open source code, which allows all users to control the orientations, policies and uses of the site. Social media will not disappear, but they will become more segmented, to better meet the more specific needs of more defined groups. And in the fight between the digital empires Microsoft, Google and Facebook, it is the latter which is the most fragile, despite the excess of its current successes, or rather because of this superficial and unstructured craze. Communications without content are like water, which successively spreads into communicating vessels. Another metaphor: viral infections are like schools of fish or flocks of parrots, they move quickly and in bulk. Facebook's near future is more than uncertain. Driven by its success, it is not clear how it could reconfigure itself by better targeting its objectives and functionalities before losing the favor of the next wave of adolescents and adult users who have clung to it.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1028

It's the phonal fight... A fratricidal fight between smartphone users. For a long time, it was believed to be confined to iPhone users vs. Blackberry users. Wrong! There are nearly 370 models of these smartphones with which you can surf the Internet, send emails, play games, listen to music, show off or take photos. To make your choice, there's no need to dwell on the color of the case or the ringtones. No, what matters is the operating system (OS). The novice must decide between Android (Google), iOS (Apple), Blackberry (RMI), Windows (Microsoft), Symbian (Nokia) and many others. But beware! This choice is anything but trivial. Opting for an operating system is like joining a clan, a family. One that despises others and fiercely defends its favorite device, convinced that its OS is the best in the world. And this choice says a lot about the user's personality and values. Group directory. The members of this tribe are easily identifiable. Their gestures give them away: by dint of frantically tapping on their touch screens, sliding them and zooming with two fingers, their manual dexterity has increased tenfold. Incorrigible fans of Apple products, it is not uncommon for them to be over-equipped with the brand's products: iMac, iPad, iPod... But before joining the iPhone clan, a hazing takes place. The device being "high-end and designer", you have to dig deep into your pocket to pay for it. Expect to pay 629 euros, excluding operator offers, for the iPhone 4. Young dynamic executives working in advertising or communication love to show off their screen, "the best resolution on a smartphone", their super camera, their emails and especially their "apps". With over 250,000 of these downloadable programs, the Apple Store is the most stocked of all operating systems. Between those that imitate farts, burps, lightsabers, downing a pint of beer and the slew of games, you can count on them to liven up your evenings. And all this paraphernalia attracts customers. A little extra, not insignificant: according to a survey conducted by the online dating site OkCupid, users of Apple's smartphone, both men and women, have more sexual partners. But let's calm down: if you're a porn fan, it's better to avoid opting for the iPhone. Steve Jobs being known for being very puritanical, racy apps are banned from the Apple Store. The same goes for if you're a fan of French manicures. It's impossible to type with claws that are too long. If the iPhone lends itself to messing around, its big rival, the Blackberry, is no joke. This smartphone is for people who work, who need to be at their peak efficiency all day long, no matter where they are. So no time to waste on childish things. Those looking for fun apps should move on. As one user sums it up, "the diversity or multiplicity of applications is poor, but if I had wanted a toy, I would probably have opted for an iPhone." In exchange, Blackberrists can have a blast synchronizing their calendar and opening, viewing, and saving Jpeg, PDF, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint files. BB fans, as it's called, operate in a vacuum. Thanks to BBM (Blackberry Messenger), an instant messaging service, they communicate only with each other. In addition to the suit and tie, they can be recognized by the phrase "I'll BBM you later," said between two meetings. Another clue to spot them: the little red light that flashes with each new email. Among the users, there are VIPs with top-secret conversations. It is impossible to monitor electronic communications (SMS, calls, emails) that pass through the device. Data encryption is such that some countries, such as Saudi Arabia, have banned it. Not recommended for the unscrupulous or those with big fingers. The BB is equipped with a keyboard full of microkeys and its small scroll wheel can be fragile. The operating system launched by Google is that of Geeks, those addicted to new technologies. For them, no fuss: Android is the future. On the Internet, we can no longer count the number of blogs or enthusiast sites that rave about the thing (Frandroid.com, Android-france.fr, Lesapplicationsandroid.fr). On their calendar (a Google calendar, of course), a big red cross on 2011, the year when their protégé should overtake the iPhone in market share. And they have reason to believe it: 95 smartphone models already run on Android. So many devices (HTC Desire, Sony Ericsson Xperia X10, Samsung Galaxy S...), with different designs and especially different prices. As a result, everyone can buy one without stopping at the pawnbroker. Which probably explains why the Android community includes quite a few anti-Apple people, who accuse Steve Jobs of monopolizing the market with expensive products. They, on the contrary, have sworn an oath to Google, its many digital tools (Gmail, Google talk, Google Maps...) and its Opensource operating system (users can improve the OS themselves). Android is not recommended for those with a bit of a stomach: each version is named after a dessert (Cupcake, donut, éclair, IceCream...) that can whet their appetite. Since the apps can be downloaded outside the Android Market, those who are not used to tinkering on the Internet can get lost in the many sites that offer them. Having arrived after the start of hostilities, Microsoft's operating system does not yet benefit from an ultra-mobilized community. But according to the advertisements, "Less in mobile and more in life", "It's time for a phone to make us forget the phone", the people targeted are the antiphonards, this population not provided with a smartphone and who find it a bit silly to spend their time with their eyes glued to their screen. Here is something that may help the undecided: according to a video posted on the Internet, the HTC mobile equipped with Windows Phone 7 is, compared to the iPhone and Android, the most resistant to the barbecue fire. Not bad. The users, quite numerous, are depressed: their operating system will not have a new version, only updates. However, Symbian (Nokia) has 22% of market share in France, just behind the iPhone. Consolation prize? Symbian remains the best-selling operating system in Asia.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1029

These software programs are free, but they are usually pushed to you by a consultant who is selling you his time. However, you recently admitted to having spent far too much on IT consulting. Government employees understand very well that your bag is empty. They themselves use free software in their basements, well aware that Microsoft software is too expensive. An intervention on your part with Microsoft would be appreciated, both by the low-paid employees and by your devoted government buyers. \*\*\* Paul-André Desjardins - Quebec, December 13, 2010

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1030

The President of the Treasury Board is being courted by proponents of free software. Allow me a word of warning: be careful, Ms. Courchesne, Santa Claus does not exist! This software is free, but it is generally pushed to you by a consultant who is selling you his time. However, you recently admitted to having spent far too much on IT consulting. Government employees understand very well that your bag is empty. They themselves use free software in their basements, well aware that Microsoft software is too expensive. An intervention on your part with Microsoft would be appreciated, both by the low-wage earners and by your devoted government buyers. Paul-André Desjardins Québec

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1031

WikiLeaks manipulates the media WikiLeaks' indiscretions cause deaths, but WikiLeaks washes its hands of it. Julian Assange does not publish any information without submitting it to prestigious newspapers (The Guardian, Le Monde, Der Spiegel, El Pais, The New York Times) which judge its credibility and relevance. Why so many newspapers? Are journalists more competent when they are spread across several newspapers? The official reason is to avoid favoritism, but it may mask another. It may be to lower the threshold of tolerance for the "sensitive" nature of certain information. The danger posed by the publication of certain information is altered by the argument "if we don't publish, our competitor will." Assange is very familiar with the mechanics that govern the media and the preponderant place of the "scoop" in it. Michel Bellemare, Quebec Non-free software The President of the Treasury Board is courted by the proponents of free software. Allow me a word of warning: be careful, Ms. Courchesne, Santa Claus does not exist! These software programs are free, but they are generally pushed to you by a consultant who sells you his time. However, you recently admitted to spending far too much on IT consulting. Government employees understand very well that your bag is empty. They themselves use free software in their basements, well aware that Microsoft software is too expensive. An intervention on your part with Microsoft would be appreciated, both by the small employees and by your devoted government buyers. Paul-André Desjardins, Quebec Lake Placid rather than Amman... Contrary to what is said, the mountain is not the biggest handicap for 2022. We can always find one. The major obstacle - and much higher! - is Vancouver 2010. The IOC will never give the Olympic Games to Canada 12 years after Vancouver. Forget it, it's impossible! That's why Lake Placid's offer is so important. Not only do we settle the case of the cursed mountain at a bargain price (for free!), but we also push the Americans out of the picture to put them on our side in a binational presentation and no longer exclusively Canadian. One stone, two birds. By the way, Lake Placid is not much further from Quebec than Parkcity was from Salt Lake City. Jacques Noël, Quebec

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1032

Human beings are protocol animals. Our behaviors obey, consciously or not, codes. Until recently, protocol was an instrument of hegemonic power. The more we mastered the rules and their construction, the more we controlled the population. The writing and policing of protocols was the privilege of the elites. The Internet is today the place through which humanity is becoming aware that freedom requires the collective resumption of the construction and reinvention of protocols. The name WikiLeaks will remain as one of the milestones of this democratization. In the word "WikiLeaks", "Leaks" is important: these are the "leaks" thanks to which the decision-making circles that once appeared solid as rock liquefy and lose their splendor. But "Wiki" is just as significant: it means that everyone can contribute to this active demystification of protocols. What do the Internet and diplomatic circles have in common? These are two worlds governed by very strict protocols, but in an inverse manner. Diplomatic rigor is a surface veneer that allows all hypocrisies, low blows and betrayals. The protocol is staged, while the maneuvers remain in the shadows. The rigor of the Internet is on the contrary found in everything that we do not see: in its source codes, in its universal standards for writing programs and processing information (for example, on the Internet, the RFC, TCP/IP or HTML standards). What is immediately visible, on the Net, is a joyful chaos, turpitude, freedom of expression, all the manifestations of the human kaleidoscope. We have long been vaguely familiar with the codes that govern the more or less hushed life of embassies, these more or less tacit rules of etiquette, precedence and relations between States and their emissaries. We are less familiar with the recent operating logic of digital technology. Wikileaks is the product of hacker culture. A hacker is not a pimply villain who causes World War III by tinkering with computers. A hacker is an actor in reality: his practice is based on reverse engineering. What does that mean? It involves deconstructing programs, rules or protocols built by groups with a monopolistic vocation to understand how they are built at the source, in order to modify them and become an actor in his own communication instruments, if possible in Opensource, that is to say in accordance with the spirit of free software, modifiable by all those who take the trouble to know the digital logic of the protocols. But hackers do not limit this way of doing things to digital programs: by spending most of their time on the Internet, the younger generations now have the algorithm in their skin: they understand to what extent our worldly protocols, our political and social rules, our behaviors, our tastes, our beliefs, our identities have been constructed and are instruments of control. The diplomatic world, that of leaders, is certainly not sacred. Many have repeated it in their analyses, the WikiLeaks leaks are not very surprising in content. But let us not forget that "the message is the medium", according to the famous and always enlightening formula of Marshall McLuhan. The strength of the current historical event lies in the form rather than in the substance. This event is said thus: "digitalism", namely the global codification of our representations in binary electronic sequences is a new universal DNA. This digitalism, by contrast effect, increasingly brings to light a complementary human tendency, "crealism", the desire to become autonomous, to freely keep oneself away from automatisms, while taking back control of a democratic recreation of protocols. In English, this is called Empowerment; in French, capacitation. The old elitist analog worlds of double talk and bluff, especially those of politics, can only be shaken. The message that WikiLeaks sends to those who govern is the following: now that you are using digital logic to organize the world and control the masses, know that the masses will be able to have access, like you, to this universal protocol to divert it or unmask its hegemonic uses. An inevitable democratization, unless we put in prison all those who know computer programming, a temptation that seems to itch some leaders, including in France. He who rules by code will fall by code. Those who intend to control the masses by biometrics, electronic control, must expect to see digital protocols turn against them thanks to the vigilance of a few, provided that the Internet and the press remain free. A freedom that must not only be technical, but critical and constructive. Because let us never forget, with Orwell, that digitalization alone, without collective creativeism, will not lead to more democracy, but only to the best of all possible worlds. Latest work published: "On the Art of Being Free in the Age of Automata" (Max Milo, 2010).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1033

Los Angeles - Visa, MasterCard, Swiss Bank... Some of the world's largest financial companies are victims of computer attacks from the group Anonymous, which says it wants to avenge the arrest of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. A form of protest carried out using free and legal software, reports our correspondent. The arrest of Julian Assange triggered a wave of virtual attacks that temporarily disrupted the sites of Visa, MasterCard and PayPal last week. This web guerrilla warfare is led by a group of hundreds of Internet users called Anonymous, a sort of leaderless swarm that spontaneously decides to cause harm to an organization deemed to be at fault. So far, Anonymous's trophy case has been rather meager: the symbolic actions of the hackers targeted the sites of companies and did not affect transactions. Researcher and Internet specialist Evgeny Morozov wrote in Foreign Policy that these virtual demonstrations were more like an occupation than a destructive attack against a given enemy. "Like the sit-in, this technique is intended to briefly disrupt a service or institution in order to make a point. Just as we don't criminalize all sit-ins, I don't think we should criminalize all disruptions." The online protesters targeted the websites of MasterCard, Visa, and PayPal after they stopped accepting micropayments sent to WikiLeaks. The activists' outrage also stems from an apparent duplicity in the criteria of these financial giants. They have long authorized online transactions from the Knights Party (the current incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan), most porn sites, and anti-abortion activists who encourage violence against doctors and their patients. Not very sophisticated The attacks are conducted using a free, open-source software called Low Orbit Ion Cannon (LOIC). Users can use the software to launch an attack directly on a site or voluntarily make their computers available to a group carrying out an attack. But these actions are not very sophisticated, according to experts. And those who take part in them do not always mask the IP address of their computer, which allows them to be identified. Two teenagers have been arrested in the Netherlands in the last few days. University researchers in the Netherlands summed up the situation in these words: "The technique of the attacks is a bit like overwhelming someone with a large number of letters, but writing your address on the back of the envelope." Julian Assange has attracted the sympathy of Internet users since his arrest: yesterday, Time magazine said that his candidacy for the title of "Person of the Year" had received the most votes in an online poll. The editors of Time are to announce their choice tomorrow. The reaction to Julian Assange's arrest is far from the only area of interest for these hackers. Interviewed by The Guardian, one of them said he was in it to make money. "For example, if you had a DVD of Harry Potter 7, Part 1, you could make $12-15,000 selling it (to hackers)," he wrote.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1034

It was during an international meeting on online marketing organized at the end of November in Sydney, Australia, by Nine MSM, a famous online portal in the country of Nicole Kidman, partially owned by Microsoft. In 2006, the same Cole had predicted there the fall of the MySpace kingdom, another space for sharing life and creations. And inevitably, the prophecy having come true, the audience was hanging on his every word, reported recently the daily newspaper The Australian. Fragmented networks "The same thing will happen to Facebook," warned the thinker of digital and the dematerialization of human relations, "but it will take more time. This network will not, however, be replaced by a single, large community, but rather by fragmented networks." Cole likes to brag and project himself into the future. The present, however, seems to prove him right, as evidenced in recent months by the emergence of a multitude of new social networks that seek to fill gaps in privacy, correct errors in the marketing of private data, but also explore the facets of communication forgotten by the empire created in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, who sees the number of his detractors grow at the same speed as his hegemony. Diaspora and the others The wave of protest is gaining momentum and Diaspora intends to take advantage of it to take flight by displaying its colors: decentralization, free software and data security. Just like Insoshi, AppleSeed or Elgg, Diaspora, imagined by four students from the Courant Institute of New York University (NYU), aims to be an open exchange network, but also hosted on the computer of each of its members - rather than on foreign servers. Thus, personal information (photos, videos, thoughts out loud about life, the world and current events) are kept at home, for greater respect for privacy, say the creators of the network. The New York Times has also described this project as the anti-Facebook, the source code of which was delivered to programmers on the Web last September to begin dissemination. An appeal for donations to support this development raised $125,000 in just a few weeks. The idea is appealing. And the same should be true of Folkdirect, another social space launched last June that offers to communicate with friends without being bothered by targeted advertising. The place presents itself as "the site for real friends" and also sets the table from the start: your personal data will not be transmitted to third parties. Two shadows on the picture however: the decoration of the places, and a pale graphic inspired by Facebook through which it is also possible to go to invite your friends to join us on Folkdirect. No more than 50 friends Another place, another spirit: Path, itself, proposes to digitally produce social cement by exchanging photos, in portable format, and this, through a smartphone application launched in November. Exit, however, the incessant quest for friends or subscribers, specific to Twitter and Facebook. This social network, created by a former high-ranking Facebook executive, Dave Morin, and the co-creator of Napster, Shawn Fanning, simply wants to facilitate the sharing of "important moments" of human existence with the people who really matter, with a limit of 50 friends, not one more, per account. Photos, yes, but not only that: this is the proposal made by One Social Web, a sort of aggregator of social networks and other online communication tools whose advent is announced for the summer of 2011. The European telephony giant Vodafone is behind this all-in-one which aims to bring together, on the model of the decentralized network, all of an Internet user's activities: email address, photo or video sharing page, Twitter communication thread... Open to the end, its current development is also done in this spirit, like Diaspora. Multiple personalities and art Against the current of the sacrosanct transparency, which participates in the construction of social networks, Hibe, for its part, is rather betting on the multiple to convince of its relevance. The exchange space therefore invites you to multiply the profiles according to your needs: one to talk with your friends about "drinking", one for your work colleagues, one for your family... the whole thing is not interconnected for obvious reasons. Less pretentious, despite its origin, but certainly more relevant, the social network of the Louvre Museum, which has just seen the light of day, also offers another way of considering socialization in the digital age. How? By creating a community of interests around the works that bring the illustrious institution to life. The members of this network are invited to provide comments on exhibitions, to distribute articles on art, to present videos and to comment on those of others in order, ultimately, without thinking too much about it, to slowly move the boundaries of social universes whose current mutation is certainly not about to end. \*\*\* -joindiaspora.com/ -dogfood.insoshi.com/ -elgg.org/ -www.folkdirect.com/ -onesocialweb.org/ -hibe.com/ -communaute.louvre.fr/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1035

And these social media have multiplied: Flickr, Myheritage, Trombi, Last.fm, Plexo in the United States, Viadeo in France, Xing in Germany, Jobssip in Spain, Renren Xiaonei in China (an imitation of Facebook which translates as: people on campus), and even in Africa, on mobile phones, iYam.mobi, launched by Fritz Ekwoge. Facebook itself, which is just six years old, seems to increase its number of users by a million per quarter, according to the staggering and unverifiable figures that are announced, reaching 600 million at the end of 2010. One in two Canadians is said to have registered, to the point where we speak of Canada "as a Facebook Nation." And its revenues, nearly 635 million in 2009, should reach a billion by 2010. According to the American Hitwise Institute, Facebook could boast 3% more unique visitors than Google and more page views. At the same time, the announcement of the Google me network has been postponed once again. Facebook is said to constitute 25% of Internet traffic in the United States. Fashion effect While the desire to socialize, just like the feeling of solitude of our individualistic masses, is not likely to diminish, how can we announce today the predictable decline of Facebook? There are many reasons for this. Facebook is first and foremost a network of adolescents in search of friends -- it has become a sort of competition to display more and more of them --, and like all the fads with which successive generations of young people identify, with clothing trends, musical groups or dances, the Facebook generation will age and pass the baton. We can already hear younger people declaring that "Facebook is boring!" We are seeing the same ephemerality in the succession of fashions for digital tools. Thus, digital watches, which had rightly invaded the market, have almost disappeared today. Fashion has returned to large hands on large dials. We hardly hear any more about the game Second Life, which was so successful three years ago, with its land speculation, and which minted its own currency, convertible into dollars. Everyone wanted to create their avatar there, while large institutions and multinationals invested in it to open shop windows and businesses. Lack of trust Despite the current taste for transparency and authenticity, networks of friends such as Facebook are increasingly provoking distrust. It is true that by exhibiting their private lives in this way, many young people naively do not care about themselves, and that this personal data can immediately be used, for better or for worse. A recent survey conducted by Iligo, a French consumer behavior analysis agency, reveals that 80% of Internet users do not trust the privacy policies of the social media they use. In the case of Facebook, the most prominent, numerous controversies have forced its leaders to back down and make apparent concessions. The fact remains that it is complicated to get out of it and that, if you manage to do so, the site "reassures" you by telling you that if you change your mind and want to re-register later, you will immediately find all the personal data you have put there - the very data that you have just tried to erase permanently to protect your privacy and your future! These two faces of Facebook, one of friendly friendliness, the other of underhand commercial exploitation of this private data, are terribly contradictory. Contradictions Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the Web, just 25 years ago, has just published an insistent warning on the "closed nature" of the Facebook platform. We will add that despite Facebook's recent announcement to now offer an easy, fast and user-friendly mode of exchange, which would make the "old email" obsolete, this network offers little innovation in terms of its functionalities. In addition, it lacks depth, devoting itself to superficial exchanges without content. Finally, I can't see how this platform will overcome for much longer the obvious contradiction between the naive relationships of adolescents and adult corporate or professional uses, such as political, commercial, humanitarian campaigns, literary, scientific, historical, academic debates, etc. Here again are two sides of Facebook that do not match. The clienteles are not the same, nor are the activities, and this platform is clearly too broad not to soon appear fragile and irrelevant. In addition, the constantly threatening commercial abuse of personal data exploitation, which is causing many users to leave Facebook, has given rise to an alternative initiative, that of Diaspora in New York, in May 2010, which offers a free software platform with open source code, allowing all users to control the orientations, policies and uses of the site. Segmentation Social media will certainly not disappear, but they will become more segmented, to better meet the more specific needs of more defined groups. And in the fight between the digital empires Microsoft, Google and Facebook, it is the latter which is clearly the most fragile, despite the excess of its current successes, or rather because of this superficial and unstructured craze. Communications without content are like water, which successively spreads into communicating vessels. Another metaphor: viral contaminations are like schools of fish or flocks of parrots, they move quickly and in bulk. The near future of Facebook is more than uncertain. Carried along by its success, it is hard to see how it could reconfigure itself by better targeting its objectives and functionalities before losing the favor of the next wave of adolescents and adult users who have clung to it. \*\*\* Hervé Fischer - President of the International Federation of Multimedia Associations and author of Le Choc du numérique (VLB, 2001)

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1036

In the shadow of the shocking news about cheating and tax evasion that fueled our feeling of being covered in leeches this week, this one went virtually unnoticed: the Quebec government will promote the use of free software in its computer park. Described like that, there is nothing in this news to get you out of preparing meat pies and doing holiday shopping. On the other hand, it is quite a Christmas for companies like Révolution Linux in Sherbrooke, invited to a buffet at which the giants were pretty much the only ones gorging themselves. The federal firearms registry and its colossal billion-euro bill, the Quebec Health File - which is still not operational even though the bill has now reached 800 million (42% more than expected - that rings a bell. It rings false. The framework policy that the provincial government is putting forward does not provide it with complete assurance of preventing such cost overflows. But it opens up to an alternative management method adopted by several countries concerned with maximizing their investments in IT. With free software, no licenses to pay for each government entity and for each individual user. This software can be copied completely legally. Ministries, institutions such as hospitals or schools can exchange it for free. The use of free software has already begun within the Quebec apparatus. It is emerging from the margins to become one of the references. "Managers have risked their careers by believing us and trusting us when the reflex of the majority was rather to go to reputable companies, regardless of performance and costs. This recognition is a huge victory for small businesses like us. It also ensures that we can no longer be ignored," rejoices the president of Révolution Linux, Benoît des Ligneris. This young Sherbrooke company sells its expertise in Canada, the United States and Europe. It has penetrated the markets of emerging countries such as Brazil and China. Révolution Linux was associated with a project by the Commission scolaire de la Région-de-Sherbrooke, which delighted the students, staff and management of the Saint-François building at La Montée high school. Seven classes at this school were equipped with computer terminals for a fraction of the cost of purchasing 231 conventional computers, taking into account many technical considerations. "We studied 21 options. The most efficient and least expensive was this one. Installing computers would have involved parallel investments in ventilation or air conditioning. "We would have had far fewer workstations for students with the same budget," says Philippe Caron, deputy director of the information technology department at the CSRS. Terminals generate less heat than a computer and are less energy-hungry. Putting 32 computers into service in a single classroom would have required reinforcing the electrical circuits. "These are details that escape us, as laypeople, but which greatly affect the equipment that we can make available to our students. The school's software can also be used at home without additional outlay for parents. That was another of our concerns," notes Céline Caron, the school's director. "Countries like Brazil are more advanced than us in terms of the number of computers per student, precisely because they have been using free software extensively for almost ten years. "Quebec is positioning itself to catch up," says the president of Révolution Linux, not hiding the fact that he is eyeing the cake. "The Quebec government invests $2.6 billion each year in its IT infrastructure. If we were to get just 1% of that amount, that would mean $26 million in contracts. The industry giants will not give up their place to us, we will have to fight. Except that we will no longer do so with a credibility deficit," believes Mr. des Ligneris. This is not the news of the century. It is even a little difficult to understand. Like when we first heard about generic drugs. Who among us does not know today that generic drugs are just as effective, at a fraction of the cost of the drugs from the manufacturer who held the patents? From now on, the IT buffet will be shared in the same way as the pharmaceutical buffet. The news is more important than we give it credit for.

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I have had very few opportunities to rejoice in our government's decisions in recent years. So, when I see one that excites me, I have to point it out. The announcement made at the Free Software Show by the President of the Treasury Board to the effect that the public sector will now be required to consider and evaluate free software for its IT needs and strategies marks a turning point in government governance of this sector. It should be applauded. This is a courageous decision because the minister will have to combat the reluctance of the "machine", a large part of which is "Microsoft certified" and which will not fail to conjure up disaster scenarios for anyone who dares to switch from proprietary solutions to free and open source solutions. She will have to resist, however, because the stakes are enormous. Not only for the cost of licenses now avoided, but because it will give a very real boost to the emerging Quebec free software industry. Hats off to you, Madame Courchesne, and hold on tight.\* Denis L'Homme Lévis \*Text written and transmitted from a computer equipped with GNU/Linux and from which Windows has been erased.

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The policy unveiled Wednesday by the President of the Treasury Board will not solve the problems encountered by major IT projects, believes the Parti Québécois. The PQ would rather see the expertise of the various departments grouped together within a single organization. This is what Sylvain Simard, Official Opposition spokesperson for the Treasury Board, the Public Service and Government Services, suggests, commenting on the tabling of the Framework Policy on Governance and Management of Information Resources. "The government should have the courage to group IT specialists from the various departments into a single unit, which would then be able to manage major projects. Our specialists find themselves isolated in their departments and without any direction when faced with external consultants." He also believes that these "three-letter" firms have very little competition. "They share the territories. I sit on the public administration commission and I see that for each IT contract, two firms are not compliant and the third gets the contract. On the next contract, another gets the contract against two non-compliant firms, and so on. I don't see anything in the policy that will correct this catastrophe," he concludes. Retired expertise The president of the Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec (SPGQ), Gilles Dussault, is happy to see Ms. Courchesne recognize "that we let too many people go. Finally! We've been saying for years that the attrition policy is killing our expertise." The Treasury Board will centralize IT development, he continues. "It's not a bad idea in itself, but when planning projects, will we consider the option of carrying out these projects internally? That's the key. There are many things we can do ourselves, even more so with free software. We are very competitive and very competent." passelin@lesoleil.com

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The President of the Treasury Board acknowledges that the government has lost its expertise in managing major IT projects in departments and agencies. This is not an ordinary admission, and it is fortunate that the Minister is taking steps to regain control rather than remaining at the mercy of the private sector. The IT resources of government agencies and departments (including health, social services and education) represent a lot, a lot of money: $2.6 billion in development and equipment, or 4% of the program spending budget. A windfall for information technology subcontractors. Increased risks of slippage for the government because costs and deadlines can more easily escape its control if it is not in control. Michelle Courchesne has just presented a bill and a framework policy on the governance and management of information resources of public bodies and Crown corporations. Its goal: to tighten IT resource planning, authorization, monitoring and accountability mechanisms. Duplication and overlap will be banned. A fight against improvisation has begun. Each public body will have to provide a three-year plan and an annual schedule for its projects. Any cost overrun of 10% will require additional authorization from the Treasury Board. The Minister also advocates the use of open-source software. She hopes that the new ways of doing things will allow the State to save $200 million by 2013-2014. The main flaw in this bill and this policy is that it is coming late. Quebec has a history of failures in terms of IT projects. A cost overrun of around 23% in the modernization of CARRA's IT systems alerted the Auditor General in 2008. The Quebec Health Record has been constantly postponed since 2006 and is swallowing up millions of dollars. Problems have also been noted at the CSST. The next report from the Auditor is likely to be very critical. Which led the PQ opposition to say that the Liberals are anticipating the Auditor's report by passing a law, and the ADQ member François Bonnardel to say that the government is acknowledging by legislating that its management of IT projects is a fiasco. These responses suggest that the Liberal government is the only one to have gotten bogged down in this area. However, the PQ government failed with GIRES. Some $200 million was swallowed up needlessly. Finally, a government is taking steps to regain control of its IT services and limit its dependence on external expertise. To achieve this, however, Quebec will have to succeed in attracting and retaining qualified personnel within departments and agencies. An operation that will require imagination on the part of the Treasury Board because competition with the private sector is fierce. Rebuilding expertise will take time, but also money. bbreton@lesoleil.com

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Quebec intends to closely monitor its investments in information technology. All organizations and Crown corporations are subject to a strict approval and evaluation process for each project by the Treasury Board, and any cost overruns of more than 10% will require new authorization. The President of the Treasury Board, Michelle Courchesne, tabled her new framework policy on the governance and management of information resources yesterday, along with the accompanying Bill 133. Departments and public agencies, the education and health networks, as well as Crown corporations, will have to comply. The system is structured around a hierarchy of "information officers." There will be a "sector" officer for each department or agency, a "network" officer for health and education; and a "chief information officer" at the top of the pyramid. The structure aims to give the government an overall picture of investments in information technology, to seize any opportunity to consolidate, pool or share resources. It also plans to tighten the approval process for any project of $5 million or more, which will have to go through three authorization stages before being implemented. Finally, each organization will have to submit a three-year plan of its investments annually, and have the planned expenses for the current year approved. Ms. Courchesne assures that this policy does not constitute an admission of failure of its major IT projects. "We are aiming for savings of $200 million per year in three years, on expenses of $2.6 billion. It still shows that we are getting good results in this area." Internally The framework policy also aims to give the government the means to ensure greater internal control of projects. But this requires qualified specialists, and there are not many of them, admits the minister. "We have lost too much expertise, it's true, and it will be difficult to correct because the entire sector is facing a shortage of qualified workers. We need to call on universities and CEGEPs to promote these professions, which were once much more popular." The President of the Treasury Board also expects changes in the relationships between government managers and external consultants. "We will even go quite far in terms of precision and detail," she predicts. As for open source software, she specifies that organizations will assess its justification in the preliminary phases of project development, therefore before the actual call for tenders process. We will therefore still see calls for tenders exclusively for Microsoft or other solutions. "But with the policy, when a project is authorized, the department or organization will have to analyze open source software in its initial business plan. This obligation will even be part of the directives of the law," she specified. Finally, Ms. Courchesne also announced a "major shift" for the Centre de services partagés du Québec (CSPQ), following an evaluation report that raised criticism. "We need to review the way the CSPQ positions itself at the service of organizations. It will have to develop an approach in which the client organization will be a stakeholder in the process," she said. She also intends to eliminate invoicing between the CSPQ and the ministries. "That is something that unnecessarily weighs down the bureaucracy..." passelin@lesoleil.com

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QUEBEC - With better monitoring of IT projects by departments and agencies, Quebec hopes to save $200 million by 2013-2014. A bill presented yesterday by Treasury Board President Michelle Courchesne will impose tighter management of these costly purchasing programs, several of which have turned into nightmares in recent years. She refuses to talk about "fiascos" - "slip-ups" at most - when talking about the tens of millions needlessly swallowed up in projects by the Ministry of Health, the CSST or the Commission administrative des régimes de retraite (CARRA). Government spending on IT systems reaches $2.6 billion per year. The bill creates a position of chief information officer - currently the Secretary of the Treasury Board, Denis Jean. Departments and agencies will have "sector leaders" who will report to him. Projects over $5 million will have to be approved in advance by the Treasury. Officials will have to produce annual progress reports, and any 10% overrun of budgets will require additional authorization. All departments and agencies are affected, as well as the education and health networks. Even regional agencies will be required to apply this policy. Hydro-Québec and Loto-Québec will also have to adopt an identical strategy. Ms. Courchesne is not gentle with the structure put in place by the Charest government, the Centre de services partagés du Québec (CSPQ), which unnecessarily complicates the process, according to a recent report by an independent firm. The CSPQ even went so far as to bill departments and agencies for its services. Such an approach between agencies of the same government is heresy, according to Ms. Courchesne. Until now, in departments and agencies, "everyone was doing their own thing," notes Ms. Courchesne. Over time, projects that seemed simple at first turn into "major management challenges." Too often, in government, we have tried to solve a problem by creating a huge application when it would have been better to split the projects. In this sense, SAGIR (Business Solutions in Integrated Resource Management) worked better than GIRES, a database project in which more than $200 million was swallowed up unnecessarily, according to the Auditor General. The Auditor General will arrive late next year with a very critical report on the management of IT projects in the government. Ms. Courchesne denied yesterday that the government had asked Renaud Lachance to delay submitting his report - in the last 10 years, it has only happened once that the Auditor General did not submit his report in December. For several years, the government has increasingly used external expertise for its IT projects, a trend that Ms. Courchesne wants to reverse. The emphasis will be on hiring and training, she explains. Often, civil servants did not have the expertise to contradict the external consultants who determined the needs of the organizations. There is a shortage of IT specialists in government, according to the minister. "To challenge external consultants, you need expertise," she summarized. Open source software Civil servants who decide on IT contracts, Ms. Courchesne said yesterday, will now have to take into account proposals for "open source software", these open programs whose licenses are free, unlike expensive "proprietary" applications such as Windows or Office, Microsoft's two main products. Open source software will have to be evaluated in terms of quality and reliability. The acquisition costs are zero, but the consulting services on these products are not, she recalled. Departments will be encouraged to turn to these less expensive solutions, which are already used by many governments around the world. Parti Québécois MNA Sylvain Simard argued that this gesture came very late, after several "proven fiascos" that could have been corrected. As for François Bonnardel, of the ADQ, he stressed that the announced policy was an admission of failure. There have been many slip-ups. The Quebec Health File was supposed to cost $562 million, but it is now at $800 million and the results are still far from being there. The CARRA system was supposed to cost $75 million; it has now reached $110 million. Hydro-Québec's billing system has many failures despite a bill of $200 million, twice as much as expected.

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Quebec is tightening the rules for managing IT projects in public bodies, an admission of failure in the eyes of the opposition parties, who accuse the government of having spent billions of dollars in public funds before taking action. The President of the Treasury Board, Michelle Courchesne, tabled a framework policy on the governance of information resources in public bodies yesterday in the National Assembly, which also opens the door to open-source software. "With this policy, we believe we will be able to save $200 million by 2013-2014," the minister insisted. Quebec is proposing, among other things, a tightening of information resource planning, better project monitoring and an increased role for the government's chief information officer. Ms. Courchesne, who wants to recruit new IT specialists in the public service, also acknowledged that "considerable amounts" have been spent on information resources in the past and that the systematic use of the private sector for the design of IT systems may not have been a very good thing. After having swallowed up no less than $2.6 billion annually in IT projects, the government is finally admitting its mistakes, maintains the ADQ. "The Quebec Health File, whose estimated costs are almost double the forecasts, or the CARRA project, which was estimated at $75 million and has now reached $110 million, are just a few examples of the Liberal fiasco in terms of IT resource management," ADQ MNA François Bonnardel told the Journal. Beware of the AG's report For the Parti Québécois, the hasty tabling of this bill is nothing more than a way to defuse the upcoming Auditor General's report, which is likely to be extremely critical of the government's management. "This is an attempt to respond in advance to the report by Renaud Lachance, who has been investigating government IT projects that are fiascos for the past 12 months, a report that will necessarily be devastating," PQ MNA Sylvain Simard told the Journal. The representative for the Richelieu riding believes that the solution proposed by Quebec to prevent huge cost overruns in IT projects risks adding a layer of bureaucracy, instead of tackling the root of the problem.

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QUEBEC CITY - QUEBEC CITY -- Quebec is tightening the rules for managing IT projects in public bodies, an admission of failure in the eyes of the opposition parties, who accuse the government of having spent billions of dollars in public funds before taking action. Treasury Board President Michelle Courchesne tabled a framework policy on the governance of information resources in public bodies in the National Assembly yesterday, which also opens the door to open-source software. "With this policy, we believe we will be able to save $200 million by 2013-2014," the minister said. Quebec is proposing, among other things, tighter planning for information resources, better project monitoring and a greater role for the government's chief information officer. Ms. Courchesne also acknowledged that "considerable amounts" had been spent on information resources in the past and that the systematic use of the private sector to design IT systems may not have been a very good thing.

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The President of the Treasury Board unveiled yesterday the "framework policy on governance and management of information resources" and tabled Bill 133, which implements this policy. "We have lost too much expertise, we have to admit that," said Michelle Courchesne during a press conference. "Too many external contracts? Probably," she said, adding that she would like to see IT development done more by government employees. "We will have to be much, much more, I would say, vigilant, or, in any case, more precise in the way we award our contracts," she said. "I am very concerned about the fact that the government is losing its expertise and know-how in every area. So, we have to rebuild it," said Michelle Courchesne, who is giving herself two or three years to implement her policy. The government spends $2.6 billion per year, or 4% of its program spending. Half of this amount is allocated to the education network and the health and social services network. More than $1 billion per year is devoted to carrying out projects and the rest goes to maintenance and operation. The President of the Treasury Board has set a goal of saving $200 million per year starting in 2013-2014. Critical report The unveiling of this policy comes at a time when the Auditor General of Quebec has just postponed the tabling of a critical report on the management of major IT projects until the next parliamentary session. The list of "fiascos," a term the minister did not want to use yesterday, is long and the cost overruns are legion: in addition to the huge aborted GIRES project, there is the suspended project of the Commission de la santé et sécurité du travail (CSST), the one that ended in failure of CARRA, the manager of the civil service pension plan, and this other one of the Réseau des services intégrés pour personnes aînées, abandoned by the Ministry of Health and Social Services. That's without counting the Dossier santé Québec, which is seriously behind schedule. The solution put forward by Michelle Courchesne is to centralize the management of IT projects. The Treasury Board will impose on departments and agencies a three-year plan for expenditures allocated to "information resources," annual approvals as well as three-stage approvals for each project. Any cost overrun of 10% or more will have to be justified to the Treasury Board. The government is also now advocating the use of free software when it proves advantageous. For the MNA for Richelieu and official opposition critic for public administration, Sylvain Simard, adding "a layer of government structure" will not be enough; instead, it would be necessary to concentrate the government's IT expertise and improve competition between large IT firms. "The government admits very explicitly that things are going very badly, that it has lost control and that it does not have the necessary expertise," he believes. ADQ critic François Bonnardel agrees. Bill 133 is "the confession of the Liberal fiasco" in IT, believes the MNA for Shefford.

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The government is opening the door wide to free software. With the bill tabled today by Treasury Board President Michelle Courchesne, this software will have to be considered in calls for tenders, not only by ministries but by all Quebec government agencies. Ms. Courchesne gave the closing conference of the Salon du logiciellibre du Québec yesterday at Laval University. She could not reveal the details of the bill before it was tabled, but she took advantage of this opportunity to announce a shift that could shake up the Quebec IT landscape. "In any project, there will now be an obligation to consider free software, to analyze it based on quality, needs and costs. This shift is not only urgent," she said, "but it will also be major, because the health and education networks, including universities, will have to comply with it." She points out that information technologies represent annual expenditures of $2.6 billion in ministries, organizations, and education and health networks. Quebec will have to change the way calls for tenders are made, in order to include comparables that are suitable for both models: proprietary and free. "I felt that a world separates your industry from our managers," she emphasizes. Free software is still a mystery to my colleagues and me, there will be a lot of teaching to do." For this reason, the President of the Treasury Board is proposing the creation of a table, starting in January, that will bring together representatives of free software and government managers. "We must give ourselves the means to take this important turn and avoid finding ourselves in a dialogue of the deaf." But these contacts will also aim to reassure decision-makers about the capacity of this young industry to meet the needs of the State in major projects. "In the event of a problem, our managers want to make sure they can resolve the issue within a few hours' notice. We can't afford to wait." Furthermore, Ms. Courchesne acknowledges that the Quebec government lacks expertise when it comes to IT challenges. "We have let a lot of them slip away over the years, and I am concerned about rebuilding professional teams in our organizations as quickly as possible. It is not normal that with such large investments we do not have sufficient strength in specialized resources." For Cyrille Béraud, president of the Association professionnelle des entreprises en logiciellibres (APELL), the progress made in just a few months is immense. "Ms. Courchesne's presence alone was an event in itself," he confided. Rebuilding expertise But in his eyes, the most important thing is the desire to rebuild the government's expertise in IT. "The real break is here. It means that we are abandoning the ideology that has predominated until now, according to which intelligence will be provided to us by multinationals." As for Daniel Pascot, director of the Department of Organizational Information Systems at Université Laval, he believes that "we have just witnessed something important. The government recognizes that without it, nothing will happen. And that goes beyond the parties, because everyone now recognizes it. I am only disappointed that there was no question of adopting standards on the formats of public documents. We must ensure that they can be consulted by any software in 10, 15 years." passelin@lesoleil.com

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"The shift is urgent, but it is big," summarized Ms. Courchesne before the participants of the Salon du logiciellibre at Université Laval. But be careful, she added, "we are not going to transform all government licenses overnight." Still: the framework policy will encourage the government apparatus to "analyze" the possibility of using free software when it makes acquisitions and to evaluate the advantages and costs. Added to this is the creation of a round table that will bring together government officials and industry representatives starting in 2011. Ms. Courchesne also made it clear that she would personally follow the progress of the file. She hopes to obtain significant results within "two or three years." Furthermore, Quebec will table a bill today on "information resources." Unlike software patented by computer giants like Microsoft, open source software allows users to have better control over the systems they use, its defenders argue. Above all, it is generally more affordable. The President of the Treasury Board makes no secret of it: the government has invested heavily in IT, and not always for the best. Noting that $2.6 billion was injected into IT resources each year, she said she wanted to ensure that this money was well managed. After centralizing IT in the 1980s, the government reversed course and massively decentralized it in the late 1990s, she said, before deploring the fact that in the process, the government “let go of a lot of expertise.” But it is wrong to believe that there is no open source software in government, she pointed out. “It is made. [...] The Department of Public Security even won an award for open source mapping software.” On the other hand, there is great resistance and managers will need to be "reassured," she said in a warning tone. "Will those who have come to integrate them be able to provide a kind of after-sales service if needed?" A few minutes earlier, the dean of the Faculty of Administration, Robert W. Mantha, had compared the arrival of free software to Gutenberg's invention of the printing press. But Gutenberg, he said, had the advantage of operating in a kind of technological desert while free software is up against the interests of well-established software companies. This is definitely the year of great successes for this industry, which has won a political victory after winning in court against the Régie des rentes, which had excluded it from a call for tenders in favor of Microsoft. For Professor Daniel Pascot, who has been campaigning for the cause for years, "the government understood that if it did nothing, nothing was going to happen." Satisfied in particular with the idea of a round table, Mr. Pascot was nevertheless "a little disappointed" yesterday that Ms. Courchesne did not talk about "formats." "A big obstacle, at the moment, is that Microsoft has control over the format of documents," he said. According to him, the government should favor "free and public" formats, such as ".odt" as opposed to those that are protected by patents, such as ".doc."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1047

Well known as a computer hardware recovery company, the Centre de traitement d'ordinateurs usagés (CTOU) has just added a new component to its services with the creation of the CTOU international foundation, or FICTOU, whose objective is to provide computer equipment to community organizations, at home or abroad, after giving a second life to computers that are supposedly at the end of their life. Jean-Pierre Tremblay, vice-president of business development and community support, specifies that FICTOU wants not only to promote good recycling practices, but also to support non-profit organizations in computerization projects and technical development, and also to promote open source software. "When a company sends its old computers, it is making an ecological gesture," says Mr. Tremblay, "but with FICTOU, we can offer to go further with computers that can still be used. If the company does not know of any organizations to which we could provide the computers, we can suggest names. With the company's agreement, we will do the work." At the same time, CTOU gives the work of dismantling parts to people who have difficulty finding a job because of functional limitations or who have intellectual disabilities. Thus, in addition to the recovery of computer equipment, the ecological component, we add the social component for work in community projects, and the humanitarian component with functional computers for non-profit organizations. school partnership "By taking action in favor of the environment, by developing the social side with workers with limitations, we also ensure the financial sustainability of the organizations in the process, everyone finding their account, adds Mr. Tremblay. This is what gives us the sustainable and equitable equation." In this vein, FICTOU is negotiating a partnership agreement with the Les Compagnons-de-Cartier school with three work platforms. The first on recycling techniques, the second on the dismantling and testing of devices and the third on the reconstruction of functional computers. The school's assistant director, Natalie Blais, confirms that the partnership agreement should be signed in the coming days. "The assembly-disassembly workshop would involve students in the pre-employment training program," she emphasizes. "And in addition to manual work, some students will be involved in the administrative side of customer relations because people will bring their old computers here. It's a great opportunity to put young people at the heart of the action." The school would become a drop-off point for CTOU so that the entire project would be environmentally friendly. In addition, for regular classes, CTOU would participate in the "discovery" program in science with workshops on robotics. International Other agreements are about to be finalized with international cooperation organizations in Quebec such as AMIE (Aide internationale à l'enfance), Plan Nagua and CSI (Coopération santé internationale). "First, he says, we check the technical and operational aspects. Which organization on site can take charge of the computer equipment? Are there trained people? If not, we can train someone from the community here to become responsible for local technical support." Secondly, Mr. Tremblay says that the energy aspect must be analyzed before installing the computers. If the orphanage, cooperative or dispensary does not have an electrical connection, solar power will have to be considered. And, lastly, to close the loop, FICTOU wants to ensure that once they have reached the end of their life, the computers can be recovered and recycled according to standards. "If there is no recycling network in the region, there will always have to be a channel to do it," assures Mr. Tremblay, in order to respect the principles followed by CTOU. ytherrien@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1048

The first thing you notice about Richard Stallman is his appearance, his beard and messy hair. But when you listen to him, it's the power of his ideas that strikes you. The "father" of free software founded a movement to protect our essential rights, our computer "sovereignty". The computer scientist is a guest speaker at the Salon du logiciellibre du Québec, which ends today. Without Richard Stallman, the system we call Linux would never have existed. "I wasn't an activist at the time [in 1984], I was a programmer, but I was aware of an injustice. Without a "free" operating system, users would always be prisoners of big companies." Richard Stallman therefore used his programming talents to create the GNU system, to which the Linux "kernel" was added in 1993. All Linux systems in this world are in reality GNU/Linux systems. It was a tour de force in computing, but the real challenge taken up by Stallman was to have created an ethics of computing, based on four "essential freedoms": being able to do whatever you want with a program; being able to distribute copies to others; being able to study and change it; and finally being able to distribute copies of these modifications. Creating a dependency It is in the name of these values that he affirms that "governments must take the turn towards free software, to keep control over their data. They have the responsibility to maintain this control and never give it up to a company. It is a matter of the computer sovereignty of the State." And it is important to do this from school, according to him. "Some "private" companies give free copies of their software to schools, but it is to create a future dependency on their products. It is as if we allowed schools to distribute drugs for free... Schools must create free, united citizens." Also, the use of free software allows students who wish to study how it works. "Budding programmers can get the source code to learn how it works, which is impossible with proprietary software..." Several countries, including Canada, want to set up an Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA). But according to him, one of the consequences of this agreement will be to prohibit the use of free software to view multimedia content on DVD. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1049

Richard Stallman, an American computer scientist who founded the FreeSoftwareFoundation (FSF), will be the guest of honor at the Salon du logiciellibre, which will take place tomorrow and Tuesday at Université Laval. Mr. Stallman is the founder of the GNU project, the operating system that is wrongly called "Linux." The term Linux refers to the kernel, one of the components of the operating system. For this reason, the FSF would prefer that we talk about the GNU/Linux system. Since the mid-90s, Richard Stallman has devoted most of his time to promoting free software to various audiences around the world. During the two days of meetings, 45 speakers will share their expertise with participants. On Tuesday morning, Mr. Stallman will meet at the National Assembly with a delegation from the Parti Québécois led by Marie Malavoy, MNA for Taillon and Official Opposition Critic for Higher Education and Research. In addition, on Tuesday afternoon, the Show will bring together representatives from Quebec political parties for a round table to discuss the use of virtual tools to enhance relationships between citizens and public administration. The event will be an excellent opportunity to measure the progress of free software in government agencies around the world, during a conference given tomorrow afternoon by a South African expert, Nico Elema. The Show is organized by the Professional Association of Free Software Companies, which encourages the creation and development of this movement.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1050

Nearly 700 participants are expected next week for the Salon du logiciellibre du Québec, where Treasury Board President Michelle Courchesne is expected to unveil the broad outlines of her framework policy on information resources to the government. The free software industry is pinning a lot of hope on the bill that Ms. Courchesne is expected to table before the end of the month. She has already indicated that a section of the policy will address this issue. The government would be prepared to adopt measures to open the tendering process to these companies. The government could also have a profound effect on Quebec's digital culture without increasing its spending, believes Daniel Pascot, director of the organizational information systems department at Université Laval and also president of FACIL, an association that promotes free computing. "The government should commit to using open formats as a priority," he says. "This is a completely realistic position that will lead to good use, because if the government uses these formats, it will lead the population and businesses to do the same." These formats include, for example, .txt, PDF, JPEG, all OpenOffice formats, or .ogg for audio files, which are accessible to all users. So-called "proprietary" formats, such as .doc, .xls or .ppt from Microsoft are covered by patents that can limit their use. According to Mr. Pascot, Quebec could, for example, commit to accepting all documents in open formats, and could even go so far as to refuse to finance migrations to new software using proprietary formats. Better ensured sustainability "The government is not a business like any other, it must ensure the sustainability of information, and open formats offer the best guarantee in this regard." Opening up to software that can be used, modified, reproduced and distributed without restriction risks causing conflicts with users and sellers of patented software, whether from Microsoft, Adobe, Apple, etc. For example, the Centre des services partagés du Québec (CSPQ) unveiled its new "standards" in a recent call for tenders on the migration of workstations and technological infrastructures from the CSPQ, the Ministère des Services Gouvernementales and Services Québec. Some 4,000 workstations and 360 servers will be exclusively reserved for Microsoft solutions, a few weeks before the President of the Treasury Board presents her policy. At the same time, the Microsoft Select registration contract and the software assurance program, which cover purchases of Microsoft products and services by Quebec ministries and organizations, expired on September 30 and have still not been renewed. It is the software resellers, from the firm Compugen, who are responsible for informing the various ministries of the status of the discussions. "The CSPQ's Acquisitions Branch has been working for several weeks on implementing a new software CT [Treasury Board] and we will inform you as soon as it is in effect," wrote Nadine Carufel, director of software solutions marketing for Compugen, in an email sent to government clients, dated October 28. Are these negotiations related to the framework policy that Ms. Courchesne is to announce? We will know next week. But in a more recent message, dated November 24, Compugen informed its clients that negotiations are still underway for the renewal of software assurances, which allow for the acquisition of recent versions. "We suggest that you remain patient and we will inform you as soon as possible," they wrote. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1051

They talk about politics as well as childbirth, the environment as well as education. Different but united, Quebec bloggers now have their day. Tomorrow, more than a hundred of them will meet in Montreal for the first "Belles à bloguer" conference. The idea was raised by a blogger last spring, then made its way onto social media. When Mélanie Thivierge heard about the initiative, the blog reader in her was thrilled. That was all it took for Coup de pouce, which she runs, to get on board with the organization. In Quebec, those interested in the web and blogs already have a few conferences they can attend. What sets bloggers apart from their peers? "There are values that are specific to girls' blogs," explains Mélanie Thivierge. "Girls are more likely to express who they are, how they feel. They open up a lot." A sentiment shared by Sandra Bellefoy, who has been blogging for eight years under the pseudonym "Etolane." She believes that men are more likely to blog about their work or a specific interest. "If she's a mother, we'll find the "child" aspect in a woman's blog. If she's not, she'll often talk about fashion. In their blogs, women tend to present several aspects of their lives." Sandra "Etolane" Bellefoy's blog is a good example. "At first, I talked about linguistics, arts and culture. Then I became a mother and it became a mommy blog. Now that I've started working again, it's a blog about everything!" A meeting of experts It's not because they sometimes discuss breastfeeding, shopping and hair that the bloggers' day will be all pink. Conferences on blog marketing, the history of the women's blogosphere and SEO on the Internet are also on the menu. "It's still a meeting of expert Internet users, not a meeting of people who have never touched a keyboard," says Sandra Bellefoy. The event coordinator believes that it's the predominantly female audience that will bring the special color to "Belles à bloguer." "The workshop topics are topics that interest everyone who blogs. I think the female bias will be reflected in the audience," says Mélanie Thivierge. Girls who will sometimes meet for the first time outside of virtual limits. "There is something in the female blogosphere that I don't see elsewhere," says Mélanie Thivierge. "There are values of mutual aid, sharing, support. The bloggers will encourage each other, pass on tips, advice. The girls know each other without ever having met." After tomorrow, that will be a thing of the past. Info: www.facebook.com/Bellesabloguer

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1052

The reprimand stemmed from a call for tenders issued a few years earlier by the Régie des rentes du Québec (RRQ) for the replacement of office suites. Only products from the multinational Microsoft were considered, raising the ire of free software advocates, who took the case to court. With this victory in hand, they are now calling on the government to adopt a policy aimed at facilitating the emergence of free software in public administration, "for greater savings, greater data security," but also so that digital Quebec can inscribe its "development in a sustainable logic" for the future, says Daniel Pascot, director of the information systems department at Université Laval and president of the Association pour l'appropriation collective de l'informatique libre (FACIL). "We are at a pivotal moment in the computerization of public services. In the wake of the judgment, there is a stronger awareness of the advantages of free software. But there are still many barriers, prejudices and reluctance to break down to allow it to circulate more freely." Strong barriers The issue of computerizing the RRQ and its legal consequences have shaken the administration, but the barriers have not given way, as evidenced by a call for tenders launched in early November by the Centre des services partagés du Québec and which, once again, mainly favoured proprietary software. "We are still struggling with many blockages induced by the government and the administration," he says. "A profound paradigm shift is therefore necessary, as is sending a clear signal from elected officials for the establishment of a new IT ecosystem." The issue, which should find some resonance at the Salon du logiciellibre opening in Quebec City early next week, is significant. Indeed, by asserting its supremacy in recent years, commercial software, that owned by multinationals such as Microsoft, has also profoundly shaped the minds of decision-makers, the operating methods of the government apparatus as well as the citizens who interact with it. "We don't worry about it enough, but computer codes guide our behavior," says Mr. Pascot, quoting the famous American lawyer Lawrence Lessig, a specialist in computer law and author of Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace. The consequence, however, is now perceptible at all levels within the State where, from now on, free software to ensure the activities of civil servants is mainly seen as a series of constraints, claim the defenders of this type of application: "The costs of change are significant," says Mr. Pascot, "because commercial software is very well established. The formats of the documents are not open and, as a result, can only be consulted with licensed software." A captivity that is profitable for the software manufacturer and costly for the public administration, which could nevertheless see the current context of budgetary restrictions as a good opportunity to get out of it, he believes. "The cuts are good for free software," he says, "since they could encourage government departments and agencies to unite to develop common IT solutions based on free software. But, to do that, we have to start thinking long-term, which is not always easy in the government apparatus." A clear message The process is already underway in the municipal world, says Mr. Pascot, where several cities are more easily adhering to computer freedom. "Right now, for example, the City of Quebec is using software that was developed for the City of Laval," he says. "Of course, it's more economical. And it's also a step in the right direction." The tone is set. And to spread elsewhere in society, it is now a clear message from the government that digital Quebec would need, according to him. "We need to promote the free format [as opposed to commercial formats from software like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.], but also encourage sharing in software development by questioning the budgetary divisions by department in the public administration." For Mr. Pascot, this new situation would certainly have a positive impact on computer security -- "when you know the computer code of a software, it is easier to defend it" --, but also on the sustainability of government computer data which would then no longer be dependent on applications in the hands of private interests. "Free software is a common good that not only has interesting technical benefits," he continues. "It is also an element favorable to sustainable development that stimulates the local economy." As proof, he cites the millions of dollars in licenses that end up each year in countries with lenient taxation, where software giants have opened offices. "For Quebec, which pays large sums for these licenses, the results are negative," he says. And if we decide to stop paying for them by turning to free software, it will definitely pay off" by contributing to the development of local expertise that all of Quebec can then benefit from, before making the rest of the planet benefit from it, believes Mr. Pascot. He adds: "The choice of a document and software format is ultimately a political act," which politicians should now seek to better understand, according to him.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1053

Paris - Several websites and blogs have made La carte et le territoire by French writer Michel Houellebecq, winner of the Prix Goncourt, freely available on the Internet, practices against which Flammarion publishers have announced "taking legal action". These actions target websites that offer the 2010 Goncourt for illegal downloading and the blogger specializing in free software, Florian Gallaire, who is distributing it for free in PDF format. For Gallaire, the fact that the writer was heavily inspired by three articles published on the encyclopedic platform Wikipedia "makes the novel a free work". He explains that the Creative Commons BY-SA license, under which Wikipedia is placed, requires that the author of the article be cited and that the "share alike" clause be respected: "If you modify, transform or adapt this creation - the article - , you only have the right to distribute the resulting creation under a contract identical to this one." "We are going to take legal action against the interested parties, starting with a formal notice. And if that is not enough, we will take action," replied the director of Flammarion publishing house, Gilles Haéri, to AFP. "This is all the more damaging because we are going to make available for legal download, starting next week, the entire work of Michel Houellebecq, i.e. 13 books" (novels, poetry and essays), announced the general director. Their price will be 20% lower than that of the paper version.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1054

According to her, the call, by favouring only commercial applications such as those from Microsoft, would contravene a Superior Court ruling that, since last July, has forced the government to take so-called free software into account in its IT procurement. Accusations rejected out of hand by the CSPQ, which, in this case, says it acted in accordance with the law. "This is not a call for tenders for software licenses," Patricia Marton, spokesperson for the government agency, told Le Devoir yesterday, "but rather a call for professional services aimed at consolidating and simplifying computer networks." However, for APELL, it is rather a roundabout way of excluding free software from the public IT landscape, even though Judge Denis Jacques strongly condemned this practice a few months ago. The case involved the company Savoir-Faire Linux, accusing the Régie des rentes du Québec (RRQ) of favouring Microsoft products in a call for tenders, to the disregard of free software that could have offered a financially interesting alternative solution. The court ruled in favor of the entrepreneur while ordering Quebec to no longer issue such calls for tenders. However, the reorganization of the computer network by the CSPQ does not comply with this directive, states APELL, since it will be done "around a single technological platform based on proprietary software," the association indicates in a press release. It denounces in passing "the control of Quebec's information systems by a small group of multinationals, without comparison and without competition." While recalling that, in this case, free software could have been considered, APELL is demanding that Quebec adopt a "real policy for the use of free software within Quebec administrations." Let us recall that last September, the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) suspended a call for tenders that failed to make room for free software. At the time, the Association pour l'appropriation collective de l'informatique libre (FACIL) had denounced this situation, forcing the company to rethink its digital needs. Between recognition and reluctance, free software is increasingly seeking its place in government systems, here and elsewhere. For its promoters, this type of application allows for increased flexibility and improves the security and sustainability of computer data while easing the pressure on public finances. In a context of budgetary crisis, several administrations, including that of Barack Obama, have spoken out in favour of this software in recent years. The Parti Québécois has also encouraged the Charest government to do the same.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1055

Yes, today, we can do almost everything with a gadget that fits in our pocket. The most interesting thing in this situation is not the state of affairs (even if we could dwell on the profound difference between being able to do almost everything and wanting to do almost everything), but the technological battle that underlies this evolution. We are not talking here about the innovation front (oh, soon 3D, and then very high speed, and then coffee, too, one day), but about the economic and especially political confrontation that is raging in the mobile Internet sector. Because behind the market of these small applications that are multiplying and redecorating a phone screen like a Christmas tree, a potentially problematic movement is beginning. Indeed, the Internet has grown as a common good. Based mainly on free software and governed by rules such as network neutrality - which ensures that the smallest high school blog can benefit from the network infrastructures on an equal footing with Microsoft or BNP. If it had been necessary to develop as many applications as there are operating systems (iOS, Android, Windows, Blackberry, etc.), to pass the filter of manufacturers who arrogate to themselves the right to accept or refuse new features, or to avoid developing technologies that are too innovative for fear of entering into competition with the paid services of operators, all the biggest players today, from Google to Facebook via Skype, Amazon or Twitter would not be there. The smartphone market is a new El Dorado, yes. But manufacturers are perhaps too greedy. By wanting to restrict openness to ensure economic control over technological development, they run the risk of slowing it down considerably. But in the best case scenario, the real losers will not necessarily be Internet users. Such a controlled, closed ecosystem, economically very profitable but which ends up being left behind by the inventiveness and dynamism that prevails in open environments, in France, we have already experienced that well. It was called Minitel.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1056

Despite a Superior Court ruling that opened the door to free software, the Centre des services partagés du Québec (CSPQ) has just adopted standards that practically grant exclusivity to Microsoft solutions. The CSPQ's most recent call for tenders establishes standards for the "migration of workstations and technological infrastructures of the CSPQ, the Ministère des Services Gouvernements and Services Québec". A decision that affects 4,000 workstations and approximately 360 servers, used by employees of the CSPQ, the Ministère des Services Gouvernements and Services Québec. It is because the Centre des services partagés brings together employees from several organizations that use different technological infrastructures that the organization has decided to standardize office tools. In a 180-page document, the CSPQ mentions "the unification and rationalization of the software catalogue". For messaging services, this means "migrating to a Microsoft Exchange 2010 infrastructure". And for workstations, the "reinstallation of workstations and laptops from Windows XP (SP3)" as well as the "standardization of the office suite to Office 2007". We also want to stick to Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager 2007, a solution that would eventually lead users to migrate to the Windows 7 operating system. A subterfuge In a press release, the Professional Association of Free Software Companies (APELL) denounces the operation as a subterfuge aimed essentially at circumventing the judgment that imposed the opening of public markets to free software solutions. "APELL questions the legality of this call for tenders, since it awards, de facto, a market to multinationals of proprietary software, without putting it into competition, without comparison with free software solutions", writes Roger Laberge, delegate to the public sector of the association. The latter is asking the President of the Treasury Board, Michelle Courchesne, "to cancel the call for tenders and to implement a real policy for the use of free software within Quebec administrations." The case is reminiscent of that of the Société de transport de Montréal, which decided in September to suspend a call for tenders for the acquisition of 2,577 Microsoft Office 2010 licenses for the same reasons. According to Daniel Pascot, director of the organizational information systems department at Université Laval and a specialist in free software, the CSPQ "is locking in choices for the future. At first glance, it looks very much like a strategy to circumvent the judgment." At the beginning of the summer, Superior Court Judge Denis Jacques concluded that it was not possible to limit oneself to a single supplier without "serious and documented research" into other available solutions. "On what criteria, on what study did the CSPQ base itself to adopt these standards? asks Daniel Pascot. We would like to know." passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1057

The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), which defends the interests of the record industry in the United States, had obtained, at the end of October, the deactivation of the peer-to-peer sharing software Limewire. Useless enterprise: Limewire being a free software, it can be cloned at will and completely legally. Since the ban, its official version can no longer be downloaded on Limewire.com. But developers have gone to dig into the source code of the abandoned software to revive it from its ashes. And better: the Pirate Edition, that's its name, will work better and longer than its official big sister, promise the new developers. Who are not looking for any form of remuneration: "no advertising or spies" In the software, "pirate coders do this for the good of the community". Despite an unambiguous name and a downright insolent description on the software's Pirate Bay page ("Middle finger at the RIAA", which we dare not translate here), the Pirate Edition makes the effort to warn users about the possible illegality of the downloads they are making.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1058

IT This is the biggest fundraising of French start-ups. Talend, the publisher of database solutions, has raised $34 million from the American fund Silver Lake and its current shareholders, Balderton and Idinvest (formerly AGF Private Equity). In just three years of existence, Talend has raised a total of $62 million. The growth potential of this company founded by Bertrand Diard and Fabrice Bonan was spotted by Bernard Liautaud, one of the few French people to have founded a global software publisher with Business Objects (BO). After the resale of Business Objects to the German SAP, Bernard Liautaud joined the Balderton fund and invested in Talend, which he has been very actively advising since then. Talend publishes open source software that aggregates company data and connects it to applications: sales, payroll, commercial, customer relations, etc. It currently has 2,000 customers worldwide, including Citibank, Yahoo! eBay, Verizon, France Telecom or CDiscount. The company should achieve a turnover of around 30 to 35 million euros this year and is aiming for nearly 70 million in 2011. The company is not yet balanced. Acquisition in Germany Thanks to the money raised from its investors, Talend will be able to make acquisitions. The first of these has just been signed. It is Sopera, a German company that allows business applications to communicate with each other. The products developed by Sopera are very complementary to those of Talend. Above all, this acquisition opens the doors to the German market for the French group. This acquisition should be followed by others because Talend must take the turn towards cloud computing, which allows businesses to relocate some of their IT services to the Internet.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1059

If, like me, you have a series of old photos that you would like to keep on your computer or share on a social network, you need a scanner. On the market, there are large format devices, those capable of scanning negatives and slides or those integrated into multifunction printers. In general, these are large devices that take up a lot of space on a work table or desk at home. But, I have just tested a small model that is very interesting for photos not exceeding the format 10 cm x 15 cm (4 in x 6 in). And it is fast. On Mac or Windows PC, no need to install a driver or special software with the new Optex Printscan1 scanner. It is automatically recognized on OS 10.6 on Mac and by Windows Vista and Windows 7 on PC. There is software with the device, but it is useless if you already have image processing software such as Photoshop Elements, for example. The device can operate in standalone mode with a USB key or an SD or SDHC memory card as a storage element. It is then connected to upload digital images to the computer. It can also be kept connected to the computer. But on the Mac, the only inconvenience during scanning, the systematic disconnection when storing the image produces an error message advising that the module has been disconnected incorrectly. On PCs, this does not happen. Very small, the device is 24 cm x 6 cm x 18 cm. You have to take the time to calibrate the sensor and clean it from time to time with the tools provided, especially when the scanned image seems to have retained dust. The device is fast, but you have to make sure to handle the photos carefully to put the image straight in the feed slot. The resolution is 300 dpi. An interesting device, but limited in terms of the format of the photos to be scanned. It is distributed by Gentec International (www.gentec-intl.com/fr) and sells for around $150. Sansa Fuze Multimedia Player SanDisk, a company known for its flash memory cards, recently launched a new multimedia player and MP3 player. Being more accustomed to touch screens, I had difficulty with the touchpad of the Sansa Fuse device in the first few minutes. Once you get used to it, it becomes relatively easy to navigate the menus to go from one music album to another or from the photo section to the video section, even to the radio, because the player is also an FM receiver. Interesting, because you can even record a program in progress when you can't download the podcast. While consulting the tree structure works well when the device is connected to a PC, you have to take a few detours on a Mac. The device is not recognized as a flash drive the first time. I had to use the small open source software XNJB to mount the drive on the Mac desktop and transfer music albums and photos manually. The device is not compatible with iTunes, but PC software is available on a mini CD in the box. There is a slot for a microSHDC memory card that expands the storage capacity or allows the use of slotRadio cards that contain songs in different genres. Most slotRadio cards hold 1000 songs and sell for about $40. The player's battery is said to last 24 hours of audio playback and five hours of video. Overall, the player is a good value for its price and the versatility of its options. However, accessing the different sections is not as easy as the documentation claims. The sale price varies between $90 and $130 depending on the 4, 8 or 16 GB versions. Shaun White Skateboarding Shaun White is in prison because he had fun. The Ministry, a kind of political entity of the pleasure cutter, prefers the gray world, without color. However, skateboard enthusiasts are imprisoned physically and in their minds. It is up to an anonymous enthusiast, in this case the player, to give color back to the world in this totally gray universe. No real competition, but an adventure where you have to, by practicing many tricks, reanimate objects and people. The force of transformation will be calculated according to the points accumulated. The more complex the figure, the higher the number of points and the more effective the effect on the environment. And the player gains in skill and ability to influence with the level of flow. There are some not very realistic little passes with the grind bars that deploy in the air to go from one point to another in special areas. Not to mention the special objects to collect by performing acrobatics. The game is particularly easy and forgives a lot of the player's mistakes with his controller. No competition, but a lot of repetition of movements to perform tricks. It's on the edge of casual play. Skateboarding fans may find it interesting. Competition freaks will be disappointed. And Shaun White, we hardly see him. For PS3, Xbox 360 and Wii consoles. Sells for $60. Portable Santa Claus He's back, Santa Claus, with his customizable video greetings on www.perenoelportable.tv. The famous PNP console (Portable Santa Claus) has already received 23 million visits and led to the broadcast of 10 million messages. The PNP will be online starting November 22 with applications for iPhone, iPod and iPad, new forms of messages and a newspaper of news from the world of elves in addition to advice for children. It's a fun little gadget.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1060

In The Social Network, two heroes share the spotlight, Mark Zuckerberg, creator of Facebook, and his eminence grise, the scheming Sean Parker. A brilliant hacker, Parker is the co-founder of Napster, a peer-to-peer music file sharing service, whose dazzling success rocked the music industry between 1999 and 2001, when it was closed by court order. A few years later, Parker joined forces with Zuckerberg and became a billionaire. In the background, we can read another story, that of the Internet and its distortion, from Napster to Facebook, from peer-to-peer to Web 2.0, from a decentralized file sharing system to a monolithic proprietary platform, certainly more attractive, but monopolizing Internet users' content, controlling their interactions and exploiting and monetizing their personal data. At least, this is the analysis made by supporters of the open Web. On the fringes, open source initiatives that want to return to the foundations of the Internet are proliferating. The most popular initiative, Diaspora, created by four New York students, aims to be an alternative Facebook, based on the use of the peer-to-peer protocol, and which allows users to keep control of their data. In a similar vein, there are also The Appleseed Project, Crabgrass or NoseRub. Alternatives to Twitter have also appeared, such as Identi.ca or soon Thimbl, in the running for the new Open Web prize launched by the Berlin festival Transmediale in collaboration with Mozilla. Thimbl, from the Telekommunisten collective, is one of the three finalists alongside Graffiti Analysis and Booki, a free service for creating books, which Internet users are invited to decide between. "What has been lost sight of in the hype of the so-called "social Web", writes Dmitry Kleiner, co-founder of the Berlin cooperative, is that sharing is the reason for the Internet. Usenet, Email, IRC, all these decentralized platforms that were not owned by anyone, have enabled social connections, the emergence of citizen journalism, the sharing of photos [...]. And microblogging itself would have been possible decades ago." In fact, Thimbl, still in development, is based on classic Internet technologies, such as the Finger protocol created in the 70s, a service present virtually on every server, but generally disabled. It does not require a specific application. Thimbl is thus built on Internet standards (Finger, SHH, http...), which should make it a very widely accessible distributed social network. No need to reinvent the wheel each time, believes Kleiner, it is enough to enhance what already exists. This free microblogging service is just one of the projects of this political collective of "agitating workers" operating in the telecommunications sphere. Among their assets are Dialstation, a low-cost long-distance communications service, Trick, cheap micro-hosting, Deadswap, an offline file-sharing system, where participants pass around a USB key under the table. For Dmitry Kleiner, "the biggest challenge of the open Web is not technical, it is political." In The Telekommunist Manifesto, which has just been published, the hacker born in the Soviet Union opposes "peer-to-peer communism to the centralized Client-Server capitalist state." He lays the foundations for an alternative economic organization that propels Marx and Engels' Communist Manifesto into the Internet age. Www.thimbl.net www.telekommunisten.net www.networkcultures.org/ networknotebooks

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1061

Jérôme Kerviel, Albert Gonzalez, Julian Assange... The three men do not know each other, live in different countries and have nothing in common, a priori. Except for one thing: each in his own way has destabilized a financial or political institution with a violence never before recorded. The first, 33, a former trader at Société Générale, took risky positions on 50 billion euros of financial assets by thwarting the bank's internal controls. These positions generated losses of almost 5 billion euros. Without a capital increase, Générale was sinking body and soul. The second, Albert Gonzalez, 28, was indicted in the United States in 2009 for hacking and reselling the details of more than 130 million bank cards from the Heartland financial group, the largest theft ever committed in the United States. The third, Julian Assange, 39, became famous this year for posting 77,000 top secret documents on the war in Afghanistan on the WikiLeaks website. He did it again with a second batch of documents on October 22, this time on Iraq. The Pentagon was turned upside down. These three examples mark the emergence at the beginning of the 21st century of a new kind of Superman. For the first time in the history of humanity, a simple individual, devoid of the traditional tools of power (army, police, etc.), without any particular charisma, can cause global disorder or destabilize institutions. Of course, it has happened in history that individuals have articulated the course of events around themselves. Joan of Arc, Rasputin or Gandhi, doubtless gifted with exceptional charisma, were able to act on the will of the powerful or the masses. But, with the Kerviels or the Gonzalezes, here comes the advent of Super-banal-men. A Superman without qualities. The Americans invented a word to designate these new individuals: "super-empowerment". Simple empowerment designated the capacity of an individual to mobilize the external and internal resources necessary for his life balance and the realization of his projects. Super-empowerment marks the capacity of an individual - or a group - to use or divert technological tools that did not exist ten years ago to satisfy an individual appetite for power or to battle with powers that he would not have dreamed of scratching a decade before. The emergence of these new powers depends on several conditions. The first is the provision of sophisticated but easy-to-use tools to the general public. The software used by Gonzalez to hack Heartland is freely downloadable on the Internet. The second condition is the Internet: social networks and blogs multiply the channels for circulating information and allow people who do not know each other to form powerful ad hoc alliances. Julien Assange, figurehead of WikiLeaks, invites the whole world to denounce "unethical" institutional behavior, but who knows what personal score-settling is hidden behind each leak? To trigger a political tsunami, sometimes all it takes is to speak out at the right time. American pastor Terry Jones, only known to his neighbors before September 11, angered the population of 22 Muslim countries by threatening to burn the Koran to commemorate September 11, 2001. Third condition: electronic technologies often allow dual use, civil or military. A mobile phone can trigger a deadly explosion remotely. American guerrilla specialist John Robb explained on his blog Global Guerilla how SkyGrabber, a software of Russian origin, sold for $25.95, allowed Afghan and Iraqi insurgents to hack the video feeds of American military drones that are trying to spy on or exterminate them. A fourth reason underlies the emergence of Superman: the excessive complexity of developed societies. Skyscrapers, power plants, sewage treatment plants, pipelines, attacked or damaged by a few determined men, can paralyze a city or even a region for a long time. And institutions are too slow and too bureaucratic to anticipate where the next blow will come from. Especially since the worst is yet to come. A number of cheap, easy-to-use techniques, perfectible because they are developed in open source, are just waiting for a little creativity to be diverted for destabilizing purposes. The progressive democratization of biotechnologies makes the mass production of pathogenic tools capable of decimating a country, or even a continent, accessible to anyone. The first drones for individual use are already on the market. Who knows what espionage or destruction missions programmed by malicious individuals these miniature flying machines will be able to accomplish? Twenty years ago, national security was threatened only by the USSR. Now, the enemy may live next door, or in the apartment above.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1062

This week, MP Charlie Angus tabled a motion to this effect in the House of Commons. The symbolic gesture underscores the importance for Ottawa of supporting open-source information and communications technologies, but also of supporting companies promoting applications not governed by user licenses. The technological path advocated by the NDP is part of a global trend. Several governments, including those of the United States and France, have committed to using more so-called free software in their administration.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1063

Treasury Board President Michelle Courchesne plans to make room for free software in the policy she is soon to table on governance and information resources. Ideas are already starting to circulate outside the government on ways to structure the development of this model. Last week, two Parti Québécois members unveiled a file that discussed the savings that the use of free software could bring to the provincial government. According to Marie Malavoy and Sylvain Simard, the Quebec government must adopt a policy on the use of free software and open formats. On Thursday, Ms. Courchesne's press secretary, Isabelle Mercille, stated that "the minister is sensitive to the evolution of this industry. A section will be dedicated specifically to free software in the framework policy on governance and information resources that Ms. Courchesne is due to table in the fall." The minister has also been invited to participate in the next Salon du logiciellibre, which will be held in December at Université Laval, and which will include Richard Matthew Stallman, founder of the FreeSoftwareFoundation and designer of the GNU/Linux operating system. However, his participation has not yet been confirmed. Quebec could give itself tools that would stimulate the development of free software, believes Daniel Pascot, director of the organizational information systems department at Université Laval's faculty of administrative sciences. According to him, since we could use a fairly large number of software programs, it would be pointless to try to become a world leader in just a few. The development of this software essentially relies on collaboration between specialists, often scattered across the globe, he points out. "Those who decide in free software are those who code, they control its evolution." And for Quebec to position itself in this field, it should be able to contribute to software development: "That means investing time, learning the software and gaining recognition from the development team." He suggests "offering grants or scholarships so that individuals, spread across several companies, in relation with the university, CEGEP or research centres, become recognised developers." The Professional Association of Free Software Companies of Quebec could, in his opinion, play a useful role in the deployment of such an initiative. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1064

The Treasury Board is depriving itself of millions of dollars in savings by turning its back on free software, at a time when it wants to rev up IT spending, argues the Parti Québécois. Marie Malavoy, the official opposition's spokesperson for higher education and research, and Sylvain Simard, the spokesperson for the Treasury Board, public service and government services, have put together a dossier to denounce the Liberal government's inertia on this issue. In 2004, Ms. Malavoy recalls, the government committed to making room for free software in its report on e-government. Six years later, it took a court ruling to force the government to only consider this option in its calls for tenders. According to her, "the government maintains a technological dependence on Microsoft when it should instead have a real policy on the use of free software and open formats within its administration." Quebec gains nothing from limiting itself to Microsoft's quasi-monopoly, adds Sylvain Simard. "What profits do we get from the millions of dollars we pay it in licenses?" he says. "The only two retailers authorized to do business with Quebec are based in Toronto. We are a colony, they send us the product and we buy it, with no other spinoff." The two MNAs cited examples of savings achieved through the implementation of open source software. The Seigneurie-des-Mille-Îles school board uses the OpenOffice suite on 9,000 workstations. It saves $800,000 in licenses over a four- to five-year period. In Europe, the French Gendarmerie has saved seven million euros (CAN$9.8 million) per year, and the Swedish police have reduced their IT costs by 50% in five years, thanks to solutions based on open source software. They also cite the example of the merger in 2007 between the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and the Euronext group. NYSE-Euronext, now the world's leading group of stock exchanges, then switched to open source software. According to the architect responsible for the IT system, the savings are in the order of 50%, but above all, the system architecture has been greatly simplified. Health record "In Quebec, we are running into problems that we cannot solve with our current systems and that are costing us more and more," laments Marie Malavoy. "That's one more reason to make a change." And in the face of the failures of the Quebec Health Record, Sylvain Simard believes that open source software offers flexibility that can be extremely useful. "Currently, we develop in a centralized manner using rigid software, and no one really knows what they're doing. The regions create their own health records because the proposed solution does not offer them the ability to adapt the system to their needs. Using free software, we can allow users to participate in the development of the solution and make their work easier." passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1065

"We can no longer put the brakes on the development of free software in public administration and in businesses," summarized Marie Malavoy, PQ spokesperson for higher education, research and loans and scholarships, who, with her colleague Sylvain Simard, decided to campaign for this other way of looking at IT. "For six years, the government has often talked about free software and the importance of considering it in its development. But it does nothing." The PQ recalled yesterday that several countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have adopted policies and measures in recent years to promote and encourage this free software within their administrations. Unlike so-called proprietary software, often marketed by the giant Microsoft, this type of application does not come with costly user licenses. They can also be easily customized according to the needs of users. "The current context indicates that we must think about the issue," said Ms. Malavoy. Free software is a way to reduce government spending." The document presented by the PQ emphasizes that, while removing pressure on the government budget, this software also reduces the government's dependence on a single IT provider, facilitates the exchange of data between several services, secures IT data, and also increases the government's digital autonomy. "Free software also has the advantage of encouraging the local IT service industry with, in the long term, the possibility of having real Quebec expertise in this field" which is expanding all over the world. The PQ's position comes a few days after a group of activists from this party launched a call for greater digital governance in Quebec. The project has been called PQ numérique (pqnumérique.org) and calls, among other things, for the promotion of open IT standards. The idea of free software is increasingly gaining ground in government bodies, especially since a judgment against the Régie des rentes du Québec, which was rebuked by the court for not considering this possibility in a recent call for tenders to change office suites in several of its computers. More recently, due to strong criticism, the Société de transport de Montréal had to suspend a call for tenders that favoured products from the multinational Microsoft, in order to see what place the public carrier could make for free software in its IT environment.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1066

In 1929, Dziga Vertov filmed Man with a Movie Camera, a manifesto for a cinema reality in opposition to Hollywood fables. In 2008, New York artist Perry Bard called on Internet users to remake the film. Man With A Movie Camera, the Global Remake is a participatory video filmed by volunteers around the world, based on Vertov's original scenes that take us through a day in the city, from dawn to dusk, between Moscow, kyiv and Odessa. Internet users can download one of the 1,700 shots from the film and offer their own interpretation. Perry Bard thus makes possible the ambitious project that the Soviet avant-garde filmmaker could only have imagined in his dreams. Vertov is one of the few to have thought of cinema not as an "art of the masses" but as a "mass activity". His goal was to launch a war machine against bourgeois cinema, the Kinoks, enlisting pioneers and working-class youth to record people's daily lives, to edit and distribute the films in a continuous flow. In the Internet age, legions of Kinoks, equipped with lightweight cameras and rapid means of communication, are now on the move. The phenomenon has a name: "crowdsourcing", a neologism attributed to Jeff Howe and Mark Robinson, literally "supply by the crowd", consisting of using the creativity or know-how of a large number of Internet users. Rotation. For the remix of Man with a Movie Camera, several hundred participants uploaded (and continue to do so) their shots. Their images scroll side by side with those of Vertov, creating interesting correspondences. The software created for the project (in open source) puts the process entirely in the hands of the contributor. If several have chosen the same shots, the software broadcasts a new variant of the film in daily rotation. Bard's constructivist project goes even further than Vertov's by delegating the editing to the machine. Participatory films, made thanks to contributions from Internet users, have since multiplied, more or less according to the same formula. Thus this summer, during the Edinburgh art festival, Blipfoto initiated a film inspired by pre-cinematic techniques. Life Turns revisits the zoetrope, an optical toy that gives the illusion of movement. The project is inspired by studies on walking carried out at the end of the 19th century by Eadweard Muybridge, a British scientist famous for his photographic decompositions of movement. The Internet user chooses one of the positions in the sequence, takes a photo and sends it to the site to enrich the film. The result is a long collective walk around the world, in which more than 1,200 people in 21 countries have already participated. Life Turns is reminiscent of Eternal Moonwalk, made by Internet users in homage to Michael Jackson and his legendary step. Webcam. Dutchman Roel Wouters' film Now Take A Bow is described as a "self-portrait of the audience." The director directs his volunteer "actors" in front of a webcam, and their performances are integrated into a film that is constantly being recomposed. In 2009, the Japanese band Sour had already solicited its fans, inviting them into their music video Hibi no Neiro, which won awards at festivals. Another variation is The Johnny Cash Project, where Internet users were invited to draw a portrait of the musician in a film frame by frame. Http://dziga.perrybard.net www.blipfoto.com/lifeturns Nowtakeabow.com Www.youtube.com/ watch?v=WfBlUQguvyw Thejohnnycashproject.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1067

INTERNET The idea is clever: while more and more Facebook users complain about seeing their personal data slip away from them, a group of students from New York University is betting on an open community network, "which cares about privacy". Its name: Diaspora. A preview version is planned for early October. The principle: each of its members will keep their personal information on their own computer or on a secure site instead of entrusting it to the network operators. And to prove their good faith, the students in question published the source code of Diaspora last week, to let specialists examine it in detail. Cruel disappointment: the programmers who studied it estimated that it was riddled with rather formidable security flaws. According to them, a hacker could easily enter the network and take control of an account using a simple small program. This would allow him to usurp a user's identity, delete photos or recruit new "friends" without their consent. Of course, the four students had warned that their code, which was not yet finalized, contained bugs and security flaws. But they did not expect such a result... They still have a few weeks to correct these problems and strengthen the security of their program. codesourceopen to the public The designers of Diaspora, who raised $200,000 for its development (the founder of Facebook is one of the investors), are counting on their first users to improve the project. The curious can test its functions on a special page that reveals an interface quite similar to that of Facebook, but more sober. This is also one of Diaspora's major assets: by collecting feedback from everyone and opening the source code to the public, problems will probably be corrected more quickly, if not more effectively, than if it were a closed proprietary software. All developers can thus contribute to the program and submit their own improvements, in the same way as what already exists for software such as FireFox, OpenOffice or Linux. However, fans of free software note that nothing prevents the creators of Diaspora from moving towards a proprietary model in the medium or long term... which would make it a Facebook bis. In the meantime, the newcomer is multiplying the arguments to convince at least a part of Facebook's half a billion users. Those who take the plunge will thus be able to share their profile and import their data on the alternative network. Will this be enough for it to find its place between Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Ping, LinkedIn and other Buzz? The answer in a few months...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1068

Even before the Hadopi law was implemented, Internet users developed methods to circumvent it. Here is a brief summary of the most well-known and most widely used illegal downloading techniques in France and elsewhere. For the bad guys: the Hackdopi router Parisian hackers had fun tinkering with a Wi-Fi router capable of hacking their neighborhood's Wi-Fi connections, even when they are protected by an encryption key. To do this, they borrowed a security tool designed to test for flaws in Wi-Fi networks and installed it on an open router used by community Wi-Fi networks. An anonymous blogger named this system "Hackdopi", and the name stuck. Hackdopi identifies all Wi-Fi connections within range of its antennas and begins to decipher their keys. As soon as it has managed to crack one, it connects to the Internet under its victim's IP (Internet Protocol) number, without their knowledge. The hacker can then download anything with complete impunity. When the owner of the connection turns off his router, Hackdopi automatically switches to a neighbor's router. Of course, the victims of this hijacking could be accused of illegal downloading. To defend themselves, it will be complicated: Hadopi could consider that the victim is an accomplice, because their Wi-Fi was not sufficiently protected or refuse to believe in the hacking theory. To avoid these inconveniences for their victims, hackers can equip Hackdopi with software that sends erroneous IP addresses over the network. They are also considering creating mini-networks made up of several pirate routers covering the same neighborhood. They will thus be able to combine the computing power of several computers to crack encryption keys more quickly and share pirated connections. For the stealthy: VPNs Another solution for downloading without being detected: the VPN (Virtual Private Network), a system designed to guarantee the anonymity of its users. A VPN consists of a data encryption system and a set of relay servers scattered across several countries. When a user connects through a VPN, their data is anonymously passed from server to server before reaching its destination, which completely obscures any trail. There are hundreds of commercial paid VPNs, created to protect the data of SMEs that cannot afford their own security service. The subscription costs a few euros per month. A well-organized hacker can use a VPN to stream music and films from a small personal server, and recruit users by circulating their addresses on forums. There are also free VPNs, originally designed to help political dissidents living in dictatorial countries communicate without being detected by the police. The most famous is the TOR project, run by a group of American and European activists, and funded by NGOs and governments of democratic countries. Some activist VPNs kick out Internet users who download too much music and films because they clog up their servers. Others, on the contrary, welcome illegal downloaders, whom they consider to be dissidents fighting against a repressive state subservient to show business multinationals. Note the emergence of hybrid VPNs, managed in a militant spirit but requiring a contribution from their users. The best known is the Swedish e-Predator, which belongs to Pirate Bay, one of the largest illegal download services in the world. For the emancipated: the capture of "streaming" Lawyers and salespeople distinguish between downloading, where the Internet user keeps a copy of the work, and streaming, which allows the work to be listened to or watched live, as on the radio or television. In reality, streaming software begins by downloading the file into a buffer, which is erased at the end of the session. However, there is a lot of software on the Internet that can capture the buffer and transform it into permanent memory. It is thus possible to download works illegally while connected to a legal site. To do this, you have the choice between free software, such as FreeMusicZilla, and commercial software, such as TubeMaster or CrazyLoader. There is also a mini-software that can be integrated into the Firefox browser, called Download Helper, which allows you to download streaming streams in one click. Similarly, the new version of the streaming player Real Player has a downloader function. Some streaming sites such as Deezer or Myspace have implemented systems preventing their streams from being captured. We are witnessing the beginning of an endless war between pirates, who will constantly invent systems for capturing protected streams, and streaming sites, condemned to invent new anti-download systems each time. For nomads: diversification of sources Initially, Hadopi will concentrate its efforts on peer-to-peer networks such as Kazaa, eMule, Limewire or Bittorrent. It is therefore perhaps less risky to return to traditional downloading from large hosting sites, such as Rapidshare (based in Switzerland), Mediafire (in Texas), or Megaupload (in Hong Kong), which indiscriminately store billions of documents from all sources and which are increasingly used by distributors of pirated works. These mega-hosts are paid for by heavy users, and free for occasional users. Unlike peer-to-peer, they do not require special software, and their traffic is the same as that of ordinary websites. Taking advantage of the widespread use of very high speeds and the continuing decline in storage costs, pirates are increasingly offering large files, of better quality than MP3 format. When you deposit a file with one of these hosts, you receive a unique Internet address in return. Only the holders of this address can find the file, which, in principle, limits its distribution. But we have seen the emergence of specialized search engines providing lists of addresses corresponding to the title of a film or a piece of music. Recently, Google has started to imitate them. The success of mega-hosts has given rise to a myriad of intermediary commercial sites, which give out precious addresses in exchange for the requester's email address or which sell passwords to read their files. Note that Hadopi will give priority to music and films. Pirates of video games and digital books can continue in peace.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1069

Tomorrow, when you open your computer and see the Windows or iTunes logo, spare a thought for those celebrating free software. For the seventh year, people around the world will be celebrating software that, unlike proprietary software, can be reproduced, modified and used without restriction. If Linux and Ubuntu are just cute names for a cat to you, think about the Firefox browser, without a doubt the free software that has become the most popular with the general public. In Quebec, conferences, happy hours and demonstrations are on the menu for the day. "The free software community is active all year long, so Free Software Day is more relaxed than before. It's less combative," says Fabian Rodriguez, a free technology advisor and employee at Canonical. Now that people are familiar with Firefox and many have installed OpenOffice on their computers, what's the next creation from the "free" world that will break the bank? Fabian Rodriguez is banking on mobility. He cites the example of Google's mobile operating system, Android. "People will discover that with open source software, you can do 95% of what Apple charges for on its iPhone for free. The applications are free. Plus, you can participate in the development of the software. People don't need to know that it's open source software." An important year Open Source Software Day will have a special flavor this year. In June, a Superior Court judge ruled that the Régie des rentes du Québec acted illegally when it acquired software from Microsoft without conducting a call for tenders. It was the open source software company Savoir-Faire Linux that brought the case to court, after the RRQ refused authorization to submit a proposal. A few months later, the Société des transports de Montréal decided to suspend a call for tenders for the acquisition of Microsoft Office 2010 licenses to "analyze the impacts of implementing a new office platform like OpenOffice or other comparable products." "Today, the adoption of free software is greater," Fabian Rodriguez rejoices. "For the past few months, it's been impressive. Before, we felt like conspirators!"

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1070

Tomorrow, when you open your computer and see the Windows or iTunes logo, spare a thought for those celebrating free software. For the seventh year, people around the world will be celebrating software that, unlike proprietary software, can be reproduced, modified and used without restriction. If Linux and Ubuntu are just cute names for a cat to you, think about the Firefox browser, without a doubt the free software that has become the most popular with the general public. In Quebec, conferences, happy hours and demonstrations are on the menu for the day. "The free software community is active all year long, so Free Software Day is more relaxed than before. It's less combative," says Fabian Rodriguez, a free technology advisor and employee at Canonical. Now that people are familiar with Firefox and many have installed OpenOffice on their computers, what's the next creation from the "free" world that will break the bank? Fabian Rodriguez is banking on mobility. He cites the example of Google's mobile operating system, Android. "People will discover that with free software, you can do 95% of what Apple charges for on its iPhone for free. The applications are free. Plus, you can participate in the development of the software. People don't need to know that it's free software." An important year Free Software Day will have a special flavor this year. In June, a Superior Court judge ruled that the Régie des rentes du Québec acted illegally when it acquired software from Microsoft without conducting a call for tenders. It was the free software company Savoir-Faire Linux that brought the case before the courts, after being refused authorization by the RRQ to submit a proposal. A few months later, the Société des transports de Montréal decided to suspend a call for tenders for the acquisition of Microsoft Office 2010 licenses to "analyze the impacts of implementing a new office platform like OpenOffice or other comparable products." "Today, the adoption of free software is greater," Fabian Rodriguez rejoices. "For the past few months, it's been impressive. Before, we felt like conspirators!"

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1071

It's hard to imagine a more hermetic network than Facebook, even though it has half a billion members. The company guards its code carefully, as well as the private data its members provide. For the past year, four New Yorkers in their early twenties have been working on their "free" social network project, a sort of open Facebook "that cares about privacy." Diaspora promises that each user will have their personal information on their own computer, rather than entrusting it to a third party. The social network published its source code this week. Soon, all Internet users should be able to use Diaspora. "Their approach is a little strange. Often, community projects invite everyone to participate, seek consensus. This is the opposite. It's a small group of people who made decisions very quickly, working in absolute secrecy," says Fabian Rodriguez. He also notes that the instigators of the project are strangely distant from the free software community and are making decisions that can seem contradictory. "One of the first things they're aiming for is to collaborate with Facebook! Sometimes you have to open up a little more to make yourself known."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1072

On the esplanade of Beaubourg, a street vendor hands out DVDs to visitors who rush into the museum. "Treat yourself to the videos from the collection of the Centre Pompidou for 1 euro." With knockdown prices and photocopied covers, the stall is full of counterfeits, but instead of Hollywood blockbusters, it offers films by the Wooster Group, Michael Snow, Thomas Hirschhorn and Jordi Colomer. The reseller, wearing a badge with an inverted C, the symbol of Copyleft (1), as opposed to the C for copyright, says he works for IP Production, which has all the necessary authorizations. "Disseminate." The contraband workshop is said to be located in the heart of the Centre Pompidou. As part of a new series "Voir/revoir", the institution is giving artists carte blanche to explore the museum's collection and audiovisual archives. First guest, Tania Bruguera, visual artist, video artist, performer born in 1968 in Cuba, wanted to address, with "IP Detournement", the question of access to these works. In particular to video art, the diffusion of which is dependent on these institutions. The artist contacted 100 artists from the "new media" collection by email to ask them if they would accept that pirated copies of their works be sold around Beaubourg, by students and street vendors, for the benefit of the latter, with the aim of democratic diffusion. "Originally, artists used the video medium precisely because it was easy to reproduce and therefore to disseminate", recalls Tania Bruguera. Those who accepted this Deal are presented in the exhibition, which is held at Forum -1, with the approval of the Pompidou Center, which nevertheless declines all responsibility for the sale of the copies. Among the artists contacted, 63 responded favorably, including Martin Le Chevallier. He agreed to four interactive works: "I have no problem with that, none of the pieces in question are limited editions and, if they are not, it is because I share the same democratic concerns." In Bulk. "Intellectual property (IP) is at the heart of the debates, in the era of open source culture," says Tania Bruguera, who wanted to confront the artists with these questions and encourage them to take a stand. Which they did, in a correspondence posted on the walls. The negative responses, made anonymous, are also argued: fear of losing control of their work, of the poor quality of the copy, criticism of the pseudo-subversive nature of their action. Bruguera chooses to present the works in an unpleasant device, highlighting the inconvenient presentation conditions of video art. In bulk, under a pale light, in the middle of piles of cardboard and pallets, stacked on shelves, televisions broadcast videos in a continuous stream, in a hubbub of tangled images and sounds, without contextualization. Next door, a cinema with a red carpet, where the videos are projected on a big screen. But, here again, access is barred and the absence of seats prevents one from settling in comfortably. Between storage and sanctification, the device ensures that one cannot watch the films and pushes spectators to buy copies sold in the street, then to watch the DVDs at home. "Despite the efforts made to attract wider audiences, video art is one of the mediums that continues to suffer from the idea that the museum is both a place of passage and a place of preservation of culture," says the performer. This action exhibition, which will result in a free downloadable digital book (2), is also a practical application of an essay published in the journal Artforum this summer, in which she stigmatized the lack of risk-taking by cultural institutions and their "desire to transform the instability that characterizes art into a serene experience." She said she dreamed of a museum "that would be closer to the Internet, open source and Wikipedia culture." The street vendors will hang around the fountain, the Beaubourg library, and one of the metro lines for a week. (1) Copyleft is the possibility given by the author of a work subject to copyright to copy, use, modify or distribute his work. (2) www.taniabruguera.com Photo Raphaël Dautigny

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1073

Digital textbooks are all the rage this school year. Particularly in the second year of high school. They compensate for the absence of traditional textbooks at the start of high school. In June, school publishers announced that nearly half of second year students would not have a paper version of their textbooks at the start of the 2010 school year. The cause is the hasty implementation of the high school reform. The new programs were made public on April 28. Too late for publishers to prepare and print the new textbooks. They will be available in mid-October. In the meantime, teachers and students can consult their digital equivalents on the Web. The digital textbook currently occupies a marginal place in the French education system. The cause is the delay in the use of new technologies. The problem of missing textbooks in high school could give it a boost. Especially since a newcomer, the company Lelivrescolaire.fr, is offering its digital history-geography or French textbooks free of charge. New competition that traditional school publishers are watching with interest. A fledgling sector Determined not to miss the train of new technologies, publishers are increasingly accompanying the traditional paper textbook with its digital version. The sector, still fledgling, only represents 1% of their turnover. But its development is inevitable and, with it, the uncertainties that accompany the production and distribution methods linked to new technologies. The place of traditional publishing is certainly not threatened by students increasing the pirated downloads of school resources, as they do with songs or films. But unexpected competition has appeared: that of school textbooks available free of charge online. There is a risk that, as with music and cinema, the dematerialization of textbooks will disrupt school publishing. Will the digital textbook sound the death knell for the paper textbook? Towards a new economic model Starting this fall, teachers and 5th grade students can, if they wish, use a free digital French or history and geography textbook available online (www.lelivrescolaire.fr). "Created by teachers, our textbooks offer the same educational guarantees as traditional textbooks," assures Eric van Rompay, president of the company Lelivrescolaire.fr. In parallel with its digital activity, the company, to ensure its economic balance, sells equivalent paper textbooks. Who would want to pay for a book that they can have for free online? The answer is provided by Sésamath. Sésamath is an association of secondary school mathematics teachers created in 2001 with the aim of providing their colleagues with free resources and professional practices. Five years ago, these teachers decided to go further by launching digital textbooks. Today on their website (http://manuel.sesamath.net), they cover the four levels of middle school, 6th, 5th, 4th, 3rd. "The publication and sale of the corresponding paper school textbooks, provided by the company Génération 5, allows the association to finance one full-time employee and four part-time employees," explains Jean-Philippe Vanroyer, president of the association. This continued interest in paper is confirmed by a Sofres survey in June: 90% of teachers say they are satisfied with the complementarity of the two media. Attentive publishers The major publishers in the sector recognize the success of Sésamath. Director of Magnard editions and president of Savoir Livre, an association that brings together the major players in school publishing, Belin, Bordas, Hachette, Hatier, Magnard and Nathan, Isabelle Magnard notes: "Sésamath's publishing work is not insignificant. It occupies 15% of the market for mathematics textbooks in middle school. We consider it to be a publisher in its own right." However, it does not constitute an economic model. Its operating base is based on the very heavy voluntary work of its 80 active members, helped by occasional contributions from its many supporters. These constraints have prevented Sésamath from gaining traction: mutualist associations with the same goals, such as Weblettres for French, or Les Clionautes for history and geography, have not gone so far as to create their own textbooks. The emergence of Lelivrescolaire.fr changes the situation. This commercial company pays its employees. Like Sésamath, it designs its textbooks using free software, an asset for teachers keen on new technologies who can enrich the textbook with their own contributions. Its main purpose is to cover all disciplinary fields at all levels of middle school, with the notable exception of mathematics due to the development of Sésamath. Its success would revolutionize the sector's economy. Digital is struggling to make its mark School publishers say they do not feel directly threatened by the newcomers. "I await their development with curiosity and interest," assures Isabelle Magnard. The members of Savoir Livre intend to transpose their dominant position to the field of digital publishing. To do this, they are demanding that the State align the VAT rate for digital textbooks with paper textbooks, i.e. 5.5% instead of the current 19.60%. They are also waiting for specific funding to be released to schools to encourage teachers to buy digital textbooks. But they still have to want to: even though its equipment places it in the average, European statistics rank France 24th out of 27 countries in terms of the use of digital tools in an educational context.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1074

At the foot of the Dortmunder U, a brewery converted into an art venue in Dortmund, Germany, a new kind of pop-up canteen, Instructables Restaurant, opened last week. Recipes, furniture, decor, and menus were all downloaded from Instructables.com. The DIY bible, this platform brings together the largest community dedicated to Do it Yourself (DIY) and is one of those sites (along with Make) that have flourished in reaction to consumerist society and disposable products. Hundreds of thousands of enthusiasts share their know-how in all areas, posting detailed manuals for making a bamboo bike, a cider press, a Rubik's Cube cake, or setting up a bunker in the basement of their house... "These online instructions are licensed under a Creative Commons license, anyone can use them, be inspired by them, or adapt them to their needs. "We thought: why not turn this mass of information into a real restaurant?" says Dutch artist Arne Hendriks, co-founder with Bas Van Abel of this open-source bistro, which was first activated during Nuit Blanche in Amsterdam in June. "The Internet is information pornography that we feed on daily. The idea is to take this information online and apply it in the real world," explains the owner, while watching his simmering pumpkin soup, made from the recipe of Jayefuu, a computer and cooking enthusiast living in Surrey, Great Britain. Everyone is invited to taste it and improve it by leaving their appreciations, giving immediate feedback to those who have posted this knowledge online. "The originality of the restaurant is that its chefs are based all over the world," jokes Hendriks. They are all credited, in small cooking cards generously provided: Tomato Pecorino Soup by Nico Groot, Barbecue Teriyake by Mhbaben, Limonade minute by Laurent 123... Comfortably installed in the Barrel chairs, plastic barrels recycled into armchairs, designed by Monkeybrad, who lives in Tennessee, we find out about the miniature grill for Marshmallow, imagined by jwilson27, a computer scientist based in Missouri. Because when you go to Instructables restaurant, you don't just eat the dish and pay the bill. You leave full but also capable of making the furniture from scratch. Like these simple and functional stools made from beer crates, polystyrene and multi-colored adhesive. "Here, if you need a table or a chair, take matters into your own hands and make one yourself. If it starts to rain, make a shelter." The inventions made there are in turn the subject of a guide that will enrich the database of the instructables.com site. Henriks chose the restaurant because "it's a place where you sit down and spend time. The kitchen is also the last workshop, the last place of creation where you make and transform ingredients." The restaurant is also launching a pizza contest until Sunday. The best recipes will be on the menu of the next Instructables restaurant, which will be held at the Picnic festival in Amsterdam, from September 22 to 24, whose theme is "Redesign the world." Www.instructablesrestaurant. com/ www.instructables.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1075

Perpignan Special Envoy - Who has never dreamed, while watching a film, of speaking to the characters on the screen? With Prison Valley, this idea is no longer science fiction. This "participatory road movie", posted online in April, has just received the Web Documentary Award at the Perpignan-Visa pour l'image Photojournalism Festival. For two years, the award has rewarded this emerging journalistic form that offers Internet users a mix of video, animation, photo, sound and text. Prison Valley investigates a county in the United States whose economy revolves around the prison industry. It does so in an unprecedented way, by pushing interactivity to its limits. The idea came from Philippe Brault, a photographer who worked for the OEil public collective, and David Dufresne, a former employee of Libération and a free software activist, two journalists who "were wondering about the future of the profession": "The idea was to explore new possibilities for telling a story," explains David Dufresne, "without it being free or purely fun. You don't have fun with confinement." In Prison Valley, visitors are invited to sign up for a room in the motel where the two journalists had taken up residence during the investigation. From there, they progress at their own pace, following in the footsteps of the authors. The tour is built around a 59-minute film, broadcast in July on the Arte channel, co-producer of the project. Along the way, visitors can branch off to look at photos and testimonies, consult statistics and links. But also talk directly with other visitors, discuss on a forum, exchange via social networks... and even send questions to the "characters" who wish. The authors have innovated at every turn, drawing ideas in particular from online video games: you have to register to be able to come back without having to do the whole thing again. And the visitor progresses in stages, according to a certain order: "We didn't want Internet users to debate on the forum without first having seen the section on the Supermax prison," explains Philippe Brault. And despite a few flaws - an uninteresting survey, an annoying voiceover - the whole thing is a success. The smooth navigation, the quality of the reporting and the images immerse the viewer in a frightening place, where it is the prisoners who build their own prisons. Interactivity, so often practiced in a demagogic way on the Internet, is used here to transpose the debate to France. "This American example is there to make us think about our situation," insists David Dufresne. For two months after it went online in April, the authors organized chats every Thursday with people involved in the French prison system, such as Jean-Marie Bockel, Secretary of State for Justice. To date, nearly two hundred thousand Internet users have visited Prison Valley. The figure is modest compared to the million they had hoped for, but the feat is that 25% of them watched the film all the way through - "good news for those who say that the Internet is not made for long forms!" The duo also measures the project's success by the activity on the forum. "After three weeks, there was a virulent campaign against us from Colorado," says Philippe Brault. "But there were also real debates between Americans. And the guard at Supermax prison came to our defense!" For the duo, Prison Valley was first and foremost an attempt to do journalism differently. For once, the characters represented had a say. "The era of the journalist-king is over," says David Dufresne. "But there are things that remain valid, such as the rigor of the investigation. Rather than seeing the Internet as a constraint, we must see it as an opportunity for our profession." Compared to traditional media, the Web offers both freedom and immense space: the authors of Prison Valley were able to choose the narrative form best suited to each situation, but also include dozens of documents and interviews as bonuses - a luxury unknown elsewhere. Could the web documentary then be the future of photojournalism? Not so simple. Under its playful exterior, Prison Valley required significant resources. More than two authors, it was in fact an entire team, with a graphic designer and a flash developer, who worked for nearly eighteen months. The budget of 320,000 euros was financed by the production company Upian, the Arte channel and grants from the CNC. "The web documentary is not the sure thing," acknowledges Philippe Brault. And not all subjects lend themselves to it." While Prison Valley continues its life on the Internet, the two friends have extended the story in the much more classic form of a book with texts and images.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1076

This half-million dollar market had been roundly denounced for several days by defenders of free software systems because it ignored a recent legal decision that now requires public administrations to consider using this type of so-called open software application. "The call for tenders was suspended by the board of directors to allow the STM to assess the impact of implementing other comparable products," Odile Paradis, spokesperson for the urban transport company, told Le Devoir yesterday. "A new call for tenders could then be launched." This process, now suspended, was normally scheduled to end on September 8 at 3 p.m. On August 17, the STM raised the ire of the Association pour l'appropriation collective de l'informatique libre (FACIL) with a call for tenders for the acquisition of 2,577 licenses for the Microsoft Office 2010 Standard office suite. The contract has an estimated value of $500,000. The reasons for the anger? The call for tenders, by targeting a single IT supplier, Microsoft, in fact ignored a recent judgment rendered last June in a dispute between Savoir-Faire Linux, a supplier of free software, and the Régie des rentes du Québec. In a 40-page document, Judge Denis Jacques of the Superior Court of Quebec, made illegal this type of transaction that favours a specific IT product and excludes other viable and equivalent solutions, according to him. "Good news" "The decision of the STM board of directors is good news," said Cyrille Béraud, president of the Association professionnelle des entreprises en logiciellibres, yesterday. "It shows that society is open to free software. We are waiting to see what happens next, but it seems promising to us." For several years, advocates of free software have been trying to make themselves heard by the public administration in Quebec, which is still struggling to open its computer systems to free applications, the adoption of which often allows for significant savings. Free software is also presented as a way to ensure greater network flexibility and greater security of government computer data. Public bodies in the United States, at the call of Barack Obama, but also in France and Brazil have decided to make more room for these computer solutions in the future. The Quebec government has still not ruled on this issue.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1077

The board of directors of the Société des transports de Montréal (STM) decided yesterday to suspend the call for tenders for the acquisition of 2,577 standard Microsoft Office 2010 licenses. This call for tenders had been criticized because the STM immediately excluded suppliers who wanted to submit a proposal based on open source software, such as the OpenOffice office suite. This approach goes against a judgment rendered earlier this summer by the Superior Court of Quebec, which declared illegal a transaction by the Régie des rentes du Québec carried out under similar conditions. "The members of the board of directors discussed the Microsoft licensing issue today and decided to suspend the call for tenders process in order to analyze the impacts of implementing a new office platform such as OpenOffice or other comparable products," said Odile Paradis, Senior Director - Public Affairs at the STM, in an email. "This is good news," rejoiced Daniel Pascot, director of the Department of Organizational Information Systems at Université Laval and president of the FACIL association, "FACIL, pour l'Appropriation Collective de l'Informatique Libre," yesterday. The judgment in the Savoir-Faire Linux/RRQ case provides that before short-circuiting the normal call for tenders process, we must be able to rely on a "serious and documented" study. The City of Montreal's procurement policy also provides that we must "ensure that the acquisition methods call for healthy competition between suppliers." "Whether they will do the analysis internally or entrust it to an external firm, we will see, in any case we intend to obtain access to the results of this analysis to ensure that it corresponds to the criteria mentioned in the judgment," concluded Mr. Pascot. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1078

Under heavy fire from critics, the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) decided yesterday to suspend its call for tenders for the acquisition of Microsoft brand software, in order to evaluate the possibility of opening this purchasing process to free software. A new call for tenders could then be launched. The STM raised the ire of the Association pour l'appropriation collective de l'informatique libre with a call for tenders for the acquisition of 2,577 licenses of the Microsoft Office 2010 Standard office suite, a contract estimated at $500,000.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1079

The lobby group is also calling on the company's executives, as well as the mayor of Montreal, to force a review of this major software purchase. Reason? Two months ago, the Superior Court of Quebec ruled that this type of IT contract award by the public administration was illegal. "This type of practice is not in accordance with the law, is not in the interest of the STM, does not respect the values of fairness and freedom of Quebec society, harms Quebec's technological independence and does not promote sustainable technological development," the Association stated in a press release earlier this week. On August 17, the STM published a call for tenders for the purchase of several hundred software programs. The call is for "the acquisition of 2,577 licenses" of the standard Microsoft Office 2010 office suite, the American giant's flagship product. The contract has an estimated value of $500,000. It does not consider any other product. For the Association, this appeal is surprising because it ignores an important judgment rendered on June 3 in a case between the Régie des rentes du Québec and the company Savoir-Faire Linux. This free software merchant denounced the awarding of a $723,000 contract to an exclusive distributor of Microsoft products in 2008 when open-access software, and therefore less expensive, could have been considered. This reading was confirmed by the court, which thus made this process of awarding a contract to a designated IT supplier illegal. "The STM's call for tenders surprises us, but only halfway," Cyrille Béraud, president of the Professional Association of Free Software Companies, told Le Devoir yesterday. Free software calls for a major paradigm shift in the IT field to move from a monopoly market to a competitive market. Even if there is an openness here and there, the public administration is not yet completely ready for this change." Yesterday, the Société de transport de Montréal did not wish to comment on this contract award for so-called proprietary software belonging to Microsoft, on the pretext that the matter must be on the agenda of its board of directors meeting today. The call for tenders, launched two weeks ago, ends on September 8 at 3 p.m. Let us recall that free software is currently seeking its place in several public administrations around the world, such as in the United States, where Barack Obama has decided to give it a larger place. These free applications are increasingly favoured in order to reduce the costs related to software acquisition, but also to ensure greater digital flexibility and security of government computer data.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1080

Ignoring a decision rendered in June by the Superior Court, the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) has just launched a call for tenders for the purchase of 2,577 standard Microsoft Office 2010 licenses, closing the door to equivalent open source software solutions. The contract represents an approximate value of $500,000. By limiting its call for tenders to Microsoft licenses only, the STM is preventing other suppliers from submitting a proposal based on the OpenOffice office suite. However, in a decision rendered on June 3, Judge Denis Jacques concluded that the Régie des rentes du Québec (RRQ) had acted illegally when it refused to consider open source software during a purchase, also limited to Microsoft office suites and operating systems. The Quebec government acknowledged the decision, which has not been appealed, while the STM is acting as if the judgment did not concern it. This is what Daniel Pascot, director of the Department of Organizational Information Systems at Université Laval and president of the association FACIL, "Facil, pour l'Appropriation Collective de l'Informatique Libre", maintains. "We are seeing once again the awarding of a contract to the multinational Microsoft without competition, without comparison with free software solutions, and this, despite a severe judgment that imposed the opening of public markets to free software solutions." The City of Montreal's procurement policy stipulates that during a call for tenders, it must be "ensure that the acquisition methods involve healthy competition". Illegal act The STM is not respecting the judgment, also believes lawyer Julius Grey, who had pleaded, with Me Marc-Aurèle Racicot, for the company Savoir-faire Linux, in the RRQ case. "It would be sad to see that public bodies in Quebec are aware of a judgment but do not apply it." According to him, the STM's call for tenders is illegal. "The judgment established the principle that in the public domain, the call for tenders is mandatory, the exceptions are limited and must be interpreted very narrowly. Unless there are exceptional reasons, the judgment must apply." The president of FACIL is asking Michel Labrecque, chairman of the STM board of directors, to immediately suspend the call for tenders. He is also asking the mayor of the metropolis, Gérald Tremblay, to change the STM's decision. The issue must also be studied today by the board of directors of the Société des transports, indicated yesterday Isabelle Tremblay, spokesperson for the STM. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1081

In the same voice, we also want to denounce the sensationalist and misinformed speeches that have emerged in the media on the occasion of these events. The repression deliberately targeted activists whose only crime was to be dressed in black. The media, also interested in the clothing fashion of the anarchists, are making headlines with images of "young" troublemakers and are attacking the famous "black bloc" whose name is repeated ad nauseam, thus claiming to understand the phenomenon. As if there were no political content behind the various tactics used... Values that disturb Ignorance of the field, intellectual laziness or primacy of the commercial vocation of the media? Perhaps. However, it is clear that one of the main reasons why people seek to criminalize and intimidate those who identify with anarchism is the fact that these people make up an ever-growing movement that conveys values that are contrary to those of the proponents of the capitalist project. Cooperation instead of competition; mutual aid instead of individualism; self-management instead of hierarchy; respect instead of racism, (hetero)sexism, ageism; freedom instead of control. Freedom, for anarchists, is at the heart of humanity, and cannot exist without equality. This freedom, far from that conceived by liberal society, actually aims at personal development inseparable from collective well-being. Equality, for its part, becomes possible when the people directly concerned take charge of all aspects that affect their lives: political decisions, the provision of services, the production of goods, land use planning. Yet the State, a close ally of the capitalist world, seems determined to prevent anarchist ideas and practices, based on these positive values, from spreading more widely in society. Knowing that a large part of the population feels crushed by an ever-growing sense of helplessness in the face of the injustices of this world, the State uses all the means at its disposal to silence dissidents who propose alternative paths to a better world. In order to maintain its legitimacy, it therefore seeks to interfere with the construction of a mass movement based on anarchist values. A strong movement It is the practical application of these values that is at the heart of the work of the CRAC, a research group affiliated with Concordia University. For five years now, the CRAC has been carrying out patient field work, in collaboration with networks and collectives in Quebec that are based on anarchist values, to document their ideals, their practices, their modes of action and organization. What emerges from our work is that this is a movement that exists well beyond the raucous demonstrations to which we would like to reduce it. Here in Quebec, this movement is indeed made up of several hundred people, who volunteer, with their guts and their revolts, animate a space for political reflection and action on the margins of an institutional system that is at an impasse. These people seek to apply the values that inspire them in their daily struggles in areas of activity as varied as those of the defense of the rights of immigrants and refugees, gays, lesbians and queers, against war, imperialism, colonization, ecological destruction, gentrification, sexism, junk food or police repression, to name but a few. Creating a better world here and now These anarchists, treated like terrorists on the streets of Toronto, study in our colleges and universities, are involved in their children's school committees, take care of their loved ones, work in community groups, sell you your bread or serve your coffee in neighborhoods that they help transform. These people create activist coffee bars, independent bookstores and libraries, alternative media, neighborhood committees, self-managed cooperatives, libertarian fanzines... They offer the recycling of old bicycles, distribute free software, form groups dedicated to organic food self-sufficiency (through purchasing groups, seed sharing, agriculture)... They reclaim abandoned spaces to create housing cooperatives, parks, movie nights and neighborhood parties. They organize spaces for the exchange of knowledge and free schools for children... The activists of the anarchist movement experiment, within these projects, with modes of organization and operation based on direct democracy and autonomy. All the people involved in a project participate in decision-making, management and the completion of tasks. There is no leader, no boss, no representative. Mechanisms are put in place to facilitate discussions, the learning of skills, participation in meetings, the creation of egalitarian social relationships. Refusing government subsidies, these groups turn to do-it-yourself, the recovery of materials and food and bartering in order to reduce their dependence on capitalist exchanges. Rooted in their communities, these groups therefore seek to set up autonomous political, social, economic and cultural projects that break with the logic of domination that motivates capitalist interest. These initiatives convey another form of political connection, of "living together", based on anarchist values and ties of proximity. By putting their values and visions into practice in the present moment, these groups attempt to make "tiny everyday revolutions", often in the shadow of the spotlight. In doing so, they demonstrate to their neighbors that they are able to organize themselves autonomously, without depending on political and economic elites. And each time a neighbor decides to get involved, she or he participates in the construction of alternative institutions and projects, which one day, we can only hope, will make those of the dominant system redundant and obsolete. Interfering with the proper functioning of the dominant system But the bearers of this dominant system will not let it happen. That is why this long-term work is accompanied, as was the case during the G20, by high-profile actions targeting the symbols of global capitalism. These actions contribute to revealing the consequences of an unjust system and to slowing down the consolidation of elite projects. History shows us that the movements that have contributed to social change have used a range of tactics ranging from popular education to sabotage to civil disobedience. These latter tactics are therefore intended to complement a range of initiatives rooted in common values that, taken as a whole, constitute the terrain of struggle of contemporary anarchists in Quebec. Thus, the media approach that reduces the movement to its flashes of brilliance without highlighting their content is based on a very narrow conception of politics. What is proposed in the media only reveals the visible part of the iceberg of a much larger phenomenon. Also, by massively repressing dissent under the pretext of the danger of a few muscular actions, the attitude of the authorities reflects the desire to silence a movement that is disturbing, especially by the strength of its ideas and the depth of its roots. But the past also shows us that those who are crushed always find the strength to get back up... \*\*\* Émilie Breton, Anna Kruzynski, Magaly Pirotte and Rachel Sarrasin - Research collective on collective autonomy

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1082

SEVERAL WikiLeaks servers are hosted in Sweden by the company PRQ, which has close ties to the famous Pirate Bay (a major site for illegal downloading of music and films) and to the Swedish Pirate Party, a powerful and organized political group. In Germany and the Netherlands, WikiLeaks receives effective assistance from hacker associations and free Internet activists. The German Daniel Schmitt, a collaborator who had until now been very discreet, now appears as WikiLeaks' number two. In Iceland, Julian Assange has been almost a national hero since WikiLeaks published the documents proving the corruption of the bankers who ruined the country. He can no longer go to the United States, but WikiLeaks is represented there by activists from the "TOR" project - an encrypted and secure network that allows people to use the Internet while remaining invisible and untraceable, on which WikiLeaks relies, in part, for its connections. One of the creators of TOR, Jacob Appelbaum, has established himself as the new de facto spokesman for WikiLeaks in the United States. Mr. Appelbaum, 30, is a well-known free software activist in San Francisco, having founded Noisebridge, the largest hacker club in California, which has well-equipped offices in the city center. Jacob Appelbaum spends his life traveling the world, especially to dictatorships, where he helps political opponents secure their Internet communications. In 2005, he spent several months in Iraqi Kurdistan initiating youth groups in free software. He brought back a traditional tattoo, a stylized peacock, which covers one arm and one shoulder. On July 29, while returning from a trip to the Netherlands, Mr. Appelbaum was stopped by the police at the New York airport and questioned for three hours about WikiLeaks. The police also analyzed the contents of his computer and confiscated his mobile phones. Two days later, Jacob Appelbaum was in Las Vegas to attend Defcon, the big annual convention of American hackers. There he spoke about TOR, and WikiLeaks.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1083

OTHER “CITIZEN RESEARCHERS” are launching into the creation of genetic drugs, bypassing the big labs. Andrew Hessel, a Canadian biologist who often spends time in Silicon Valley, has just created a cooperative company called Pink Army, which will bring together women with breast cancer and help them get involved in the fight against their disease, using the Internet. Previously, Mr. Hessel had worked for a large pharmaceutical laboratory for seven years: “We were a good team, with a big budget. And yet, in seven years, we didn’t put a single new drug on the market – just variations of existing drugs, to extend the patents. We were prisoners of a legal and financial strategy.” In reaction to his former environment, Mr. Hessel organized his cooperative by taking inspiration from the free software movement: all the research results will be made available free of charge to the research community – including private laboratories. Pink Army is banking on the continuing advances in synthetic biology and virotherapy to design personalized treatments: "Each cancer is unique. So we're going to fight it with drugs that are tailor-made to each patient's genetic makeup." This means it won't be possible to test on other volunteers: each patient will be her own guinea pig and will assume the risks with full knowledge of the facts - which should simplify the paperwork. Pink Army, which currently has 400 members, is not rich, but for Mr. Hessel, that's not a problem: "Synthetic biology has become cheap. If I want to make an artificial virus that can kill a patient's cancer cells, I'll write its genetic code on a computer, then send it to a specialized lab. A week later, I'll receive my virus in the mail in a tube. If its genome has 6,000 base pairs, it will cost me $3,000. "Mr. Hessel expects reactions from the pharmaceutical industry, but says he is ready to face them: "We will stay outside the commercial circuit, and we will not use patented products or techniques. I do not see how we can be attacked."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1084

The neurons were boiling yesterday afternoon at the Place de l'Université-du-Québec, as the 170 participants in the Bivouac Urbain worked tirelessly on their creation. "I'm sorry if I'm a little confused," Joé Dupuis, who has been awake for over 24 hours, told Le Soleil several times. The 21-year-old technophile is participating in the competition for the second year, which ends today at 8 p.m. Like all the teams, his team had to draw inspiration from the song Dan Dan, by the group Misteur Vallaire, to design either a video game or a 2D or 3D animated short film, a new part this year. And imagination was not lacking. After a six-hour brainstorming session, his team Illogical Studios decided to go for a highly original concept. "The only words in the song are 'wake up'. So the goal of our game is for the character to wake up at the end of the game," he explained. Their character will go through different scenes, such as a meadow where they will have to dig the ground with a shovel to reach the darkness. "The bulk of the work is done, but the challenge is to put it all together and not have any gaps between the scenes," he explained. "But we're going to win!" he added without any pretension. Room for the little ones According to PÔLE Québec Chaudière-Appalaches, multimedia creation generates an estimated $250 million in revenue in the region. Nearly 60 companies employ 1,340 people. In the wake of major job providers like Frima or Beenox, many small businesses want to carve out a place for themselves among the big ones, like that of Joé, one of the four founders of Illogical Studios. With his team of around ten employees, he works from a basement in Cap-Rouge. Created 10 months ago, the company has chosen a niche that has been little exploited until now: open source engines. By making their platform accessible to small video game designers, the group of enthusiasts hopes to build a bridge between the small and the big. "Often, large companies don't want to lend [resources] to small designers they don't know. So, with our platform, we're going to allow small people to produce a finished game and transform it into a language compatible with all sorts of devices like the Xbox or the iPhone. Then, they can go to Microsoft or Activision to sell it to them," he explained. Already functional, their platform should be ready for winter. In the meantime, don't hesitate to go test their game tomorrow at noon. mjnantel@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1085

Madeleine Perreault Villeneuve is celebrating her 80th birthday today. Her family and friends gathered on Saturday, July 24, at the Relais Camping de la Montagne in Val-Bélair to celebrate the event. Mrs. Villeneuve had 10 children between 1950 and 1965 (five boys and five girls), has 19 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren and "it looks like" four more are on the way. We are talking about a lineage of 58 people. Mrs. Villeneuve is probably the ancestor of the "Superwomen". She supported her husband Charles-Omer, an enterprising businessman, in his many projects by taking care of all sorts of tasks including administration, accounting, supervising the boys with their tasks on the farm and not to mention preparing good meals for the whole family and maintaining her large house. Today, shopping is one of her favorite activities. Happy birthday, Ms. Villeneuve. Congratulations and good luck to Donald L. Gilbert, MBA, who, since July 26, has been the General Manager of InfoGlobe in Quebec, an IT services company specializing in free software and which represents the largest platform specializing in free software (Open-Source) in Quebec, if not in Canada. www.infoglobe.ca The Escaladon, held on May 29 under the honorary presidency of Joanne Boivin, for the benefit of the Maison Richelieu Hébergement Jeunesse Sainte-Foy, ultimately raised $22,000. The funds raised will be used to operate the Maison Richelieu Hébergement Jeunesse Sainte-Foy, an Auberge du coeur which, for 25 years, has helped, supported and accompanied teenage girls experiencing personal, family and social difficulties, in developing their power to act. William Samson, a 12-year-old musician, made his dream come true on July 15, to meet the members of the band RUSH. Accompanied by his parents, Sonia Carrier and Stéphan Samson, William experienced a magical evening, full of surprises including drumsticks from drummer Neil Pert. Special thanks to Jenny Carrier and Andy Curran from the band Coney Hatch for allowing William to have a memorable experience. BIRTHDAYS Jean-François Breau, singer (Changer), 32 years old, Fernando Alonso, Spanish Formula 1 driver (Renaud team), world champion in 2005 and 2006, 29 years old Benoît Langlais, actor (2 Frères) 27 years old, Michel Brazeau, show producer in Quebec City. Jean Rochon, doctor and Quebec politician. Minister of Health (1994-1998), 72 years old. Ted Lindsay, NHL hockey player (1944-1965, Red Wings, Blackhawks), member of the "Production Line" with Gordie Howe and Sid Abel, 85 years old. DISAPPEARED July 29, 2007. Michel Serrault (photo), 79 years old, one of the sacred monsters of French cinema. A figure of boulevard theater, he triumphed in the role of Zaza Napoli in "La Cage aux folles". 2005. Al McKibbon, 86 years old, jazz bassist. 1993. Guy Dufresne, 78 years old, author of the series "Cap-aux-Sorciers", "Septième Nord" and "Les Forges de Saint-Maurice". 1992. Michel "Bunny" Larocque, 40 years old, former goaltender for the Canadiens. 1983. Luis Buñuel, 83 years old, he revolutionized the seventh art with ideas and images often considered sacrilegious. 1974. "Mama" Cass Elliot, 32 years old, soloist of the group The Mamas & The Papas. IN MEMORY July 29, 1985. Serge Savard announces that Jacques Lemaire is giving up his position as head instructor of the Canadiens. Jean Perron will take his place behind the Tricolore bench.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1086

SINCE his election as President of the Assembly in June 2007, Bernard Accoyer has committed, with the assistance of the Quaestors, to ensuring that the State budget allocation does not increase by a single euro cent, which represents savings of 150 million euros over five years. The annual budget of the National Assembly (533.9 million euros) will therefore remain stable until 2012. This is despite the creation of two new permanent committees (sustainable development, cultural affairs) and that of an evaluation and control committee. The savings efforts affect all areas. Real estate: the Assembly has purchased a building on rue Las Cases housing the foreign and European affairs committees. The complete renovation of the offices at 101, rue de l'Université has also made it possible to accommodate many deputies. The reimbursement of overnight stays in the Saint-Dominique residence (formerly the Sofitel hotel) has thus virtually disappeared. Total property costs have decreased by more than 6 million euros per year. In the IT field, two million euros have been saved thanks to the extension of free software, the spacing out of hardware renewals, the reduction of telephone costs and the dematerialization of documents. In terms of communication, 1.7 million euros of savings have been generated on an overall budget of 3.9 million. In transport, expenditure has also fallen substantially due to the elimination of first class for air travel by deputies on mission, including for the President of the Assembly. One hundred and fifty thousand euros of savings have also been made in the allocation of SNCF cards. Finally, the vehicle fleet has been thoroughly combed, with the use of less powerful vehicles. Between 1 January 2006 and 1 January 2010, the number of civil servants also fell by more than 2.5%, despite greater security requirements. And the cost of the Parliament Congress rose to 231,000 euros (for half a day), whereas it used to take place over a full day, at a cost of 423,000 euros.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1087

"What I like best about graffiti is tagging. It's the purest form of graffiti, the most abundant, but also the most unloved," says American hacker artist Evan Roth, who is passionate about these calligraphies, express signatures scribbled on walls. And more precisely for what we don't see, that is to say the furtive gesture of the tagger that he has set out to capture. He himself is not a pro with the spray can, as he readily admits. On the other hand, he skillfully handles computer code. After studying architecture, followed by a thesis on "Graffiti and Technology" at Parsons, the New York school of design, he co-founded the Graffiti Research Lab, which would renew this urban art by hybridizing it with technologies "to make graffiti ever higher, ever bigger." Among his inventions, the Throwies, LED lights coupled with magnets and batteries that are thrown away and stuck to street furniture, or the Laser Tag that allows monumental graffiti with laser in public spaces. Evan Roth developed the first version of Graffiti Analysis, his movement analyzer, in 2004. He spotted familiar tags (Hell, Avone, Jesus Saves and Katsu) on his journeys and asked the four graffiti artists to reproduce their signature with a marker topped with a light, tracked by a camera. A software of his own collects, analyzes and records the movement data, archived in a database 000000book.com, free and open to all. Graffiti artists are invited to share their manual style, which several stars such as Seen, Twist, Amaze and Jonone have already done. An iPhone application also allows you to trace your own tag with your finger and then send it to the archive which contains 10,000 3D animations. All tags created with the software are saved in a new standard (Graffiti markup language) that is compatible with other applications that Evan helped develop. For example, Eye Writer, a cheap, open-source device that literally lets you write with your eyes, was developed for TemptOne, a graffiti artist who suffers from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis that leaves him completely paralyzed except for his eyes. Thanks to Eye Writer, which won the Prix Ars electronica this year, he was able to start tagging the city again from his hospital bed. Developers are invited to create new applications and visualizations of these movements. The artist Golan Levin used this data to have these tags drawn by industrial robots, and Benjamin Gaulon used his Printball, a robot armed with a paintball gun that shoots letters on the walls. "My goal is to bring together two communities that, each in their own way, hack the system, whether in the code or the urban landscape," explains Evan Roth. He also hopes to renew the tag by proposing unexpected forms "so that people can appreciate the beauty of these calligraphies with a new eye". At the Kunsthalle in Vienna, he has just exhibited a 3D sculpture of a tag captured on the spot and materialized with a 3D printer. "A way of clandestinely bringing these illegal tags into the museum." After the version 2.0 presented at the Fondation Cartier in 2009, Evan Roth, who has since settled in Paris, is offering this Saturday, for the closing of the Les grandes traversées festival in Bordeaux, a version 3.0, with projected tags that are written on the walls surrounded by a cloud of particles pulsating according to the surrounding sounds and the structure of the buildings. Http://evan-roth.com http://graffitianalysis.com www.eye-writer.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1088

The case was brought before the courts by defenders of free software about two years ago. According to them, this practice was discriminatory for free software solutions, which are the most likely to save the government millions of dollars in recurring payments for user rights for so-called proprietary software. "After analyzing the judgment, we decided to leave it at that," Sylvie Lebreux, spokesperson for the Régie des rentes du Québec (RRQ), the organization at the heart of the Quebec Superior Court's decision rendered on June 3, told Le Devoir yesterday. The Régie had until last Monday to exercise its right to appeal. "We believe that all the players in this case acted in good faith. We also take note of the positions and recommendations set out in this judgment for the future." A month ago, Judge Denis Jacques ruled that the RRQ had failed in its duty by awarding a $723,000 contract to Compugen, a Microsoft software distributor, to upgrade 800 workstations. The Vista operating system, as well as the Visio and Office applications, were at the heart of this transaction. For the Régie, only these products could meet its needs, which exempted it from issuing a call for tenders. This was an error, according to the judgment, which, without cancelling the contract awarded, states that "a call for tenders would have allowed for competition between different suppliers who could have proposed original solutions to meet the Régie's needs." What's more, the Court also highlighted the government's inconsistency in publicly acknowledging the economic and structural advantages of free software through its Department of Government Services, but failing to make room for it in its computer system. The decision of the Régie not to drag out the legal proceedings was welcomed by Cyrille Béraud, of the company Savoir Faire Linux, the man behind the lawsuit against the government agency. "The opposite would have been surprising," he said. "The judgment is to the advantage of the government. It is also an important opening for free software and we must now look forward." All over the world, these free software solutions are increasingly being considered by public administrations to reduce their procurement bills while ensuring greater independence from certain suppliers. The United States, France and Brazil have also announced major changes in recent months to integrate more of them into their digital landscape.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1089

Microsoft, Nokia, and to a lesser extent Intel: these three groups, leaders in their market, are seeing their supremacy increasingly threatened. By Google, by Apple, and more generally by the mobile Internet revolution. Nokia The Finnish group still had a large market share of 40% in mobile phones two years ago. And this included smartphones, machines as powerful as mini-computers, capable of connecting to the Internet. But the arrival of Apple's iPhone in June 2007 shook this colossus. The group took a long time before launching its own touchscreen terminal. It has launched a number of mobile services: a portal (Ovi), a musical content offering (musicMe), online games, etc. Without success. Today, the group, which still sells more than a million phones per day, has lost its technological leadership and risks finding itself confined to manufacturing low-end terminals. A formidable situation, because its financial margins would be crushed and the brand would be exposed even more to the risks of counterfeiting. Microsoft The American, the world's leading software publisher, still equips nine out of ten computers in the world with operating systems (the Windows range) and office software (the Office suite). But players from the Internet, first and foremost Google, or supporters of free software, which can be modified and used as desired, are attacking it head-on on PC screens, with more basic but free products (the Chrome OS operating system and Google Docs software). Furthermore, its mobile phone operating system is failing to establish itself. Its market share in high-end telephony has even fallen, dropping from 10.2% to 6.8% in one year in the first quarter of 2010, according to Gartner. Many criticize software that is literally inspired by Windows, not optimized for mobile, and less ergonomic than that of the iPhone. "Windows phones" continue to be popular with professionals, who find their work "environment" there, but less so with the general public. Intel The American group, the world's leading manufacturer of microprocessors, is also one of the leaders in the "PC platform": around eight out of ten machines are equipped with one of its chips. "In the PC world, there is a great deal of standardization of the different modules that make up the machine: the processor, the operating system, etc. One company can produce one component, a second another, a third assemble them. The structure of the mobile market is completely different. Everything is much more integrated," explains Sébastien Rospide, consultant for the specialist firm Décision. Companies like Samsung and even Apple design or even produce everything in-house (hardware, software, chip, etc.). The American Qualcomm offers telephone manufacturers very specific modules, combining the ability to connect the telephone to mobile networks and the ability to run computer applications. Intel remains a newcomer in this sector. But these three groups retain considerable human and financial capacities: hundreds of engineers in research and development or tens of billions of dollars that can be quickly mobilized, in the case of Intel or Microsoft. They have no choice, because it is the core of their businesses that is threatened. Intel is focusing on energy savings to design semiconductors that are just as powerful, but less power-hungry to meet one of the major constraints of telephones: autonomy. Microsoft announced, for this fall, the availability of its new operating system for mobile telephones, "Windows Mobile Seven". Its engineers have chosen to focus on social networks: the software offers a telephone where you "surf" from one application to another via your different contacts (from a Facebook profile to a Flickr account via a Twitter feed...). An original proposition, which would allow terminal manufacturers to distinguish themselves from the iPhone. As for Nokia, its directors announced a partnership with Intel to design operating systems ("MeeGo") for digital tablets. Perhaps they will choose to cross the Rubicon, abandoning their home-made operating system dedicated to phones, Symbian, for Android, Google's, today the darling of independent developers (along with the iPhone)? This would be the way to give their terminals some new life.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1090

Find an Internet café, rent all the computers available for a few hours, and present a net.art exhibition there. On June 11, the artist Aram Bartholl organized the first Speed Show, an express exhibition in a small Internet café in Kreuzberg, a trendy district of Berlin, where he presented, on all the requisitioned stations, online works that could be viewed on a simple web browser. Monopolies. The location is announced on the Net at the last minute, like a techno Free party. From 9 p.m., more than 150 people crowded into this improvised gallery under the astonished gaze of the owners of the Internet café (also drinks vendors), delighted by this unusual turnout. The first edition of the Speed Show brought together a dozen artist-coders, open source activists and other Web renegades. Net.art pioneers like Jodi, Olia Lialina and Dragan Espenschied, who made the Internet their artistic medium in the 90s, rub shoulders with their worthy successors. The technical difficulties, the low bandwidth and the novelty of the tool then reserved this art for an avant-garde. Although declared dead in 1998 by those who invented it, net.art still seems to have a bright future ahead of it, revived by a new generation that multiplies interventions on YouTube, criticizes social networks and their monopolies, while celebrating pixels and html. "Classic net.art is remixed with web activism, the Do-it-Yourself philosophy, the culture of sharing, writes Aram Bartholl who speaks of "pop.net.art" to designate this resurgence, at a time when the Web has become an integral part of people's lives and more and more amateurs are making creative use of the network. Spearheading this pop trend is the FAT Lab (Free Art and Technology), of which Aram Bartholl is a member, as well as Evan Roth, who presents his Animated Gif Mash-Up, an open-source tool that allows you to mix animated gifs with any music file. The Speed Show is punctuated by Education of the Noobz's chipmusic, made on old Atari STs, the code of which is freely downloadable. Constant Dullaart offers his own "agitated" vision of current events with Nervous News, where the BBC's web pages seem to be having an epileptic fit. The star of the evening is the famous Web 2.0 Suicide Machine from the Moddr collective, which allows you to sabotage your Twitter, Myspace and Facebook accounts, which earned him an excommunicado from the number 1 social network. "Interloper." "The problem with art on the Internet is how to exhibit it," explains Bartholl. "Today, we no longer need a gallery or a museum. The screen at home is the window that allows access to everything, including art. On the other hand, physical encounters are more important than ever. Looking at a screen, alone at home, is boring. The Internet café represents the Internet in a cheap, amateur, shady way. Why not set up your own gallery there for a few hours." The artist encourages everyone to take ownership of this fast, mobile and networked format and to organize a Speed Show in the Internet café downstairs, to present your work or that of your friends, while having a drink. Http://fffff.at/speed-show-how-to/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1091

"I imagine that the world suddenly freezes. What would you do if you had the opportunity to rebuild everything, reinvent everything?" Ykon Game, a board game imagined by the eponymous collective, is a remake of Buckminster Fuller's World Game, developed in the 1960s. For the American architect, inventor of the geodesic dome, the game was an ideal tool for understanding and finding solutions to humanity's problems (hunger, illiteracy, health, environment). Ykon Game is a contemporary version, but rather than healing the wounds of the old world, it hopes to inspire new ideas that could radically alter the course of things. Invited by the Mal au pixel festival, the collective took over the Eof gallery last Sunday, reproducing a giant planisphere on the ground. Among the scenarios suggested by the participants, the general "reset": databases, bank accounts, computer clocks are reset to zero and new software installed that would take into account indicators based not on GDP but on the degree of "humanity". Voltage drops. Mal au pixel, the little Parisian brother of the Finnish festival Pixelache, dedicated to electronic cultures, tackles environmental issues and access to technologies. Spread across a dozen locations, this fifth edition summons "non-Western perspectives" on these issues, by inviting artists from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Adepts of recycling, they tinker with the tools at hand, favoring low-tech and the sharing of knowledge. Faced with daily power cuts, Jean Katambayi Mukendi imagined a cardboard prototype stuffed with electronics that allows these voltage drops to be visualized. "I am myself a victim of these sudden variations due to the anarchic exploitation of the electrical network in the Republic of Congo, the galloping demography in the cities where everyone connects to the device," says the artist whose sculpture was blocked for two days by customs, not very sensitive to his art, who considered that the electrical device did not meet NF standards. Bombay artists Ashok Sukumaran and Shaina Anand imagine new uses of the media for local populations, documented at the BenJ gallery. They divert a surveillance camera in East Jerusalem to put it in the hands of Palestinian residents. In New Delhi, they connect televisions and cheap surveillance equipment to create a local communication network. In a market in Dakar, they organize radio microphone sessions using an antenna, 15 transistors and a car battery. Same "do it yourself" credo in the Re:farm the City project, which aims to allow the average person to create their own apartment vegetable garden. For five days, in the Mycroft gallery under construction, these electronic gardeners from Spain, Argentina and Portugal, are leading a workshop to create a mobile farm installed in old suitcases picked up in the street, develop their own electronic tools to control humidity, light, temperature and maintain crops remotely when you go on vacation. Urban farmers. The project is Opensource, all the instructions are online, the ultimate goal being to encourage the production and consumption of local products. The community of urban farmers is spreading to New York, Madrid, Barcelona, Buenos Aires and now Paris. They will present their project on Saturday at the CentQuatre, during a seminar on Hacklabs, places of creation between art, science and citizenship. While you're growing your strawberries, you might as well print your own vinyl records too. At the Nuit d'encre gallery, Yuri Suzuki has set up an amateur recording studio that looks like a kitchen. The artist records Dubplates live with local music groups, makes a mold and then presses a disc from colored melted plastic. The sound is a little dirty, but when you get tired of the disc, you just put it in the oven and print a new one. In an even lower-def version, Gaël Angelis presents at Ars Longa his fragile phonographs made entirely of paper. On the warped scratchcard discs, dug with grooves, wanders a needle amplified with the help of spitting horns. Sound performances that are at the heart of the festival's rich musical program, with this evening at the Java an explosive poster lining up Scorpion Violente and his synthetic nihilism, the twisted electro nursery rhymes of Niwouinwouin, the Harsh noise of Fred Nippi or the dada rock'n'roll of Elvis Trauma Center.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1092

SAN FRANCISCO — (AP) Flock, a Web browser that emphasizes social networking, wants to make it easier and faster to see what friends and family are up to. The browser was updated this week using open-source code built by Google for its Chrome browser, which has been used by millions since its launch in 2008, largely because of its speed. Google also became Flock’s default search engine. Flock previously ran on the same platform as Mozilla’s Firefox, the second-most-used browser behind Microsoft’s Internet Explorer. About 17 million people have downloaded previous versions of Flock in the past five years, putting it well behind Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari and Opera. Flock President Shawn Hardin hopes the update will help the browser reach 70 million downloads within the next year. In addition to loading websites faster, the new version of Flock includes tools that will allow users to check their social networks without having to hop from site to site. The "What Your Friends Say" tool offers search results from a user's friend groups on popular sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. For example, searching for "oil spill" or "smart phones" will bring up the latest comments on those topics from a person's network of friends.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1093

SOFTWARE Three years after Google, Microsoft, in turn, offers the general public the possibility of using a light version of Office, its office software suite, for free via the Internet. An option offered at the same time as Office 2010, the new paid version of its "bouquet" of software (Word, Excel, Power Point, etc.) present on a billion computers worldwide. Is the giant ready to deprive itself of part of Office sales to better compete against Google or even open source solutions? "We are betting that Office Web Apps, the light and free version of the suite accessible on the Internet, will facilitate the sharing and use of Office on the move," explains Jean-Christophe Pitié, director of Microsoft's Office division in France. Thanks to a simple Windows Live address, all users will be able to exchange and share documents by connecting to the Web wherever they are, which will give them access to these tools." They will also have 25 gigabytes of storage space. This service will be financed by advertising, Microsoft emphasizes. In fact, it will be advertising for its own products. Sales erosion The leaders of the Redmond group are convinced that free applications will be a complement to the paid use of Office. "If we want to create content with video, 3D and graphic effects, the light version will not be enough," adds Jean-Christophe Pitié. Videos, slideshows, tables... The creation of documents and content has been made easier so that amateurs can improvise as "pros". Financially, Microsoft has an interest in making this bet a good one. In the third quarter of 2010, which ended on March 31, Microsoft Business Division, the branch that hosts Office - 90% of its turnover - saw its sales erode compared to last year. It went from 4.5 to 4.2 billion dollars, while its operating profit fell from 2.7 to 2.6 billion dollars for the first quarter of the year. In France, however, Jean-Christophe Pitié observed good performances. Sales of Office to the general public have tripled in three years. But the general public brings in much less: the family and student license for a computer costs only 99 euros, while the license for a professional reaches 499 euros for a workstation and climbs to 699 euros for three workstations. At the same time, Google Apps are doing well: 25 million people use it and a million of them have subscribed to its paid version which costs 40 euros per user per year. An activity still marginal for the leading online advertising agency.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1094

This is one of the major launches of 2010 for Microsoft. On Tuesday, June 15, the American group launched the latest version of its Office suite worldwide, called Office 2010 for the general public. For the world's leading software publisher, the stakes are high. Comprised of the Word word processor, the Excel spreadsheet, the PowerPoint slideshow software and the OneNote note-taking tool, Office is by far the most widely used office suite in the world. Nearly a billion PCs are equipped with it. Above all, it accounts for a third of the group's turnover ($18.9 billion or €15.5 billion) and more than half of its operating income ($12 billion). The group's other "cash cow" is the Windows operating system for computers. Microsoft owes its exceptional profitability to Office and Windows: for its fiscal year ending June 2009, the publisher made a net profit of 14.5 billion dollars, more than the GDP of Gabon or Guinea... Increasingly competitive The big news in Office 2010 is that for the first time, Microsoft is offering a Web version of its product, albeit simplified, but free. From any computer with an Internet connection, it will be possible, even if you have not previously purchased Office 2010 (which costs at least 99 euros), to create or modify Word, Excel, etc. documents. And also to store up to 25 gigabytes of documents (the equivalent of thousands of Word files). "You will also be able to access them via your multimedia phone. This offer is complementary to the use of Office on your PC," explains Jean-Christophe Pitié, director of the Office division at Microsoft France. A timid but radical change in the economic model. With Office Web, the online version, the group plans to make money by selling advertisements, which will "a priori only be visible in the storage space", specifies Mr. Pitié. "There is obviously a risk of cannibalization of the paid version by the free version", estimates Mathieu Poujol of the Pierre Audoin Consultants firm. But does the American group have a choice? As with Windows, still dominant but increasingly challenged by free or less expensive software (Linux, Google Chrome OS), Office must deal with new, more competitive products. Like Google Docs, a suite accessible on the Web, published by Google, or the OpenOffice.org project, based on free software, supported by IBM, Oracle and independent developers. Dominant position These software programs are more basic, but their designers are betting on all those, especially in the general public, who do not need all the features of Office for their daily use. "Some, particularly government departments, choose us to escape Microsoft's influence," says Charles-Henri Schulz, a member of the OpenOffice.org community council. Microsoft's dominant position does not seem to be under threat in the short term, however. "Google Docs is not widely used in businesses," says Mr. Poujol. The third version of OpenOffice.org, released in 2009, has been downloaded 154 million times. "Microsoft is still very strong. Its salespeople are capable of slashing their prices to keep a customer," he says. "If it is threatened, it is more by the possible end of the omnipotence of the PC," adds the specialist, referring to the successful launch of Apple's iPad and the enormous success of phones permanently connected to the Internet. In fact, Microsoft built its success on the PC "platform." However, the American giant is currently struggling to establish itself on mobile phones. The market share of Windows Mobile, its operating system for multimedia phones, fell to 6.8% in the first quarter of 2010, from 10.2% a year earlier, according to Gartner Group. And the publisher has still not publicly announced a product dedicated to tablets.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1095

To manage an increasingly large and complex network, ZAP Québec and other community wireless organizations need effective tools that don't cost a fortune. And thanks to open source software, they work wonders. The software used throughout Quebec by the six member organizations of the Alliance communautaire du sans-fil (CSF) is called WIFIDog (the wireless dog). It was initially created by members of Île sans fil, the Montreal community access network, and was later modified by other organizations in Quebec, Ontario, England and Germany. WIFIDog is used to create user accounts. The software starts up as soon as a user connects, and it keeps statistics on network usage. "We don't want to know which sites users go to," emphasizes Mario Asselin, spokesperson for ZAP Québec. "We simply want to evaluate the level of use of the accounts to ensure that it remains a start-up service. If someone abuses [...], we can disconnect them, but that has almost never happened." With the expansion of networks, WIFIDog is reaching its limits, he thinks. "We patched it up as our networks grew, but we can't do that forever, it ends up becoming too heavy. We are now thinking of creating a new product, which is currently called Authpuppy." All the groups have pooled funds, and a lot of volunteer work. We hope to arrive in the fall with this replacement for WIFIDog, which has reached the end of its useful life. "We decided to create something new, and other groups around the world who are watching us will be able to use what we created, and perhaps improve it. That's the beauty of open source software." The same thing happened with another tool developed in Quebec City. "There came a point where we lacked the arguments to convince organizations to install a terminal [...] in their homes. So we had the idea of creating a site where citizens could request a ZAP at a location of their choice. That's how we were able to demonstrate that there was a strong demand to connect the Plains." The tool is called moijezap.org, and the other members of the Wireless Community Alliance took note. "The other regions saw our tool, and since we work in open source mode, Montreal and Sherbrooke didn't have to pay to use what we had developed. We shared the code with them."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1096

Marie Malavoy, Official Opposition Critic for Research and Development and Technological Innovations, will have the opportunity today to present, at the Bureau of the National Assembly, a project aimed at testing free software on Parliament Hill. The Bureau is made up of a few MNAs, including the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Chief Government Whip and the Official Opposition Whip. "I asked to meet with them to present a document that presents free software, explains its advantages, and reports on some successful experiments elsewhere in the world," she said in an interview with Le Soleil. This week is a pivotal moment, explains the PQ MNA for Taillon. On the one hand, a recent Superior Court judgment opened the door to free software by stating that the government must use calls for tenders when replacing operating systems or office suites. On the other hand, this is the last meeting of the Bureau before the end of the session. "I don't expect the Bureau to make a commitment at this point," she said, "but I would like to see at least a small working committee created, with people who know about free software, to look at the possibility of testing it." Such a project would not put Quebec on the sidelines of technological development, quite the contrary, she said. "There is a vast movement around the world toward the use of free software, and Quebec must participate. The National Assembly is small compared to the Quebec government, but if this project were successful, it could help move things forward." Furthermore, she added, the Parti Québécois intends to put pressure on the government to prevent it from appealing the Superior Court's judgment and to change its practices for the future. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1097

It's all well and good to criticize Facebook, but we still need to be able to find alternatives. And at that level, we feel bad for admitting that inspiration is almost lacking. Go back to MySpace? And why not listen to the Spice Girls in baggy jeans again, while we're at it. More seriously, the old refrain of the extreme right "you love it or you leave it" would be hard to apply to the social network. A more realistic formula would be "you love it or you improve it". This is the whole point of the American researcher specializing in social networks and employed by Microsoft, Danah Boyd, often critical of the site, who published a post on her blog in May entitled Leaving Facebook is useless: encouraging it to improve is not. Boyd believes that privacy disputes are not sufficient reasons to cause a mass exodus from the social network and only concern a minority, a sort of slightly snobbish technophile elite. The growing number of users and the relatively low participation in the "Quit Facebook Day" on May 31, despite significant media coverage, tend to support her point. The specialist, who mentions the "very, very, very deep" relationship between the network and most of its members, uses her own little comparison to justify the inaction of users who do not always agree with the site's policy: "It's like saying that people should leave their apartment because they don't get along with their landlord, or that they should dump their spouse because of a decision that was poorly perceived." Zahia D. For Boyd, the main concern remains the clear ignorance of ordinary people on Facebook, who are not or barely aware of the consequences of certain publications, or of the processes used to make them inaccessible to the entire Web. However, simple tools exist to dot the i's and cross the t's. For example, the Reclaim Privacy tool allows you to "test" the confidentiality of your Facebook profile in a simple, quick and effective way: using a simple colour code (green for secure, red for risky), the user will know in ten seconds whether some of their data is accessible to a slightly too wide sphere. And thus avoid disappointments like the one experienced by a certain Zahia D., a pleasant young girl well known to certain footballers. On 21 April, the website of Le Monde quoted her first name and the initial of her last name in an article concerning the sex scandal. In a few minutes, Internet users found her profile by rummaging through the Facebook contacts of the alleged intermediary between the Blues and the young lady. Her profile is not private and her personal photos will thus be all over the Internet in half a day. Will salvation come from the free software community? Riding on the discontent, an initiative soberly named "Diaspora" has been making headlines for several weeks. Control. Financed by patron Internet users, the future site aims to be an Opensource alternative to Mark Zuckerberg's network, where everyone will keep control of their personal data that will not end up stored on a computer server in California. The project is led by four students at New York University, who presented their objectives in a video that almost verges on geek self-caricature. No reason to doubt their motivation or their talent, but no reason to worry the giant Facebook either. The height of irony is that Zuckerberg recently announced that he had invested a few dollars in the project. Personal information that he could have kept to himself, but the PR is well worth an unpacking of private life.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1098

It is unfortunate, but not surprising given how dominant Microsoft is in the government machine, that common sense has not led the government to adopt free software on its own, as many administrations around the world have done. Is it not time now to break the de facto monopoly that Microsoft exercises on software installed on PCs purchased by ordinary people? Why, in fact, should the Office of Consumer Protection not require PC distributors to offer a choice of free operating system instead of Windows? The free option could save consumers money. \*\*\* Denis L'Homme - Lévis, June 4, 2010

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1099

This victory won by Savoir-faire Linux at the expense of the Microsoft software monopoly and its "Microsoft certified" apostles is excellent news for free software enthusiasts. It is also excellent news for the Quebec taxpayer since it will allow the government and its agencies - perhaps against their will - to substantially reduce their office automation budget without losing computer functionality. It is regrettable, but not surprising when we know how dominant Microsoft is in the government machine, that simple common sense has not led the government to adopt free software of its own accord as many administrations around the world have done. Is it not time, now, to break the de facto monopoly that Microsoft exercises on software installed on PCs purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Average? Why, indeed, should the Office of Consumer Protection not require PC distributors to offer a choice of free operating system instead of Windows? The free option could save consumers money. Denis L'Homme Lévis

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1100

(TM) The PQ and ADQ opposition urged the government not to appeal a recent Superior Court decision that would open the way to the use of free software in the public service. This week, Savoir-Faire Linux (SFL) won its case before the Régie des rentes du Québec and the Centre de services partagés du Québec. "The Superior Court would save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars (...). In February 2008, the Régie awarded a $700,000 contract for the renewal of computer workstations without a call for tenders. There is a Quebec company, SFL, that is contesting it because it was unable to submit a bid with another computer system called free software," said ADQ leader Gérard Deltell yesterday during question period. The same story was echoed by PQ member Marie Malavoy. According to her analysis, Quebec "knows that they (free software) are more flexible, more efficient and less expensive. Despite everything, this government is covering its ears and closing its eyes and does not want to hear anything about free software." Extremely cautious, the Minister of Government Services, Dominique Vien, simply said that "we take note (of the judgment). We are analyzing it and we will see what happens next." The legal appeal period is 30 days.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1101

In the process, the court also highlights the inconsistency of the government which, while recognizing the economic and structural advantages of open source software to ensure the sustainability and flexibility of its computer equipment, struggles to make room for this technology in its contract awarding process, and this, to the benefit of multinational proprietary software companies associated with costly "exclusive licensing rights." Defenders of free applications applaud. "This is a very good decision for us," Cyrille Béraud, president of Savoir-Faire Linux, a company that promotes free software and which has decided to challenge the validity of the contract awarded to Microsoft by the RRQ, told Le Devoir yesterday. "But it is also a great victory for the Quebec government which, with this judgment, now has a tool to free itself from the stranglehold of multinationals on its information system." In his forty-page judgment handed down yesterday, Judge Denis Jacques believes that the RRQ failed in its duty by awarding a $722,848 contract to Compugen, a distributor of Microsoft products, to update its workstations. For the Régie, only one supplier, the American multinational, could meet its IT needs and, in this context, the Regulation respecting supply, construction and service contracts of government departments and public bodies therefore allowed it to award this contract worth more than $25,000 without a competitive bidding process. A misreading, says the Superior Court, which ultimately rules that the Régie did not prove that no other system could serve its digital interests before signing the cheque. "The Court considers that a call for tenders would have allowed for competition between different suppliers who could have proposed original solutions to meet the needs of the Régie," wrote the judge, who nevertheless decided not to cancel the award of the contract, but made this award process illegal for the future. "This is a judgment that will set a precedent," commented Mr. Béraud, who has been fighting for years against Microsoft's monopoly in public administration equipment. According to him, free software, whose great ambassador throughout the world is the open-access operating system called Linux, could lead to significant savings for governments. Its applications, which can be downloaded free of charge, can also be used without paying royalties. Their computer code is also open, which allows everyone to manipulate and shape them according to specific needs, with the key being greater independence from certain suppliers. Better still, these "free software programs offer great potential in terms of information security and protection of citizens' privacy," according to the Ministry of Government Services in a document presented on its website, as Judge Denis Jacques points out in his verdict. In the United States, the Obama administration has decided to make more room for this type of software in government computers in the future. France and Brazil have also expressed their intention in recent months to introduce more free software into government computer equipment. "These are programs that guarantee equitable access to technology in addition to contributing to the sustainable development of information systems," says Mr. Béraud. Free software is ultimately a matter of public interest, it is not just a technical matter." Contacted by Le Devoir, Herman Huot, spokesperson for the RRQ, indicated yesterday that the Régie would "take note of the judgment and its consequences for [it]" before taking part in the commentary game. The organization has 30 days to appeal the case, an option "that could certainly be considered," he said. However, this scenario would be absurd, according to Mr. Béraud, represented in this case by the famous lawyer Julius Grey, among others: "The Quebec government is not going to appeal a judgment that now strengthens its ability to enter the 21st century and modernize," he summarized.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1102

The Régie des rentes du Québec (RRQ) acted illegally in February 2008 when it acquired Microsoft software without conducting a call for tenders, concluded Superior Court Justice Denis Jacques. In a lengthy judgment of some forty pages, the judge ruled in full favor of the company Savoir-Faire Linux (SFL), which initiated this lawsuit against the RRQ and the Centre de services partagés du Québec. "The primary beneficiary of this judgment is the Quebec government, which is freed from the grip of multinationals," declared SFL President Cyrille Béraud yesterday. "All I gained was the right to be compared to others in a free and competitive market." SFL had filed this lawsuit after being refused authorization by the Régie to submit a proposal based on the Linux system, when acquiring operating systems and office suites for 500 workstations. Simple upgrade? Before the court, the Centre de services partagés du Québec argued that the Régie was only carrying out an "upgrade" of its workstations, to justify its decision to stick with Microsoft products, in particular the Vista operating system and the Office 2007 suite. The judge did not agree, since the RRQ was replacing the Windows XP system and the Office 2000 suite. "This is a migration, a renewal of its computer equipment. [...] If such a major change constituted an upgrade, everything would become an upgrade, making the call for tenders rule inapplicable." The judge also cites email exchanges between RRQ employees, which he believes show improvisation and bias toward Microsoft solutions. "Give me arguments to justify each product, everything that comes to mind..." wrote one employee, a comment that speaks volumes about the lack of serious and documented research, the judge concluded. "I would like a CGI expert on free software to comment on the response we sent [to Cyrille Béraud]. Are the arguments valid? [...] I would like our comments to remain CONFIDENTIAL," the same employee asked later. An approach that surprised even the people at CGI. "I thought the goal was to compare the two solutions," wrote the specialist approached by the Régie. "However, this is a request to confirm that Linux - OpenOffice is not in the game. It would be paradoxical to make such a finding when we are promoting the opposite..." This exchange, wrote the judge, "demonstrates the spirit in which the Régie operates to bypass its obligation to proceed by call for tenders...". He also notes the RRQ's decision to publish its notice of intent in the middle of the Christmas period, on December 21, 2007, requiring that any interested party submit their comments before January 11, 2008. "Unfortunately for the Régie's "strategy", Mr. Béraud responded on December 25, 2007," recalled Judge Jacques. The judge considered that it would be unreasonable to retroactively cancel the transaction concluded in 2008, but he nevertheless considered it "fair and necessary" to declare that the Régie acted illegally by proceeding with this acquisition without serious and documented research. He concluded that it could not award this contract without a call for tenders. The Régie's spokesperson, Herman Huot, indicated yesterday that the organization was giving itself a few days to study the decision. As for the president of SFL, he explained that his approach "was not intended to annoy the RRQ or anyone else. We wanted to highlight the fact that we were falling behind technologically. I hope that, since this is only a declaratory judgment, the State will not appeal it." "We could not have hoped for better," he added. "I would like to take this opportunity to launch a solemn appeal to the political parties and the Charest government to address the issue of free software. Free software means technological independence, local jobs, less expensive and more efficient information systems." passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1103

QUEBEC - In an important judgment, the Superior Court of Quebec ruled yesterday that the government is required to issue public calls for tenders for the purchase of software licenses, even if it believes that only one company can meet its expectations. In his judgment, Judge Denis Jacques established that the Régie des rentes du Québec did not have the right to directly grant Microsoft the mandate to renew licenses for its employees' workstations. The RRQ was then switching from Windows XP to Vista and adding licenses for Visio and Office, two other products of the American multinational. "This is an important judgment for the future of Quebec," declared Cyrille Béraud yesterday, head of Savoir-faire Linux, the firm that took the RRQ to court. The computer scientist believes that this decision will free the government and Quebec public companies from the grip of multinationals. The RRQ case may seem marginal since the Crown corporation only purchased $700,000 worth of software. It can be estimated that each year, departments purchase $100 million worth of software without a call for tenders. The Régie des rentes was laconic: "We have just received this judgment. We intend to read it before commenting on it," said Herman Huot, the organization's spokesperson. In his verdict, Judge Jacques established that the Régie "acted illegally in the fall of 2006 by choosing a supplier, Microsoft (...) in the absence of serious research (...) based on the required specifications and in the absence of a public notice." Mr. Béraud believes that the Court is opening the door wide to "free software," a formula that is infinitely less expensive than the products of multinationals.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1104

It was the Internship and Placement Service, in conjunction with its partner SMA/Technologies et solutions d'apprentissage, that won an award for its Individual Development Plan (IDP), a computer tool for students who do internships in companies during their university studies. It should be noted that the Université de Sherbrooke has earned an enviable reputation in the field of internships, thanks to its cooperative system that allows students to alternate between classroom studies and paid internships in companies during their university education. Year after year, approximately 4,000 internships are organized in this way. Of course, the interns are not left to their own devices, and the university has set up a supervision system that includes an internship coordinator assigned to the incumbent, company visits and meetings with the employer, as well as evaluation reports. The IDP does not replace this supervision, but it reinforces and, above all, refines it. “The Individual Development Plan is a specialized software that the student accesses via the Internet using a password,” explains Denis-Robert Elias, Director of the Internship and Placement Service. “First, the student must fill out a technical sheet in which he describes the environment of his internship and his perception of it. He must also set goals. The software offers him an exercise to do each week. Then, the PDI asks him to self-evaluate according to 16 skills, three of which, according to his choice, will become his priorities. A logbook allows the intern to record his observations and ideas at any time.” The beauty of it is that the internship coordinator and the employer also have access to the student’s PDI. They can therefore follow the evolution of the intern’s thinking and even comment on it. “This virtually creates permanent contact between the student, the coordinator and the employer, regardless of the location of the internship.” The other significant advantage is that the PDI requires students to reflect and allows them to better evaluate themselves throughout the internship. "It's a great tool for reflection. At first, students may find the exercise tedious, but at the end of the internship, they all tell us that the PDI allowed them to get to know themselves better." The PDI also allows students to better prepare for the workplace. "We built the software based on the same principles that guide talent and skills management software used in large companies. We want our young students to learn to behave like young professionals and to be able to ask the right questions and then act accordingly. The PDI allows us to strengthen this part of learning a profession. In my opinion, it is the second generation of internships." A team of seven students from the Faculty of Engineering won the Octas Prize in the "Student Emerging Talent" category for their computer glove project, the Glovus 3. "It was our final bachelor's degree project," explains Denis Bellavance, one of the members of this team from computer engineering and electrical engineering. The challenge this team set itself was to create a new interface between humans and computers that would not involve a mouse or keyboard. The answer was the Glovus 3 computer glove. "It's the movement you make while wearing the glove that gives the computer commands. For example, bending a finger can correspond to a mouse click. We also had to make the glove easy to use and compatible with several software programs." The first step was to design the computer glove, which includes 13 sensors made up of accelerometers and gyrometers, capable of measuring the movements you make with the glove. The data is then transmitted to the computer via the Bluetooth wireless network. "Then there was the acquisition phase during which, by repeating a gesture or movement, the computer found the characteristics of this movement, in order to then be able to recognize it without error." Once the acquisition phase was complete, the next step consisted of associating a specific action with the movement. "The user is free to choose the action they want and associate it with a specific movement, according to their needs." Denis Bellavance's team chose to test the Glovus 3 with music software, such as Garage Band or even the game Guitar Hero. "We therefore associated the movements of the glove with musical actions. The flexion of a finger could correspond, for example, to an A sharp. We made the movement and the computer produced the note." It was therefore possible to make music by moving the gloved hand. "With the game Guitar Hero, it's almost like air guitar hero that we were doing." Could this computer glove have new applications? "It's possible, but we haven't tried to market it. For us, it was a student project. However, we developed this project using open source code, so others may want to push it further," concludes Denis Bellavance, now employed by Amazon in Seattle. \*\*\* Contributor to Le Devoir

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1105

IT This is a new blow for Microsoft. According to yesterday's Financial Times, Google employees have been asked since January to abandon Windows, the Microsoft operating system that runs their computers. Employees of the Californian Internet giant interviewed by the business daily explain that management invoked the vulnerability of Windows in the security domain. Indeed, Google had revealed last January that it was the victim of a vast computer hacking operation orchestrated from China. And the investigation had shown that the flaw came from Internet Explorer (IE), Microsoft's Internet browser. The software publisher had admitted that one of the versions of IE presented risks but only when it was used with Windows 2000 and Windows XP. A security "patch" had then been produced by Microsoft. For Google, this event was an opportunity to review its IT strategy. Now, the management of the famous search engine is offering its employees the choice of Mac OS, Apple's operating system, or of switching to open-source Linux. Employees who want to stay on Windows need permission from their superiors, and those who want to buy a new machine running Windows must submit to the approval of Google's technical director, reports the Financial Times. A series of exchanges of words Financially, the loss of 10,000 users - the total number of employees at Google worldwide - is not a big deal. The amount paid by Google for Microsoft's licenses should not exceed three million dollars for three years. But this gesture is significant. It adds to a series of exchanges of words between the two giants of new technologies. Google, which did not threaten Microsoft when it was content to be a search engine, has become a competitor in many areas: it publishes office software and Android, its operating system, now equips mobile phones. Google has also launched Chrome, its own Internet browser, and Chrome OS, its computer operating system, should soon be available on Acer machines. For its part, Microsoft has become a heavyweight on the Web. And its alliance with Yahoo! should allow it to better compete with Google. However, this news makes one person happy: Apple, whose market capitalization is neck and neck with that of Microsoft.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1106

The cream of innovators in music, art, cinema, design, architecture, video games, nothing less... This is the stated ambition of the site The Creators Project, which is redrawing, in a few clicks, the world map of culture, Vice-style. At the controls, Vice, an irreverent fanzine created in 2004 in Montreal, which has become a media empire present in more than 20 countries. At the purse strings, the microprocessor giant Intel, in need of pop legitimacy, which is thumbing its nose at Apple in the process. A strange coupling whose common denominator is the marriage between creativity and technology. Shane Smith, co-founder of Vice, says he wants to launch "something inspired by the Parisian salons of the 1920s" where artists, writers, and musicians converged to exchange ideas. The Creators Project hopes to become the hub of digital creation, to bring together tomorrow's talents, to break down barriers between disciplines, and to stimulate collaborations between artists. The project is being rolled out online but also physically, during a series of events combining installations, screenings, conferences and musical fiestas around the world. The first takes place at Milk Studios in New York on June 26, before making a detour to the Old Continent (London on July 17) but is mainly looking towards emerging scenes (and their markets), Brazil (São Paulo on August 14), South Korea (Seoul on August 28) and Beijing where the grand finale will take place, from September 17 to 19. For the moment, it is difficult to see how these events will be different from any other electronic arts festival. The casting, in any case, is impressive and does not lack flair. Among the 84 artists in the stable, there are a few emblematic pioneers (Laurent Garnier, Stefan Sagmeister, Spike Jonze, Richie Hawtin, Chris Cunningham, etc.), but above all the rising generation "in independent cinema, futuristic architecture, avant-garde electronic music and fashion" according to the press release. The site is gradually revealing videos presenting the work of its protégés, including the Korean Hojun Song, who wants to launch his own open source satellite, the Chinese Ray Lei and his pretty hand-drawn animations, the hypnotic light architectures of the Brazilian Muti Randolph, the clips of Radical Friend, the paper dresses of Jum Nakao or the impressive interactive installations of the London collective UVA Côté Frenchy: the director Ladj Ly of Kourtrajmé, the Versaillais of Phoenix, the collective Exyzt... Each interview is also an opportunity to detail the software used, the brands of computer hardware, and to say how cool technology is. Vice itself is a descendant of the digital revolution. "Vice started basically when idiots were allowed to publish," Shane Smith told Wired. "Technology allowed us to launch our own magazine, then our own WebTV, VBS, thanks to editing tools, cameras, and cheap software. Technology has always been at the heart of what we do." Vice has also recently launched another news platform that pleasantly mixes electronic cultures, Motherboard.tv, sponsored by Dell this time. Www.thecreatorsproject.com www.viceland.com www.vbs.tv www.motherboard.tv

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1107

DNA, deoxyribonucleic acid, whose double helix structure was described by Crick and Watson in 1953, is indeed a macromolecule that can do everything. As a carrier of heredity of course, and of the information necessary for the development and functioning of an organism. But the tools developed by biologists to synthesize tailor-made fragments at will have also given ideas to chemists and physicists keen on nanotechnologies. In 1994, Leonard Adleman was the first to propose the use of DNA strands to solve a problem called the traveling salesman problem, which consists of determining the smallest route connecting several points and passing through each one only once. He thus paved the way for future molecular computers, capable of performing complex combinatorial calculations "in a test tube". Since then, DNA logic gates, mimicking the operation of electronic circuits on silicon, have been designed. Moreover, since the early 1990s, some people have imagined being able to take advantage of the ability of DNA fragments to attach to each other to create two-dimensional, and soon three-dimensional, structures - such as cubes or truncated octahedrons. But the synthesis of such objects required multiple steps and had a low yield. More recently, the technique known as DNA origami has emerged. This time, it involves synthesizing not several but a single strand of DNA, whose folding points and local affinities have been previously predicted so that it takes the desired shape. Indeed, the DNA molecule is made up of four basic building blocks A, T, C and G: adenine, which binds by complementarity to thymine and cytosine to guanine. Among the first, in 2006, Paul Rothemund (Caltech, Pasadena) thus designed a wide variety of planar structures, taking advantage of these elective affinities. Since then, the synthesis of these origami has been refined and it is now possible to design three-dimensional objects, such as those that illustrate this page, designed in 2009 by William Shih's team (Harvard University). This laboratory has even developed free computer-aided design software, caDNAno. To obtain such self-assemblies, DNA currently has "no competitors", judges Christophe Vieu, from the Laboratory of Analysis and Architecture of Systems (CNRS, Toulouse). The challenge now is to find a use for these inert structures, in chemistry, pharmacy or even electronics.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1108

"The only thing the government should do today [yesterday] is tell us right now that it is giving up appealing and that it is taking note of the judgment," Marie Malavoy of the Parti Québécois said in the House yesterday. "This judgment opens the door to tens of millions of dollars in savings," said Gérard Deltel, leader of the Action démocratique du Québec (ADQ), while asking Quebec to seize this opportunity rather than "contesting and making Quebecers pay even more." On Thursday, after several years of proceedings, Judge Denis Jacques indicated that the purchase of Microsoft software by the RRQ for an amount of $722,000 was illegal since no call for tenders had been issued and the Régie had not been able to prove that no other solution could be considered. The RRQ was taken to court by the company Savoir-faire Linux, which denounced the awarding of this type of contract without a call for tender, specifying that free software, these applications that can be downloaded for free and with open source code, could meet the needs of the organization at a lower cost. The government has until July 3 to appeal. Questioned in the House by the opposition, Dominique Vien, Minister of Government Services, refused to comment on the fate that Quebec reserves for this judgment. "We acknowledge it, we are analyzing it and we will see what happens next," she indicated.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1109

The association that promotes free software in Quebec, FACIL, will not have to pay the $107,000 that the law firm Tremblay, Bois, Mignault was claiming. The court registry instead assessed the amounts owed to the lawyers who represented the Centre de services partagés du Québec (CSPQ) in a case that FACIL lost, where the organization contested the CSPQ's method of awarding software purchasing contracts, at $465. Me Claude Jean, who had argued for the CSPQ in this case, points out that FACIL's motion had been dismissed with costs and that it is common practice to then submit a bill of costs to the opposing party. The sum of $107,000 represented 1% of the contracts contested by FACIL, he explains. The court instead concluded that the value of the contracts at stake could not be estimated. A bill of $107,000 would certainly have forced FACIL into bankruptcy, believes the president of the association, Cyrille Béraud, also president of Savoir-faire Linux, who was delighted yesterday with the decision of the deputy clerk. "It's a good decision, but it should never have come to this. We are just an association that does work in the public interest." Mr. Béraud points out that this bill of costs was submitted nine months after the final decision in the FACIL case, but just a few weeks before Savoir-faire Linux pleaded in court in a similar case against the government. Me Claude Jean explains this delay by the fact that he had simply accumulated a delay in his bills of costs, adding that he had no intention of contesting the clerk's decision. In Parliament, Cyrille Béraud also says he is very interested in the idea launched by PQ member Marie Malavoy to carry out a pilot project to test free software in the National Assembly, as has been done in France. "I would be delighted, because nothing will change until politicians come out in favour of free software. It would be a great showcase, but Ms. Malavoy has work ahead of her, if we are to believe the new National Assembly website... It is very far from free software, the site only uses Microsoft's Silverlight, and Linux workstations are therefore excluded. When you think that the government paid $3.5 million for this site..." passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1110

The official opposition's spokesperson for research and development and technological innovations, Marie Malavoy, wants to convince her colleagues to follow the example of the French MNAs and implement free software on the workstations of the National Assembly of Quebec. This is what the PQ MNA for Taillon told Le Soleil yesterday in a telephone interview. "I think we could convince the National Assembly to do a pilot project on free software, like the French National Assembly did. This is the next step I have set for myself. When you are not in power and you see that things are blocked, you have to find other ways to open the door." Indeed, after having carried out a pilot project, the French National Assembly proceeded with a definitive implementation on the workstations of all MNAs. "We could invite those who have done it in France to talk to us about it. If the National Assembly opened the door to that, the government would be in a very poor position to oppose it," she said. Ms. Malavoy had raised the subject last week during the study of the budget appropriations of the Treasury Board. "The idea is to see if the Quebec government could, like 27 OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] countries, make a change and express political will. There are millions of dollars at stake in this adventure and I think it is time for Quebec to make the change," she said to the President of the Treasury Board, Monique Gagnon-Tremblay. "We can't wipe the slate clean tomorrow morning and then say: we're starting from scratch with this free software. We are not at a disadvantage, but we still have to do it correctly," the minister replied. The PQ member was left with the impression that the current government is not interested in the issue. "I had the impression that Ms. Gagnon-Tremblay didn't know what I was talking about. It's still surprising to see that the President of the Treasury Board is not aware of this issue, which is taking on global proportions." According to her, the government is not only showing ignorance, but also strong resistance to opening up to free software. "It's even trying to silence the spokespersons with a $107,000 lawsuit." She is referring to a claim for legal costs filed by lawyers representing the government against a non-profit organization, FACIL. This organization is not strong enough to face a lawsuit of this magnitude, believes the PQ critic. In the Parti Québécois, however, the member maintains that the idea has come a long way. "Within the caucus, I regularly come back to the subject and my colleagues know what we are talking about. The best demonstration is that I was granted part of Sylvain Simard's time to raise the issue in parliamentary committee," she said. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1111

Alissa is a Bot, a dreamy conversational agent, with whom we can chat right now in the virtual space of the Jeu de Paume (1). For eight months, 24 hours a day, Internet users are invited to chat with her on the project's website or, for the more enterprising, to join her on Second Life. Alissa is an avatar, a beautiful brunette with the features of Nicole Hiss, the heroine of Marguerite Duras' film Détruire, she says. "She is inspired by several female figures," says her Pygmalion, the artist Agnès de Cayeux. From the character of Janice, a woman who falls in love with a computer unit, a film script by Guattari that was never made, from Faustina in The Invention of Morel, from the writer Linda Lê... A webcam films her continuously, opening a window onto this baroque virtual universe where she teleports from one place to another, Elon, a lunar crater, an ice floe, or a lawn covered in giant Easter eggs, leading several simultaneous conversations in writing with strangers who call out to her, carefully archived. "You can easily fall in love with a bot, especially when it's in an avatar's body," says Agnès de Cayeux (2), explaining that on Second Life, it was now possible to attach a bot program to an avatar, in other words, to make it speak by itself, without human intervention. For now, Alissa stutters, stammers, repeats herself, jumps from one thing to another, but should gradually absorb our words, remember our thoughts, and grow with the exchanges. The offspring of a long line of "chatbots", Alissa is the great-niece of Eliza, the oldest "intelligent agent" created in 1966, a psychologist developed by Joseph Weizenbaum, who asks questions and uses the content of conversations to enrich her database. Or of Sowana, an expert in contemporary art created by the artist Paul Devautour in 1996. Or of Alice, the open-source bot developed by Richard Wallace since 1995, three times a finalist for the Loebner Prize, which rewards the program that best passes the Turing test. In other words, the ability for a machine to make a human believe that he is talking to another human, an old fantasy of computer scientists. This is not the ambition of Alissa, a literary creature who has read Foucault's "Heterotopias" or Guattari's 65 Dreams of Kafka, inundated with films and texts by Bataille and Toussaint. She has her obsessions, dreams, exile and will systematically try to draw you into this terrain. Distracted, she sometimes bugs, understands "weapons" instead of "tears". "Alissa is not a very sophisticated program, she does not seek to give the illusion that she is intelligent. We know that machines do not think. The hope is that people will open up, forget that they are talking to a bot and end up talking to themselves." These intimate conversations with an avatar are a way of making the presence of our doubles in the future tangible: do avatars dream, do they have emotions, do they love? Discussions that Alissa will have with Miladus, avatar of the historian of religions Milad Doueihi, during meetings on Wednesdays April 14, May 19 and June 16 at 9 p.m. (3), around specific themes: exile, death, sex and gender. (1) www.jeudepaume.org (2) www.arpla.fr/odnm/? page\_id=6871 (3) Until November 17.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1112

However, Radio-Canada demonstrated yesterday that a system of collusion between large IT firms that award contracts on a rotating basis could well exist in Quebec. In his reaction to this CBC report, Premier Charest did not seem surprised, Bernard Drainville pointed out yesterday. The Premier also pointed out that the Treasury Board published a new policy in October aimed at tightening up the awarding of contracts in this area. The PQ MNA recalled that Bell XWave obtained one of the largest contracts awarded for the implementation of the DSQ. It had been the sole bidder, which the Auditor General had denounced in 2008. "It's becoming extremely worrisome," Mr. Drainville said before reiterating his request for the establishment of a public inquiry commission on the construction sector. Shedding "light on collusion practices" in a key sector, he explained, would allow us to "understand what is also happening" in other related fields, "such as communications technologies." Open-source software could be a solution to the problems of the enormous costs of such a system, he admitted. "This is something we are currently thinking about at the [PQ]," he said, noting that Europe was keen on this software that allows the state to avoid paying exorbitant royalties to multinationals like Microsoft. Furthermore, the MP recalled what the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec (FMOQ) revealed to Le Devoir in early March: it would be possible to treat "20% more patients" if the files were computerized. The FMOQ denounces the stalling of the DSQ file. Since Health Minister Yves Bolduc was on vacation, it was his press attaché, Karine Rivard, who responded to Mr. Drainville's criticism. According to her, the file is "progressing well", the "monitoring is rigorous" and the objective has long been to obtain functional computerized files in 2011 and not in 2010.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1113

At Révolution Linux, we like companies that are as flexible as the products of this Sherbrooke SME that works in information technology. Since 2004, the company headed by Benoit Des Ligneris has developed computer applications intended primarily for the world of education. The beauty of the business is that it works using free or "open source" software. By using this software that is easily adaptable to the needs of customers, we lower acquisition costs, notes President Des Ligneris. "We have developed several programs adapted for students. Their ability to work with this tool prepares them to be good citizens in the future," he says. "Computers at school are a good way to stimulate students. We can even offer different software from one school to another." Révolution Linux's other hobby horse is development with terminals instead of networked computers. Less expensive, more resistant and less energy-intensive, terminals can perform the same tasks as traditional PCs, adds the businessman. All you have to do is connect them to a computer server that provides memory and software. "It's also very interesting for school boards. Students are equipped with terminals instead of computers. They can access the Internet or as many software programs. It's better to invest in a good server than in computers that quickly become obsolete." "It's also less expensive to maintain terminals than computers. It makes security management easier." In fact, at Révolution Linux, we practice what we preach. While respecting the limits of confidentiality, we can say that we apply the principles of free software in the company's activities. First, the workstations are equipped with terminals. Also, the continuous improvement process is accessible to employees. Everyone can have their say. "My personal motto, which applies as much to our customers, our shareholders, our suppliers, our partners, but also and especially to our employees, is the following: I prefer to work with motivated people rather than working to motivate people," he mentions. "The role of the management team is simply to allow this motivation to express itself with the least possible frustration for our employees. It is their motivation and their success that we want." If we can lay out the daily life of the thirty employees of Révolution Linux in this way, it is because the SME on King Street West received the "Remarkable Employer" certification yesterday, the first to be offered in the Sherbrooke region. The brand is recognized by the Quebec government and awarded by the Bureau de normalisation du Québec. It aims to help organizations better face the challenges associated with the shortage of labor and recognize quality employers. This program was developed by the firm Groupe Ambition. When a company registers for this program, an employee opinion evaluation process is set in motion. The results of the questionnaire give management a good idea of the company's motivations and attraction for employees. In his speech, Benoit Des Ligneris summarized the company's philosophy: "The right to make mistakes exists at Révolution Linux. But the total quality approach aims to prevent errors from happening again." More information on this certification will be available at a conference scheduled for April 14, from 7:30 to 9 a.m., at the Hôtel Le Président.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1114

Faced with the concept of Flattr, two types of reactions. Disbelief, of course, because a system that allows Internet users to pay without any compensation seems doomed to failure, so far removed is it from the classic commercial model. Or optimism, because it is new and we cannot know before trying. Who would have bet, in 2001, on the success of an encyclopedia fed by Internet users and freely modifiable? Flattr will allow you to pay a fixed monthly sum. While surfing, the Internet user will be able to press a "Flattr" button on blogs, artists' sites, or any other creative platform. Their contribution will then be distributed among all the projects they have decided to support. At the helm is the Swede Peter Sunde, aka Brokep, who is also the co-founder of the sharing site the Pirate Bay. How did you come up with the idea of creating Flattr? About two years ago, the debate in Sweden about internet funding was very heated, and no one was trying a different approach: using the philosophy of the internet itself as a basis for thinking. I wanted people not to be forced to pay. People try, test, and only give value to things once they know what they are. Nobody pays for the internet as such, you pay to have access to all the information. I wanted to do something that was based on the same principles. Is there a connection between The Pirate Bay (TPB) and Flattr? Yes, they are pretty much the same thing. The goal of TPB was to fight the dominant position of big media corporations. Flattr is also a way to do that, by removing the barriers that prevent having a simple and efficient payment system. It is about taking back control and continuing to pay the creators, but not the intermediaries. What is Flattr's business model? Right now, we take 10% of the amount paid. That's a pretty high number, but our hope is to get to a point where we can lower it and still be profitable. If we're not, we can't survive. But lowering our charge will eventually attract more people, which will benefit everyone. Isn't it a bit utopian to think that people will pay without being forced to? No, not really. They really want to help when they know that the money is going to the right people, without too many charges. At the same time, the notion of a price for something disappears with Flattr. It's less about how much something costs than how many people can you help. We think it can work, because people have always wanted to help creators. It's similar to the global patronage advocated by Richard Stallman, the guru of free software... Well, Flattr can be considered a patronage system, from a certain point of view. Richard Stallman has always been interested in setting up a similar system. How are you going to promote Flattr on the Internet? We will start locally and we have invited Swedes to join us. And we hope to open up internationally in a few months. Internet users will know about us through bloggers, artists and sites that they like. It is with them that we will try to establish partnerships. Will there be a "freemium" area (where the user accesses exclusive content)? No, we are not interested in blocking content. It is political. We do not want our system to be used for things like that that alter the Internet in a bad way. A date? We are aiming for the end of April. But deadlines are made to be exceeded.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1115

Human nature is not fundamentally power-hungry, believes American economist Jeremy Rifkin. Natural empathy could even save the species from catastrophe, he argues in his new essay, The Empathic Civilization. "Empathy is the social element that binds all civilizations together." The person on the other end of the line making this bold statement is not a disciple of the monk Matthew Ricard, and even less a "born again Christian." Rather, it is American economist Jeremy Rifkin. In a new "brick" of nearly 700 pages, the author of The End of Work (1995) and The European Dream (2005) proposes an empathetic "revolution" to survive the century. Utopia? Quite the opposite, argues Rifkin, an advisor to the European Union and founder of the Third Industrial Revolution Global CEO Business Roundtable, an organization made up of a hundred world leaders in fields such as renewable energy, construction and architecture. "Being empathetic is not being utopian, but rather being aware of the difficulty of existing. The reason I wrote this book is that I feel that our species has reached a turning point. Looking at the facts, the figures, it is realistic to consider that humanity will reach its extinction in the next century." But what does humanity's imminent march towards our self-destruction have to do with empathy? Everything, argues Jeremy Rifkin, who bases his statements on child development psychology, neurobiology, economics and history. Human nature, if it wants to survive in the biosphere, will have to abandon a conception of existence inherited from the Age of Enlightenment (John Locke, Adam Smith, Descartes). Notions which suggest that the purpose of existence is through material progress. Recent studies on the natural empathy of individuals have convinced Rifkin that human nature is not fundamentally vile, power-hungry or even obsessed with the drive to reproduce. Freud and Darwin must be turning in their graves... "In the last 10-15 years, certain scientific discoveries have come to challenge received ideas about human destiny. Recent data demonstrate that human nature is fundamentally social: the worst thing you can do to an individual is to ostracize him. Empathy would be imprinted in our biology, in our neural circuits." A story of photosynthesis In his economics classes, the first lesson that Jeremy Rifkin gives his students is that the basic energy of our planet is photosynthesis. And if we continue like this, supply will no longer be sufficient to meet demand. "At present, we use 25% of the available photosynthesis and we will soon be 9 billion inhabitants. This is not sustainable." The economist identifies three events that announced the beginning of the end and perhaps the arrival of a new era: the price of oil, which in July 2008 reached a record $147 per barrel (the end of the industrial era according to him), the collapse of the financial system, followed 18 months later by the Copenhagen conference that brought together leaders from 192 countries. If he wanted to write a book on empathy, it is because he senses that the solution to these crucial issues does not lie in the old paradigms of globalization. "The ideal of the American dream, the toxic cowboy, has no place in a globalizing world. But if we discover "homo-empathic", it will be possible to see the planet as a human family." The big question facing humanity is: "how can we imagine the next stage of the biosphere, technologies and communication, in order to initiate a third industrial era?" The Empathic Civilization proposes to invent a model of "distributed capitalism". To illustrate this new model, he talks about the birth of a third industrial revolution that would be imbued with an awareness of the biosphere. In a "zero carbon" economy, houses and buildings would become micro-power stations of renewable energy. With surplus hydrogen and shared electricity, we could create sharing networks ("open source"), a bit like the internet. According to him, the "empathic model" will be easily adopted by the younger generations who grew up with the internet and an ecological awareness. "Think of the earthquake in Haiti: in less than an hour, all the young people were exchanging about it on Twitter and YouTube, in real time. The internet generation is more inclusive and has less need to establish boundaries of color or religion." And speaking of young people and iPhones, Barack Obama is obviously the most eloquent symbol of a paradigm shift. "Empathy is President Obama's guiding philosophy. But he got himself into trouble when he announced he wanted to create an empathetic Supreme Court. Republicans jumped on that, insisting that the Supreme Court should be impartial." The Empathic Civilization Jeremy Rifkin, published in English (American), Penguin, 642 pages

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1116

Some readers have pointed out an error in an article about free software. We cited the case of Norway, which will require that public documents be offered in free formats, citing among others the formats H.264 for video and JPEG or PNG for images. This is an error, since these formats are covered by licenses. The decree actually provides that for any public document, a copy must be accessible in a free format, such as Ogg Vorbis, FLAC or Ogg Theora, even if a copy already exists in one of the proprietary formats.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1117

Today, to finance creation and online information, most musicians, artists, bloggers, and videographers have no other option than to ask for alms on the Net. Several initiatives are emerging, which aim to promote free access to culture, thanks to a system of funding through donations. The tip jar. It appeared at the beginning of the 2000s, in the midst of the "dotcom" crisis. Revenues linked to advertising banners were plummeting and Google AdSense did not yet exist. In 2001, Amazon's tip jar appeared on the home pages of sites, a discreet appeal to the philanthropy of Internet users. The "Honor system", a computer-assisted quest service, is operated by the online bookseller for the benefit of any site that requests it. Fans can send a donation to their favorite site by clicking on a special button installed at the bottom of the page. If they are already Amazon customers, they will not have much else to do, the credit card number already stored at the online bookseller, the withdrawal is automatic, Amazon pocketing a nice commission in the process. In the process, the first "cybersleeve" operations appear, including the famous Savekaryn.com, where Karyn, a TV producer focused on designer clothes and expensive coffees, solicited the Web to bail out her debts, thus managing to collect $20,000. Encouraged by this success, a whole armada of sites began begging online (help Shannon make her first film, help send my daughter to college, help a cancer victim, help a couple and their dog) but most of them did not touch a kopeck... Amazon's piggy bank was gradually supplanted by that of its competitor Paypal (online payment system, owned by eBay). Since then, donation buttons have become widespread, allowing donors to leave a tip to support their favorite blogger. Economics blogger Paul Jorion is thus paid by his audience, to the tune of around 2,000 euros per month. But few are those who manage to live off it. Another problem with a system like Paypal is that it is unsuitable for microdonations. For transactions between 0 and 2,500 euros, Paypal takes 3.4% of the amount plus 0.25 euros. On a donation of 1 euro, it pockets a third of the price. Popular Patronage. The goal of crowdfunding is to bring together a community of people to finance a project in the most varied fields. Anyone can become a co-producer of a film (cinemareloaded.com), a record (kisskissbankbank.com), a book, a report (spot.us) or any other project (Indie gogo, Kickstarter, or Babeldoor). By involving a fan in the production, you are sure to make them your best promoter. Killing two birds with one stone... In exchange for their donation, they may receive, depending on the case, nothing at all except the eternal gratitude of the author, compensation commensurate with their efforts and, rarely, a share in the profits, in the event of success. Individuals can start their own fundraiser, such as The Sochi Project, a long-term investigative project launched by a Dutch photographer and filmmaker on the turbulent Russian region of Sochi, which will host the 2014 Olympic Games. A five-year report requiring $30,000, it has already raised more than $22,000 from 309 donors. Another option is to post your project on a platform site like Kickstarter, which has enabled more than 500 projects to come to fruition. Although, as its creator Perry Chen pointed out at the SXSW conference, 99% of the ideas will not be funded. Most of these sites set a countdown (around three months) to raise the necessary funds, just to prevent the Internet user from procrastinating too long. The money is only debited if the minimum threshold is reached. To encourage the Internet user to get out their wallet, the author turns into a smiling peddler in order to convince them of the merits of his enterprise with videos and personalized messages, accompanied by graduated rewards. So if you gave ten euros to this climber on Babeldoor to help him do an 8,000, he promised to think of you on a prayer wheel. In vain, the project did not appeal. But if you financed the purchase of an effects pedal for the singer Valentine for 15 euros, she would compose a little one-minute song for you with your first name in it. And if you gave 50 euros, Valentine would whisper a three-minute custom song based on your personality. The artist's hat. Instead of asking Internet users to pay for the content before they have had the opportunity to see or hear it, recent initiatives imagine declining the principle of the artist's hat. Everyone is free to give or not, after the fact. Based on a hypothetical desire of the Internet user to pay the creators, systems like Kachingle (which did not take off) or Flattr operate according to the principle of the monthly subscription (read below). A donation without compensation that does not have the obligatory nature of the global patronage imagined by the researcher Francis Muguet where Internet users would pay a fixed sum through their access provider, then paid to the copyright management companies according to the preferences of the Internet user. At the same time, the Société d'acceptation et de partage des dons (SARD) was launched last September, the aim of which is to facilitate donations from Internet users to artists. It brings together personalities from the Internet, free software and creators. SARD wants to experiment with several distribution methods: either the Internet user gives directly to the works of their choice, or they pay into the common pot. Third avenue considered, that of “major donors”, such as Internet service providers or telecom operators.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1118

While the Quebec government is fighting in court to shut the door on it, free software is quietly establishing itself across the planet, from Norway to Brazil, in large-scale projects. In the legal battle between Savoir-faire Linux (SFL) and the Régie des rentes du Québec, the government is defending its "right" to avoid calls for tenders when it comes to obtaining software, in order to buy directly from Microsoft. Oddly enough, Quebec prefers the multinational's monopoly to competition. Not all countries see things the same way. "We had to choose: either go into the kitchen and prepare the meal we wanted, or eat what Microsoft wanted us to eat. Quite simply, the idea of freedom prevailed." It was not SFL's lawyer who spoke these words, but President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil in December 2009, at the International Free Software Congress in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Several Brazilian cities and states had started using free software in the early 2000s. In 2003, after Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was elected president, the government adopted a policy on the use of free software. More than 2,000 civil servants have been trained in the migration and management of these systems. Among other things, the Brazilian government has created a portal that offers more than 500 services to citizens, all created using free software. The World Bank lists more than 60 countries or international organizations that have published policies on the use of free software by public administration. France and Norway Daniel Pascot, director of the information systems department at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, can cite several examples of large-scale migration to free systems. "The National Gendarmerie is one of the most exemplary," he says, "with 70,000 to 80,000 workstations. We first automated the gendarme's workstation for recording declarations with the Open-Office suite, which we connected to a legal database." "Then, we replaced Internet Explorer with Firefox and now, we are preparing to migrate the entire operating system from Windows to Linux [the Ubuntu distribution]. They are a third of the way there and in two years, all the gendarmes' workstations will be 100% free software." The Ministry of Finance has followed a similar approach, he adds. "The ministry runs almost entirely on free software, about 100,000 workstations. They kept the Oracle database, it's the only software that hasn't changed." The migration allows the ministry to gain autonomy, according to him. "It's the ministry that decides when to change software, not the supplier. And once a software is developed, it belongs to the ministry, not the supplier. It doesn't have to pay a license to use it and the improvements made to the program can be used by others." Mr. Pascot estimates that soon, nearly half of the French civil service, or 400,000 civil servants out of 800,000, will use free software, not to mention the workstations of the 577 deputies of the National Assembly and their assistants, 1,154 workstations in all, which run on the Ubuntu distribution of Linux. Finally, Mr. Pascot mentions, the Norwegian government has decided that from 2012, all documents exchanged between ministries and public bodies must be in open formats, such as Theora or H.264 for video; Ogg Vorbis for audio or JPEG or PNG for images. Documents published previously will have until January 1, 2014 to be converted to an open format. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1119

Free software should have its place in Quebec, as in other countries, thinks Daniel Pascot, professor at Université Laval. A favourable judgment in the Savoir-faire Linux (SFL) case would open the door to change, according to him. "This is not the trial of free software that we are conducting," he says, "it is the trial of openness. The decision could set a precedent and lead to a change in government direction." Mr. Pascot is director of the organizational information systems department and also director of the Centre for Research and Transfer in Enterprise Architecture (CERTAE), at the Faculty of Administration Sciences at Laval. The culture of the public service does not encourage openness, he notes. "Under current conditions, if a civil servant buys something other than Microsoft and encounters problems, he risks being sidelined. With a victory, we would reverse the trend and it would become frowned upon not to consider free software in a purchase." Mr. Pascot himself has only used free software for about ten years, and the subject fascinates him. With his research centre, he intends to scrutinize the Quebec government's practices in terms of software purchases. "We will request all the government's bids and we will analyze them in depth. From there, it will become more difficult for Quebec to avoid calls for tenders." Security In the trial between SFL and the Régie des rentes, the government is citing security issues, among other things, to stick with Microsoft products. But, according to Mr. Pascot, free software, by its very nature, also offers a high level of security. "It's a strange argument that the Régie is using because many people secure documents using methods other than those offered by Windows Vista. In France, the Ministry of Finance is the target of two million attacks per week, but the majority are directed at Windows, while the ministry uses free software." In addition, Mr. Pascot points out, the user of the free software can modify the code as he wishes. "We only keep the parts we need and eliminate the rest. This increases security because with Windows, attacks often target features that we don't use, but that remain present." By having access to the free software code, Mr. Pascot points out, we are able to quickly correct a vulnerability. "If we see attacks against a part of the code, we can change it ourselves, in a few hours. We don't have to wait for Microsoft to send us an update." Finally, the professor points out, the experiences of the Ministry of Finance and the National Gendarmerie in France show a saving of 20% compared to proprietary Windows solutions, thanks to the absence of licensing costs.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1120

After conquering offices and mobile phones, Google now wants to set up shop in our living rooms: the search engine grandmaster has teamed up with Sony and Intel to offer televisions in the United States that allow you to surf the Internet in a few months. This is nothing revolutionary in itself: different types of decoders or game consoles already allow you to access the Web from a television. Apple, its arch-nemesis, also offers Apple TV, a box that searches for music, photos or videos on the Web to broadcast them on the small screen. But none of these tele-web systems have really managed to establish themselves so far... leading Google to believe that it could perhaps break through there too. "Having supremacy for living room devices is something like the Holy Grail for technology companies," recalls Ian Paul, journalist for PC World. High-tech. The details of Google TV are secret, the three majors working on it, Google, Sony and Intel, have not yet wanted to reveal the project. But the executives of the three companies have made it clear that Google TV will be developed from Android, the mobile phone operating system bought by Google. As with Android phones (or rival Apple iPhones), Google plans to rely on the creativity of users, who will be invited to develop applications for Google TV. Within two months, a development kit should be made available to developers, who have already designed more than 30,000 applications for the Android phone, so that they can now create the TV of tomorrow. Google TV could then be launched in the United States as early as next summer. If Google remains faithful to its "open-source" strategy and allows everyone to install Google TV in their television, set-top box, games console or Blu-ray player, it will be "giant", predicts Amy Vernon, a journalist at NetworkWorld: "Google could do for Internet television what it did for the search engine market: make it simple and open enough for everyone to use it." If all previous experiences of tele-internet have remained reserved for a few high-tech enthusiasts, it is also because the viewer generally does not want overly complicated connections, Amy Vernon points out: "The average user often has trouble imagining how to set the clock on his DVD player." Google, the genius of simplicity, could be the one that finally succeeds in the "democratization" of televised Internet, predicts this expert. "Artificial." All of Google's genius, and its power on the Web, do not guarantee its successful transition to the living room, warn other American analysts. "This could be a judicious development for Google, but it could also hurt it," points out Steve McBrian, of Top TechReviews. "The world of television is very different," he continues, recalling that Apple, which is not exactly a dilettante either, experienced the "fiasco" with its Apple TV. The Internet is "rich in text" (news sites, blogs, chats or social networks, etc.) which is difficult to enjoy from a couch in the living room, at a respectable distance from the television, also observes Ian Paul, of PC World: "Is it really plausible to want to use your television for Twitter or for instant messaging chats? There have been many failed experiments that sought to put the Web on living room televisions and I think that one of the main reasons for the failure is that there is something artificial in wanting to surf on a screen that is three meters from where you are sitting." One solution could be to use mobile phones (like iPhone or Android)... as "visual remote controls", suggests this expert: lying on the sofa, you could just tap on your phone to see the chosen videos unfold in large format on the TV screen... Even Google is not there yet: the Mountain View giant is currently working in concert with Logitech, for a remote control including a small keyboard. After having introduced a lot of possibilities for distractions in the office, Google could also bring the office into our living rooms...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1121

This is a historic turning point. From the European to the regional elections, political ecology is now establishing itself as an autonomous space in the French political landscape. But given the scale of the challenges that our societies must meet, consolidation is an absolute necessity. We must commit to the long term and honour this appointment with history, otherwise we will disqualify our criticism of the irresponsibility of those who do nothing, in Copenhagen or elsewhere, because they are incapable of going beyond their own petty particular interests. We need a structure that is both sustainable and flexible, capable of developing collective positions and carrying out the ecological project, without getting bogged down in the sterility of power games or the mad storm of competing egos. Let us be clear: there is no question of abandoning this dynamic of political and social renewal to the party apparatus. That would amount to setting up in the already crowded cemetery of disappointed hopes. I also recognize that, under the pressure of the electoral deadlines, we have postponed the question of the form of our movement for too long, to the point of leaving the dream fallow. Between a simple electoral brand and a purely virtual network, Europe Ecologie has remained a projection, where everyone could see noon at their door. Moreover, the contrasting results of our lists in the first round of the regional elections underline the success of those who respected the spirit of the gathering compared to those who were content to formally apply the letter, reducing it to a simple tactic of openness. Without denying its recent history, it is time to embody political ecology in a new body, a largely unprecedented, decompartmentalized political form, to lead the transformation of society. Abstention, populism, clientelism... This election proves it again: for decades, the gap has continued to widen between society and politics. The democratic divorce is profound between completely uprooted party logics that operate in isolation and an active, diverse, creative society but without illusions about the nature and forms of the power that is exercised over it. The political parties of yesterday were real places of socialization and learning of the city. But today they are most often reduced to structures isolated from society, sterilized by strict logics of conquest of power, incapable of thinking and accompanying social change, much less of contributing to it. A corporatized mass party or an enlightened vanguard of the revolution, red or even green: that is the world of yesterday. That of the industrial revolution and of parties conceived as disembodied machines, with no other object than power. Like Formula 1 stables, these beautiful political mechanisms can be very sophisticated and run great races among themselves, but they always go round in circles on the same circuit, with fewer and fewer spectators. The political movement that we must build cannot be likened to a traditional party. The challenges of the 21st century call for a metamorphosis, a rearrangement of the very form of politics. Democracy requires an organization that respects the plurality and singularity of its components. A social and cultural biodiversity, directly animated by the vitality of its experiences and ideas. We need a mode of political organization that thinks about and leads social transformation, in line with the knowledge society. I imagine a pollinating organization, which gathers ideas, transports them and fertilizes with other parts of the social body. In practice, current politics has expropriated citizens by dispossessing them of the City, in the name of technocratic rationalism or populist emotion. It is necessary to "repoliticize" civil society at the same time as "civilizing" political society and moving politics from the proprietary system to that of free software. I do not forget the important contribution of the Greens for twenty-five years to defend and illustrate our ideas in French political life. Nevertheless, not only is the classic party form now unsuited to the new demands of our societies, but I also believe that, sooner or later, it will come into conflict with our anti-authoritarian culture, a fundamental principle of ecological thought. Neither a machine party nor a business party, I would prefer that we invent together a "Political Cooperative" - that is to say, a structure capable of producing meaning and transmitting political meaning and strategic decisions. I see it as a way of guaranteeing everyone common ownership of the movement and the pooling of its political benefits, a way of restoring meaning to commitment and political reflection. While this Cooperative obviously aims to collectively decide on both the institutional deadlines between now and 2012 and the major issues of society, its definitive form has not yet been determined. It will be up to its members to define its outlines, structure and strategy. This debate must be open. For this, I call for the creation of "Europe Ecologie-22 March collectives". Constituted on a regional or local basis to avoid any anti-democratic centralism, these collectives will be real agoras of political ecology, moderated on the Internet (1). Their main mission being to think about the structuring of the movement, they will remain a transitional stage, which will have to give way to the Cooperative that they will have helped to build. Throughout their existence, they will respect a principle of dual membership, for the associative, the unionists and even those who are registered in a political party. Because one can be green, socialist, Cap 21, communist, whatever else, and a stakeholder in this collective dynamic. Once again, the important thing is less where we come from, but where we want to go, together. It is the very spirit of the gathering that has made our strength, this desire to build an alternative common good. When the time comes, each member of the Cooperative will vote to democratically consecrate its birth. Until now, Europe Ecologie has been content to be a fairly unclassifiable political object. The challenge of maturity is its metamorphosis into a true autonomous ecological political subject, transcending old political cultures. Www.europeecologie22mars.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1122

At work, many of the solutions we implement on the server side are completely license-free. We have also developed the Intranet portal of the hospital where I work internally on a free platform. Hearing such aberrations makes my hair stand on end! In the current context of budget cuts, the government should implement guidelines promoting the use of free software whenever there is an equivalent for a given function. In my opinion, there is not much paid software that does not have an equivalent in free software, and the latter is sometimes superior in many respects. \*\*\* David Lévêsque, Sainte-Julie, March 17, 2010

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1123

Starting Wednesday, March 17, Microsoft will gradually offer all European users of its Web browser, Internet Explorer, the option to download a competing tool. Tens of millions of people are affected. They will see "choice screens" displayed on their computer screens, offering a dozen of these software programs whose role is to make Web pages visible. This system is the result of pressure from the European Commission, which accused the American giant, the world's leading software publisher, of abusing its dominant position by systematically integrating Internet Explorer into its operating systems. However, these are used in nine out of ten computers worldwide. To surf the Web with another tool, you had to go to your publisher's website and then download your browser, which took several minutes. Will the "choice screen" reshuffle the cards on the browser market? Since the aim of the maneuver is to give them more visibility, Microsoft's competitors are likely to see their market share increase. Microsoft began testing its "screen" at the beginning of March and some are already congratulating themselves. "More than half of our downloads come from this screen," says Paal Unanue-Zahl, spokesperson for the Norwegian publisher Opera. However, nothing of the sort has been observed among the designers of the Firefox browser. Furthermore, the device only concerns Europeans, at most a fifth of Internet users in the world. And its effectiveness will be appreciated over time: the screen will in fact be offered for five years, with each purchase of a new computer equipped with a Microsoft operating system. In reality, the cards have already started to be reshuffled, because the browser has become strategic again for the computer giants. First, there was the emergence of Firefox, five years ago. The tool was designed by former employees of the Netscape search engine, brought together within a non-profit foundation, Mozilla. This works on the free software model: Firefox progresses thanks to the voluntary collaboration of thousands of computer scientists around the world. The tool has managed to gain several points of market share per year thanks to innovations such as "tabbed" browsing. Google's ambitions More recently, there was the arrival of the American Google, the publisher of the most popular search engine on the Web. Less than eighteen months after it was made available, Chrome, its browser, managed to capture almost 5% of the market share. Proof of its ambitions: in January 2010, Google launched a huge billboard campaign in Europe. A first for a group that had almost never advertised. However, the browser market is not worth billions of dollars: browsers are generally offered free of charge and their publishers are paid - quite modestly - with payments from search engines for the traffic they bring them. The stakes are nevertheless considerable. "The browser is the Internet user's only point of entry to the Web," explains Fabrice Milhoud, marketing director at Microsoft. For giants like Google and Microsoft, controlling it means being able to better promote their multiple online services: messaging, information aggregators, etc. This is all the more important since an increasing proportion of computer applications, particularly desktop applications, are "running" on the Internet and are no longer stored directly on the hard drive of computers. The battle between browsers is being played out in the field of innovation. It is up to the publisher to be the first to display increasingly complex web pages. Even at Microsoft, they are working twice as hard. Many had accused the American company of having neglected its browser in the early 2000s, and, as a result, of having "caused the Web to stagnate". "We are going to offer IT developers improved versions of Internet Explorer every eight weeks, compared to every three months before," assures Bernard Ourghanlian, technical director of Microsoft France.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1124

"We don't understand why this request for reimbursement is coming today," Cyrille Béraud, from the group for the collective appropriation of free computing (FACIL), told Le Devoir yesterday. "It's a hard blow for our association, but it's also a full-scale offensive by the government against free software," software whose access and use are not governed by costly operating licenses. Coincidence or chance, last week, Mr. Béraud once again appeared before the courts to denounce the awarding of a $722,848 contract to the multinational Microsoft by the Régie des rentes du Québec. The case was heard after two years of waiting and, above all, the filing by government lawyers of 25 cancellation motions. In essence, Mr. Béraud, this time as president of Savoir-faire Linux, an IT services company specializing in free software, is questioning the process by which Quebec awarded these contracts, without a call for tenders, to the American computer giant. According to him, the wording of the notices of intent would never take into account the existence in the IT environment of free software, which could nevertheless compete with the products of Bill Gates' empire at a lower cost for taxpayers. "There is a blockage in Quebec with regard to free software," says Mr. Béraud, who, two years ago, through FACIL, led a similar fight. It was against the CSPQ and the awarding of seven contracts to Microsoft worth $10.7 million without a call for tenders. The case was dismissed, the court having ruled that the group could not contest a transaction in which it was not a party. "At a time when we are trying to reduce government spending, free software is certainly something to consider," he continues. Despite our calls, it was not possible to speak to a CSPQ representative yesterday. For its part, the FACIL group, which operates with an annual budget of $5,000, says it is now seriously considering closing its doors. "If bailiffs were to come, they would only find $400 in our account," says Mr. Béraud. "And no one will be any better off." \*\*\*\*\* A longer version of this text is available on our website www.ledevoir.com.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1125

New episode in the confrontation between the free software world and the Quebec government; this time, Quebec is trying to bring FACIL, a small non-profit organization, to heel by demanding $106,000 in legal fees. FACIL, pour l'appropriation collective de l'informatique libre, brings together individuals and organizations to promote the adoption, use and democratization of free software and open standards in Quebec. In 2008, the organization filed a motion against the provincial government in Superior Court. It criticized Quebec for renewing Microsoft software licenses without a call for tenders, when it should be required to do so by law. However, FACIL was dismissed by the Court, which ruled that the organization did not have the necessary interest to undertake this case given its status, which prevents it from being a bidder in a call for tenders. FACIL then went to the Court of Appeal, without any more success. The organization subsequently abandoned legal proceedings after the Quebec government amended its regulations on the conditions for acquiring software licenses. The revision still allows organizations to enter into a software acquisition contract by mutual agreement, provided that they "have carried out serious and documented research demonstrating that only the supplier targeted by this contract can meet their needs." Last week, the government and the Centre des services partagés du Québec (CSPQ) mandated a law firm to demand that FACIL reimburse $106,000 in legal fees. This was done a few days before the start of the hearings at the Quebec City courthouse, for the case of Savoir-faire Linux against the Régie des rentes du Québec. The company is also contesting the RRQ's software purchasing practices, and it turns out that the president of Savoir-faire Linux, Cyrille Béraud, also acts as president of FACIL. According to him, this is an attempt at intimidation. "This is an attempt to interfere in the legal process. We are being sent this claim a year and a half after FACIL's requests, a few days before our trial against the RRQ. How else can we interpret this? We are dismayed. All we are asking is for consultation on the implementation of free software in the interest of Quebec society." The board of directors of FACIL also denounced, in a press release, this "excessively legalistic procedure that resembles censorship."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1126

This is the proportion of the increase that the free software market should experience in 2010 after 47% in 2009, according to a study by the Pierre Audouin Consultants firm. France, where it represented 1.47 billion euros, is the most mature country.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1127

The Régie des rentes du Québec wanted to stick to a single platform, Microsoft, to avoid spreading itself too thinly across several technologies, we learned yesterday on the second day of the trial brought by Savoir-faire Linux (SFL). Bernard Bourret was head of technology services when the contract contested by SFL was signed. The Régie had chosen to adopt a single technological "ecosystem", that of Microsoft, for several reasons, including to facilitate the integration of all components. This is also what Gerry Laflamme, IT analyst and project manager at the RRQ, explained. According to him, the OpenOffice office suite, a free and open source software, could not be integrated into the integrated document management system, which governs access to all RRQ documents. Security issue He also maintained that OpenOffice could not be integrated into the security system that protects the confidentiality of personal information, a crucial function for the RRQ. Finally, he said, thousands of documents containing macro commands would have had to be converted to be compatible with the Open-Office suite. Cross-examined by Savoir-faire Linux's lawyers, Mr. Laflamme acknowledged that a Linux workstation could perform most of the tasks of a Windows workstation. A document was also produced in which the analyst had written that the contract to migrate some 1,000 workstations to Windows Vista in 2007-2008 would provide a good opportunity to test the free software. However, the Régie's specialists were of the opinion that the free software was not yet ready for the intended use and that there was a risk of problems with the two systems coexisting. According to them, despite the savings made in licensing fees, the conversion and harmonization costs would have been too high. Dismissed without requesting an evaluation Savoir-faire Linux's lawyers, however, made the witnesses admit that the Régie's analysts did not call upon any free software specialist to evaluate this option, and to dismiss it. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1128

This is a Quebec first. A few hundred Internet users can follow the Savoir-Faire Linux (SFL) trial live on Twitter, although it is forbidden to connect your Blackberry or laptop to the Internet in the courthouse. Julien Plissonneau Duquene uses only his pencil and notebook to take notes, but at each break, he rushes into the corridors with his laptop and quickly writes his tweets, capsules of 140 characters or less, which summarize the latest developments in this trial that is captivating the world of free software. "This is not a world first, nor even a French first," he says. "It was done in France during the Dominique Villepin trial, but in Quebec, it's the first time." About 500 people follow his microblog at one time or another during the day. "The advantage of Twitter is that the platform is global, so we are followed everywhere. There are former SFL clients and employees, legal professionals, communications managers." Julien Plissonneau is himself a former employee of Savoir-Faire Linux. "I worked on preparing this case and I thought it would be a good way to make it known. We chose transparency, a position that is the complete opposite of that of the Régie des rentes in this case. We have to be transparent to make ourselves heard, otherwise we hit a wall." Free software is greatly underestimated in Quebec, according to him. He gives the example of a project he carried out for SFL at the Bell Helicopter company. It involved designing the company's website and producing all the documentation on the helicopters it manufactures. "It was a totally resistant environment, and during the call for tenders, we did not make reference to free software. We completed our project within the deadlines and budgets, with a product that ran on the Windows platform without any problems. They were very surprised."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1129

They were believed to be geeks to the depths of their memory. They were considered keyboard whizzes. The first generation to have grown up with digital technology, digital natives are said to be intuitively comfortable with new technologies (computers, cell phones, Internet). A myth that has now been put into perspective by several studies, including one recently conducted by the Travail et Technologie foundation in Namur (Belgium), which reports that the practices of 16-25 year-olds are dominated by communication and recreation. A view shared by Jean-Noël Lafargue, 42, a technology expert and lecturer since 1996, notably at the University of Paris-8 and the École supérieure d'Arts du Havre. According to him, young people are more "digital naives". The "digital natives" generation doesn't exist? They do. But in my opinion, they are much less competent than people think. What is characteristic of their approach and use of digital technology? Ease. At the beginning of computing, thirty years ago, the computer was used almost exclusively for programming, for making things. We invented, discovered, cleared the way. For my generation, the computer was a conquest. We saw it arrive at our homes. For today's students, it has always existed. They are immersed in it, it is their universe and they do not question it. Most of them are not interested in using the computer as a tool. The more it goes on, the more it becomes a medium. The less we make and the more we consume. And young people are essentially good at consuming and communicating. They would be good at chatting or sending text messages but no more comfortable than their grandmother at laying out a document? Yes. It is a trend that surprises me in art schools and universities. Ten or fifteen years ago, students arrived knowing nothing. Today's people have a computer, spend four hours a day in front of it, but they may not know how to open a text file. Or it's something they learned at school, which they may vaguely remember, like Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In technology classes, they learn things, but it's never put into perspective. They're not necessarily aware of the recent history of computers and the Internet and that things haven't always existed. And that doesn't interest them. Are digital terminals becoming a new form of television? Yes. A television where you are still active, but whose activity does not go beyond the intended framework. We have gone from the computer as a universal tool allowing you to do just about anything you want to an interactive medium where you can act within the imposed limits. That is to say, associated with increasingly pre-set tools? With the development of free software and Do-it-yourself, the idea of taking power over the machine exists. But the trend in computing is not going that way. The general public is increasingly a passive consumer. The desire to master the machine has disappeared. We only use it or are used by it. This is probably a normal evolution. At one time, anyone who had a car had to be a bit of a mechanic, whereas today we go to the garage. Is this the end of tinkerers and hackers? As we knew them, yes. Besides, the United States is very annoyed that there are fewer and fewer hackers, whom they need for their army. Thanks to free software, there have never been so many tools and documentation is everywhere, but I think that proportionally the number of people who take charge of their digital existence, in terms of creation, objects and software, is decreasing. Do young people feel concerned by the issues surrounding the Internet: Hadopi law, filtering, censorship? I have the impression that no. They wonder if they could have problems downloading something, but to be honest, they often don't know if it's illegal or not. And that's normal, because they are constantly offered things for free that we are otherwise trying to sell them. For them, it's very confusing. We can't complain that they lack reference points when at the same time we are constantly disorienting them, for example by saying that a high-tech mobile phone costs fifty cents and that a Lady Gaga song that is played on repeat in supermarkets costs 0.99 euros. Otherwise, they are not ultra-sensitive to censorship issues. When we tell them how things are going in China, they don't really feel concerned. How will this "post-micro" generation make digital evolve? The question is whether this generation will be able to master the development of technologies. I fear not. We are far from the myth of cyber-punk fiction with kids who knew how to program satellites from their quartz watches. They are no more equipped than the previous generation, or even less than the thirty- or forty-somethings interested in computers.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1130

The Régie des rentes (RRQ) had no intention of issuing a call for tenders to acquire operating systems and office suites for 800 workstations, argued yesterday the witnesses for Savoir-faire Linux (SFL), the company that is suing the RRQ to force it to take into account open source software solutions when awarding IT contracts. The trial concerns a $720,000 contract awarded by the RRQ in early 2008 to acquire Windows Vista operating systems and Office suites. SFL was represented yesterday by Me Marc-Aurèle Racicot and by lawyer Julius Grey. The latter responded, early in the day, to a motion to dismiss the proceedings presented by the opposing party. Judge Denis Jacques finally decided to hear the parties on the merits, without however making a final ruling on the motion. In all, six lawyers represented the defendants, which are the RRQ, Microsoft, Compugen, the Centre des services partagés du Québec and finally the Attorney General of Quebec. The president of Savoir-faire Linux, Cyrille Béraud, and its project director, Benoît Grégoire, described yesterday, before Judge Jacques, their efforts with the RRQ to have it consider their open-source software solutions. Golden opportunity This contract represented an excellent opportunity to propose an alternative solution since several operating systems and office suites had to be replaced, explained Mr. Grégoire. But during a meeting held in January 2008, he said, it became clear that the Régie had long decided to stick with Microsoft products, without analyzing its needs. "It was clear that the decision had been made several months before publishing the notice of intent to acquire and that it was too late to include us in the process. They made it clear to us that since they had decided to buy Microsoft products, there was no obligation for them to hold a call for tenders." According to Mr. Grégoire, the acquisition project did not contain any description of the RRQ's needs. "It simply gave the number of workstations and office suites. It gave no details on the uses that were planned for them, nothing that would allow for proposing other solutions." Normally, for any contract over $25,000, departments and public bodies must proceed by call for tenders, but a section of the regulation on supply contracts allows for an exemption if, "after a serious and documented search, there is only one supplier who can meet the specifications and has the necessary qualifications." Savoir-faire Linux maintains that the Régie has not presented any serious study demonstrating that Microsoft was the only supplier qualified to respond to this contract. Cyrille Béraud summarized the Régie's arguments for not proceeding with a call for tenders: "We have Microsoft products, we like Microsoft and we continue with Microsoft..." The trial will continue today and could even last until Friday. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1131

This week, the Superior Court will hear at the Quebec courthouse the lawsuit filed by the Quebec company Savoir-faire Linux, which specializes in the service and development of free software, against the Régie des rentes du Québec (RRQ), which it accuses of having awarded a $720,000 contract to the multinational Microsoft without a call for tenders to update its workstations. "As a supplier, what we are contesting is not that we were not chosen, but that we were not even able to bid on the markets!" summarizes Cyrille Béraud, president of the Montreal SME that also has offices in Quebec City and Ottawa. While the RRQ claims that its approach was simply an update to justify not issuing a call for tenders, Savoir-faire Linux believes that it is more of an upgrade since the new Microsoft software has absolutely nothing to do with the previous ones, apart from their function and the name of the manufacturer. Mr. Béraud believes that the Quebec government is wasting a lot of money by favouring Microsoft and setting aside free software. "With free software, the RRQ would have benefited from savings of approximately $350,000 and if we extend that to the entire Quebec state, that's close to $80 million in savings that could be achieved," he claims. Quebec is lagging behind The president of Savoir-faire Linux also believes that the Quebec government's way of doing things is detrimental to local employment. "Free software is available for free on the Internet and does not require the payment of an annual license like Microsoft products, but it helps create local jobs in companies like mine that install and develop it in addition to training staff. The hundred million dollars that the government pays in licenses is a hundred million dollars invested in jobs outside." Cyrille Béraud also points out that Quebec is lagging far behind other regions of the world in the use of free software. "After France, Germany, the Netherlands and Brazil, even the United Kingdom is switching to free software and major companies are emerging from this situation," he concludes. ibussieres@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1132

The case of Savoir-faire Linux against the Régie des rentes du Québec will be closely followed internationally, according to Laurent Bounin, director of the Association professionnelle des entreprises en logiciellibres (APELL). "This is a first in Canada and, for this type of industry, a world first. We believe that this trial could have major repercussions on the free software industry around the world because, if we come out on top, other similar actions will be taken," explains Mr. Bounin, who expects the Superior Court to render a decision by the fall. Mr. Bounin points out that using free software in a company costs more in the short term because of employee training needs and adapting business models, but that it becomes advantageous in the long term because of the absence of annual licensing fees. The trial on Twitter Created a year ago, APELL currently has five member companies, including Sys-Tech of Quebec City. "The number of businesses and the number of jobs related to them could grow significantly if the Quebec government decided to use free software," says Bounin. In the meantime, people interested in the case and the future of free software in Quebec will be able to follow the legal proceedings all week by logging on to the social network Twitter. "That's a first, too!" says Bounin, noting that more than 300 people have already signed up at www.twitter.com/sflrrq to read blogger Julien Plissonneau Duquène's comments live during the trial.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1133

Communication Martin Scorsese The American filmmaker will direct the next commercial for Chanel's men's perfume, whose hero will be played by French actor Gaspard Ulliel, Jordane Crantelle's partner in town, who is responsible for celebrity communications for the luxury brand. The young actor has notably appeared in A Very Long Engagement, a film by Jean-Pierre Jeunet with Audrey Tautou, director and actress in the commercial for Chanel No. 5 women's perfume. Marc Tessier, president of Vidéo Futur Entertainment Group, former CEO of Canal and former president of France Télévisions, and Marie-Louise Antoni-Lagayette, advisor to the president of Generali France, have been appointed members of the supervisory board of Ediradio-RTL, the company that publishes RTL radio. Renaud Dely, until now deputy editorial director of Marianne, has been appointed editor-in-chief at France Inter, in charge of the morning show. Hélène Ribault has taken charge of public relations for the Euro RSCG group in France. Energy Sébastien Loux becomes Deputy CEO of Direct Energie, alongside the company's three founders, CEO Xavier Caïtucoli, Fabien Choné and Thierry Roussel. Space Joël Barre, general engineer of the armament, is promoted to Deputy CEO of the National Center for Space Studies (CNES), and director of the Guiana Space Center in Kourou. Patrice Duhamel is the new CEO of ThalesRaytheonSystems France. Controversy Guy Verhofstadt The former Belgian Prime Minister persists and signs. After his column on the debate on national identity, published in Le Monde on February 11 ("There is something rotten in the French Republic"), the MEP states, in a column published on February 23 by the Belgian dailies Le Soir and De Standaard, that "Europe will be post-national or it will not be." Of Bernard Kouchner, who had said about him that "ridicule kills a little", he judges the "embodied reaction not entirely sincere, I believe, on the part of the former founder of Doctors Without Borders, who in other times would have shown less understanding for the government's thesis. But Mr. Kouchner confirms the adage that "the function makes the man." Surveillance Vivienne Cox, a Briton, and Alexandra Schaapveld, a Dutchwoman, are offered to join the supervisory board of the Vallourec group. Lindsay Owen-Jones, chairman of the board of L'Oréal, has given up his bonuses for 2009, i.e. 900,000 euros which would have been added to his fixed salary of 1.5 million euros. Serge Kampf, president and founder of the IT services company Capgemini, will not receive a fixed salary in 2010. Finance Constance de Poncins, 40, has been promoted to director of commitments at Neuflize Vie, a life insurance and capitalization company for the Neuflize OBC bank. IT Tangui Morlier is the new president of the Association for the Promotion and Research in Free Software (April). This association of 5,360 members (including 447 legal entities, companies, associations, etc.) defends free software and fights the Hadopi law. It will launch the Libre en fête operation at the end of March, in partnership with the delegation for Internet usage and the Cyberbase network of the Caisse des Dépôts.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1134

PRESS Nathalie Collin The co-chair of the board of directors of "Libération" has been elected to the presidency of the Paris daily newspaper cooperative, one of the five cooperatives of Presstalis (ex-NMPP), replacing Bernard Villeneuve, deputy director of the Desfossés International group. She will also sit on the Presstalis management board, alongside other heads of daily newspaper publishers, including David Guiraud, vice-chairman of the board of directors and general director of the Le Monde group. IT Patrice Bertrand is the first elected spokesperson of the National Council for Free Software (CNLL), created by ten associations representing two hundred companies in the free software economic sector, a market valued at 1.1 billion euros in France in 2009. JUSTICE Anne-Elisabeth Combes becomes an associate lawyer in the employment law department of Ernst & Young law firm. Henri Savoie, 45, State Councilor, former collaborator of Alain Juppé at Matignon, and Christophe Ingrain, former technical advisor in charge of justice at the Presidency of the Republic, have joined the law firm Darrois Villey Maillot Brochier, as associate lawyers. Michel Quéré, a lawyer specializing in banking law, is joining the firm Lovells, recently merged with Hogan & Hartson, as an associate. Laurence Mitrovic, 46, a lawyer at the Paris and New York bars, is appointed Director of Legal Affairs and Compliance at Aviva France. EUROPE Odile Renaud-Basso, Master Advisor at the Court of Auditors, will be appointed Deputy Head of the Office of the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy. FINANCE Hugues Sibille This former advisor to Martine Aubry at the Ministry of Employment, former interministerial delegate for the social economy, has been appointed vice-president of Crédit Coopératif, where he had been deputy director in charge of the social economy and local authorities since 2005. Mr. Sibille, 58, was for a time director of partnerships at the Caisse des Dépôts, in charge of business creation and the social economy. He chairs Avise, the agency for the valuation of socio-economic initiatives. Jean-François Théodore, deputy general manager of Nyse-Euronext, becomes chairman of the supervisory board of Mandel Partners. CITIES Xavier Lemoine, 49, mayor (UMP) of Montfermeil, and Nathalie Appéré, 36, first deputy (PS) to the mayor of Rennes, have been appointed vice-presidents of the National Council of Cities, chaired by the Prime Minister. Katayoune Panahi, technical advisor to Patrick Devedjian's office, is appointed general director of Defacto, a public institution managing the La Défense district. DEFENSE Marc Gatin, Emmanuel Chavasse-Frétaz and Arnault Chereil de la Rivière, general controllers of the armed forces, replace Thierry Perrin as government commissioner to, respectively, Dassault Aviation, EADS France, Astrium SAS, MBDA France, Eurocopter, Sogepa, Sogeade, and Défense Conseil International. CULTURE André Cardinali takes charge of the development of the American Dance Academy in Paris. Mr. Cardinali is also a project manager at the European Book Fair in Dijon and the Les pépites du cinéma festival.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1135

IN ADDITION TO THE COURSES offered by the RATP Seniorcité program, it is also possible to learn about the Internet in the provinces, in "digital public spaces", associations that benefit from the "Netpublic" label, and whose list is available on the website of the delegation for Internet usage (DUI). Several municipalities, including the City of Paris, and some universities provide training modules on new communication tools. Companies specializing in IT also offer home training: expect to pay 70 euros per hour at Bugbusters and 105 euros at PC 30. The telecommunications operator Orange provides courses at 130 euros per hour, and 50% of its packages are tax deductible. In terms of equipment, the president of the Fraternité numérique association, Brice Alzon, suggests to his students "the sheep policy: buy the best-selling brands and the most common operating system, so that your grandson can assist you remotely when you are lost," he recommends. For this reason, he advises against computers specifically designed for seniors, such as those from E-Sidor, which run on a Linux environment (software). "Any computer scientist can troubleshoot Linux, and we equip many retirement homes," assures us at E-Sidor. Many observers believe that Internet on mobile phones could interest seniors, if the ergonomics were up to par, as is the case with telephony. Bazile Telecom and the manufacturer Doro have developed a single-button telephone: the user communicates with an operator who transfers their calls. Doro also offers a whole range of mobile phones that are easy to use, thanks in particular to their large buttons.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1136

The Victoria & Albert Museum, a London institution, is dedicating an exhibition, "Recode: Digital Design Sensations", until April 11, dedicated to artists (Troika, Golan Levin, Julius Popp, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer...) who have made computer code their material, with generative works, others in networks and interactive installations. The artist Karsten Schmidt was responsible for the visual identity of the exhibition "Recode". The code of the work has been made available in open source, anyone can download it and modify it to create their own variation. They are presented in the online gallery Recode Decode. The best of them are also broadcast on the video screens of the London Underground throughout the duration of the exhibition. Among the lucky ones, the version of the Austrian artist Lia, those of Henner Wöhler or Joe Turner, to discover online. Www.vam.ac.uk/microsites /decode/recodegallery

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1137

Last December, the billion mark was passed. A billion of what? Internet users. It is a considerable event that has almost gone unnoticed. There are now more than a billion men and women who, with the Internet, exchange, invent, inform and inform themselves, trade, buy or sell, "share their intelligence", as Professor Khayat said here last week, about cancer research. But there are also those who swarm and pollute, liars and fantasists, pornographers and revisionists, spreading their horrors and slogans, vengeful fanatics, organized terrorists (al-Qaeda uses the Internet to the full), propagators of every imaginable excess. (It was because she had seen images of the idiotic "scarf game" on the Internet that a young Marie T. accidentally hanged herself with her judo belt in her bedroom in Quimper.) "Googling" The Web - it's the same word, and it has the same meaning, that of an infinite network, a virtual field, without limits, and almost without laws - has created another universe, both in ours - the real one - and next to it, so that "the earth is flat", according to the formula of the American journalist Thomas L. Friedman. We know all this, no doubt, and we know the irresistible increase in the power of Google, this very rich company that has only existed for twelve years and which allows, in a little over half a second, to deliver practically any answer to practically any question - to the point that the verb "googling" has entered everyday language. You are not looking for information. You Google. Yes, we probably know all this, and perhaps I am just stating some obvious facts that you already know. But I wanted to address these topics on the occasion of new statistics published by ComScore. They were provided to me by a "techie" friend who is surprised, sometimes with irony, even sadness - as my children do - by my relatively meager and still incomplete mastery of the Internet - my clumsiness in "surfing" the Web. - In a way, he says, the count of the number of Internet users by country gives an accurate picture of the world today. The largest number of Internet users is in China (179 million), followed by the USA (163 million), Japan (60 million), Germany, the United Kingdom, France (34 million) and India (32 million). France, which has 64 million inhabitants, is therefore "Internet user" for half of its population. That's a good rank. - India, with 1.3 billion inhabitants, is only number seven in the world? Is that normal? - It's simply a question of equipment. You'll notice the absence of Africa and the Middle East. Only 49 million users in these two parts of the world, one of which, Africa, is a continent. But there again, it's only a question of time and equipment, and this disparity will diminish one day. What will happen when the third and fourth worlds have access, under the same conditions as us, to the Internet? I don't know. Nobody knows. As with everything, by the way! It's a difficult notion to accept, but we must understand that the virtual world is never finished. When he remade his "walking man" dozens of times, Giacometti decided one day that he was finished. Even if he was not - like any artist - satisfied with his sculpture, he had to put an end to his work. Well, we must know that the virtual world is endless - like space. NASA sent man to the Moon forty-one years ago, thanks to computers whose entire energy, today, could fit into a single chip, or almost! In a few years, there will be no more computers. They will be in our bodies. Power of ideas My friend then encourages me to look on the Web for a demonstration recently made during a TED conference. What is this new acronym? T for Technique, E for Entertainment, D for Design. I find out and summarize: it is an organization dedicated to "the power of ideas in the world" - and which brings together, in one or two annual meetings, fifty people from all disciplines who are entitled to eighteen minutes, no more, to present their new idea. It takes place in California and you have to pay $6,000 to get in to listen to speakers on art, science, architecture, ecology, politics, etc. Paradoxically, TED then makes the results of the talks available to Internet users for free on its website. So I "surfed" (www.ted.com/talks) and watched the incredible "tinkering" presented by an Indian researcher, a certain Pranav Mistry, who is finishing his doctorate at MIT, a playful, smiling, and astonishingly ingenious young man. - Already, my technophile points out, we can say that Pranav Mistry represents today's world. He is Indian and he studies in the USA. He is "global". He has tinkered with a system that allows us to do without a computer; he invented a tiny, intuitive camera, hanging from his neck, and in which he put all the intelligence of his computer and connected it to the two fingers of each of his hands, equipped with a sort of electronic dice and his fingers replace the "mouse" (the famous "field mouse" that Chirac had not been able to master!) and can project, on any surface, on your shirt, on a wall, an image or information. In short, he demonstrates that, soon, man will no longer need an interface to communicate. He will develop a "sixth sense" that will free the machine from his body, the two becoming one. "Open source" I am getting a bit lost, but am fascinated by watching Pranav Mistry and the ovation he gets from the audience. I learn that the practice of the TED conference is multiplying. Thus, on January 30, in Paris, at the Espace Cardin, 700 people listened for five hours to psychologists, historians, biotherapists, strategy consultants and other cosmologists. The press did not say a word about it - even less so the "8pm" news. But it did not escape Internet users: "Certainly, the Internet can convey Evil - do not forget that Google has adopted as its motto "Don't be evil" - but it can also be an "open source" (that is the term used), an "open source" that will advance, by pooling ideas and innovations." Interesting detail: one of the spectators of this TED conference in Paris concluded on his blog: "I spent a hair-raising and stimulating afternoon. We did not hear, once, the word "crisis"! This sentence alone says a lot: there are indeed two worlds. The virtual one, which we hope is virtuous. The real one, from everyday life, which suffers and worries. Could the virtual relieve the real? The Internet as an antidote to our poisons? We must not dream. The "elites" of the inter-national government will not be able to replace those who patiently fight against cruel reality. But we can also hope that dozens of Pranav Mistrys will come and invent balms for all our wounds. Abellio said: "The world will be saved by a few." Do these "few" inhabit the Web? plabro@lefigaro.fr

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1138

"Fuck Google". The workshop's theme has the advantage of being clear. On the occasion of the Transmediale, a digital art festival last week in Berlin (and of which Google was one of the sponsors), the turbulent FAT Lab tried to raise awareness among Internet users about the Google octopus. An informal network bringing together about twenty artists, musicians and hackers, FAT (Free Art and Technology) campaigns for free culture, open technologies by developing projects, preferably wacky and very first degree. "We try to interest the youngest in free culture, by speaking their language, by using viral videos. To give a cool and (hip) pop image of open source and collaborative practices", says Evan Roth, also founder of the Graffiti Research Lab. This international club of geeks usually meets online, chatting on IRC to define a theme that they have fun declining in the form of software, extensions, games, parody videos. Rapper Kanye West's repeated scandals gave rise, for example, to a KANYWEBST. For a week, participants were required to express themselves only in capital letters (a very rude way of "SHOUTING" on the Web) and to propose 2.0 tools that ridicule the pop star. For example, this program that tweets at each new outburst of anger or this extension that allows you to see the Web through your striped glasses. In the role of the bad guy, Google is the ideal client. The multinational that owns more than 150 domains, dozens of web applications, a search engine and some of the most popular sites has become essential. FAT wants to raise awareness of this "Google-ification of the Internet" and the issue of the personal data that we trust it with. FuckGoogle is a collection of extensions, open source software and direct actions created to draw attention to the role that Google plays in our everyday lives. "Don't get me wrong," writes Aram Bartholl, "We too use Google, Gmail, YouTube, its calendars, documents, maps, etc. We use them like public toilets when we have to pee; because it seems there is no other option. But there are alternatives." A contemporary Pythia, Google has the answer to everything. So we can trust "Dr. Google" to diagnose the illness you are suffering from: just enter your symptoms in the query bar. Evan Roth hijacks a film where a skinny black guy (playing YOU) gets his bike stolen (playing "your content") by a big guy (playing Google). "Get your business back!" concludes the clip with this slogan "Web 3.0: the great retreat to your own servers." Among other heroic actions: showing your butt to the Google Street View car on the prowl in Berlin. Currently in development is a "Google Air Horn" plug-in, a siren that will sound every time you are on a website using a Google service, in order to provoke a Pavlovian reflex or make you deaf forever. Http://fffff.at

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1139

Ready to go to war against global warming? Coalition of the Willing is a collaborative animated film that aims to remobilize activists after the failure of the Copenhagen summit. Since it now seems certain that our world leaders are not going to move heaven and earth to save the planet, all that remains is to do it ourselves. To remotivate the troops, nothing beats a well-crafted little (counter-)propaganda film, illustrating counter-attack strategies (open source, collaboration, crowd politics, etc.). The film is made by 20 artists who will each animate a part of the script, put online in several waves over six weeks. The first four excerpts are available. The initiator of this project is Knife Party, aka Simon Robson, author of the multi-award-winning animation What Barry Says , which criticized the American invasion of Iraq. Http://coalitionofthewilling.org.uk

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1140

Freewheeling radio station WFMU, broadcasting from New Jersey and on the Web, launched the Free Music Archive in April, a resource for high-quality free music that can be streamed or downloaded for free. Inspired by Creative Commons and the open source movement, the FMA provides a legal framework for artists and their audiences to facilitate the sharing of music. The tracks here are carefully selected by experts in their field, from 8-bit to old folk, from hip-hop to sound poetry. Among them is Excavated Shellac, a 78-rpm specialist, which offers plenty of rarities, vernacular music from around the world. Other audio curiosities include the radio show Phoning in , where DJ TYalksonthephone phones musicians who are playing live on the end of the receiver. Http://freemusicarchive.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1141

The man behind the Linux operating system, Linus Torvalds, has probably made some people happy at Google. He recently claimed on his blog that he loves the new Nexus One. The Google phone was unveiled in January. It is the first phone to bear the Google logo and runs on the search giant's open-source mobile operating system, Android. "I generally hate cell phones - they are annoying and distract you when you are working, reading, or whatever - and a cell phone is just an opportunity for me to be disturbed wherever you are. Which is not a good thing," the famous programmer wrote. However, he says that Google's phone has just changed his mind. "I was not keen on buying a phone online without seeing it first, but the day they announced pinch-to-zoom (multi-touch) I decided to take the plunge," Torvalds wrote. Google's Android operating system is based on the Linux system kernel.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1142

Peter Sunde, aka Brokep, aka Mr. Co-Founder of The Pirate Bay, has just launched the test phase of Flattr, a social micro-payment system designed to facilitate online financing of creation. Not exactly a grand launch, just a short sentence, "This is #flattr", posted on the micro-blogging site Twitter, to introduce a very educational video (in English). The principle: each Flattr user pays a fixed amount each month, for example 3 euros. When surfing, on a blog, on a musician's site or on a photographer's gallery, he can click on a Flattr button if he wants to give a part of his contribution. This button would appear in the same way as the Digg, Twitter or Facebook buttons that are almost everywhere on the Net today. At the end of the month, if the Internet user has clicked on a Flattr button ten times, each creator will receive a tenth of the amount. The explanatory video concludes with: "It's the small streams that make the big rivers." The concept of Flattr does not come out of nowhere. It is directly inspired by the idea of global sponsorship imagined by Francis Muguet and Richard Stallman. The only difference is that in the context of global sponsorship, the monthly charge is fixed and mandatory. It remains to be seen whether a system based on volunteering will be able to work on a large scale. Everything has to start somewhere. Http://flattr.com/beta/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1143

Saint-Médard-en-Jalles, on the outskirts of Bordeaux, 30,000 inhabitants. Four out of five at signs in the Villes Internet ranking, the Michelin guide for the most Web-friendly municipalities. Neighborhood blogs, a well-established e-administration, Internet initiations for seniors... Like Saint-Médard-en-Jalles, the Internet simplifies the management of municipalities, brings elected officials closer to residents and residents together. Half rural, half urban, Saint-Médard is quite representative of these local authorities connected to the global network for the benefit of the very local. Its "humus" lends itself to this, which combines an extensive forest area and several cutting-edge industries. The mayor (Serge Lamaison, PS), his deputies and the municipal executives are imbued with an unwavering faith in the virtues of digital technology. Serge Larrous, the general director of services, reads Le Monde on his iPhone and, like his colleagues, swears by free software, which is less expensive and more "open" than Microsoft tools. At the forefront of communication technologies, Saint-Médard-en-Jalles proudly proclaims this quality of "free city" from any dependence on Internet giants. Free and eager to free itself from paperwork. Four thousand families now pay online for canteen fees and their registration for a sports club. Those who are not yet in the habit are asked to go through digital counters for their administrative procedures. It is less annoying than queuing at the town hall. Association managers can book municipal halls online. Residents benefit, if they wish, from an address in "...@stmedard.fr"... In a word, Saint-Médard-en-Jalles wants to be a laboratory for digital living together. Its computer scientists are working on a 3D representation of the city, in the style of Second Life. The first buildings - the town hall, a swimming pool, etc. - have already emerged from the ground, so to speak. Soon, residents will be able to walk around from their homes and click on the information panels that will mark their route: opening hours, emergency numbers, media library catalogues, etc. Caught up in this digital whirlwind, the people of Saint-Médard have become demanding. One in ten citizens is deprived of access to the Internet due to a lack of adequate infrastructure - housing is very dispersed - and they do not tolerate it well. "At neighbourhood meetings," says one elected official, Jacques Guichoux, "people ask us when they will have the Internet. A bit like they used to ask for running water and electricity. "Those who have access to the Web have a meticulous relationship with citizenship," explains Stéphan Pelletier, the deputy mayor in charge of local democracy: "They bombard us with emails on the most varied subjects to which they often expect an immediate response." Reducing the "digital divide" is on the agenda in Saint-Médard. In 2009, the media library's introductory workshops trained a thousand people, young and old, in how to use the Internet. A "cyber-base", where job seekers can come and write a CV, a cover letter or consult company offers, completes this system. You can familiarize yourself with office automation, play online, create a blog... The neighborhood blogs, of which there are three, spread local micro-news to every home: on January 29, the West sociocultural association, Asco, organized a bingo game in the Georges-Brassens hall. The planet did not stop turning that night. But this cyber-citizenship strengthens citizenship in general. In 2007, more than 90% of Saint-Médard-en-Jalle voters voted in the presidential election. As a reward, the city received the Marianne of civic-mindedness. Its tropism for the Internet and its four at-signs certainly have something to do with it.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1144

How to convert a Word file to PDF? Mac users do not need to install anything. Using the print command in Word (and any other application), they simply click on the PDF button and then choose whether to save the document as a PDF, fax it or send it directly by email. With Windows, the situation is different. If you are using Microsoft Office 2007, you can download the program SaveAsPDFandXPS.exe for free from the Microsoft website. Once installed on your PC, this extension adds a new menu that allows you to export and save files in PDF (and XPS) format in Office 2007 applications. With older versions of Word, you have to use external software. Several commercial products are available, such as Adobe Acrobat (417 euros) or Abbyy PDF Transformer (65 euros). The simplest, PDFCreator, has the advantage of being free. It is an open source software that simulates a printer. Once this program is installed, activate the Print function of Word, then choose PDFCreator from the printers menu. Then click Save to convert the document to PDF format and save it on your hard drive. An alternative is to download and install the OpenOffice.org software suite, which works like Microsoft Office, and produces PDF files directly. Nothing more to add: you have a word processor, a spreadsheet, a presentation software and a database manager. All documents can thus be saved in PDF format.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1145

SHERBROOKE - Newfoundland researchers working on a system that would allow unmanned vehicles to avoid obstacles in flight have signed an agreement with students from the Université de Sherbrooke's Véhicule aérienne miniature group (VAMUdeS). The Sherbrooke expertise will make the Memorial University scientists' research less costly. Currently, explains François Bolduc-Teasdale, a mechanical engineering student and member of VAMUdeS, unmanned aerial vehicles are designed to travel from point A to point B, so they do not detect obstacles along the way. Researchers from the Raven project in Newfoundland are particularly interested in the Arctic, where they hope unmanned aircraft could carry out long missions, for example in unpatrolled areas. One phase of the project involves obstacle avoidance by aerial vehicles. Most planes have radars, but they won't detect a self-piloted aerial vehicle, notes Éric Demers, an electrical engineering student and member of the group. The VAMUdeS group designs unmanned surveillance vehicles. "The goal of the group is to develop this type of vehicle to meet the needs of industry," explains François Teasdale-Bolduc. It was during a competition in New Brunswick that the Sherbrooke students met the Newfoundland researchers. Subsequently, François Bolduc-Teasdale and his classmate Simon Jobin, also a member of the group, went to St. John's last August to show their self-piloted prototype to the Raven project team. The team was reportedly particularly impressed by the flexibility of the Sherbrooke students' self-piloting system. Crash tests "The system used is inexpensive and if it breaks, it can be repaired quickly. With our system, we can do crash tests without it costing a lot of money," explained the two students, whose prototype wings are about a metre and a half long. The researchers from the Canadian island were also interested in the fact that the students were inspired by the Paparazzi open-source technology, which also facilitates their research. The agreement with the Newfoundland researchers was signed in January. The latter ordered two autopilots from the Sherbrooke group to carry out their tests. In addition to working on this project, the students would like to take part in two major competitions, one in Maryland next June and another in Australia, the date of which has not yet been announced. VAMUdeS is also looking for sponsors. isabelle.pion@latribune.qc.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1146

Between Molson Street and Jean-Duceppe Park, there is a huge 400,000 square foot lot. The “most beautiful piece of land” owned by the Société de développement Angus (SDA), according to Christian Yaccarini, president and CEO of the non-profit organization. And it’s no coincidence that it’s still vacant. “For years, we’ve dreamed of developing this land, but we wanted to wait until we were experienced enough to be able to push further what we’ve always wanted to do in Angus. We’re there,” Mr. Yaccarini told Le Devoir. Some 850,000 square feet of rental space can be built there. “It’s huge,” he added. “And now, we can really do something innovative. We’ve given ourselves until June to think about it, to come up with a vision, without stopping ourselves from dreaming for the moment because of budgetary or urban planning constraints.” But what is there to think about? In fact, since this project is expected to span a period of 10 years, it will not be completed before 2020. "Things are moving so quickly in the world of work, with the advancement of technologies, that we wonder how society will function in 2020, 2030, 2040 and even 2050. What will its needs be?" asks Christian Yaccarini. And that's without forgetting the ecological concerns that will come to the fore. The idea of bringing the workplace and living environment closer together is therefore a priority for the SDA. "In 20 years, will people still be leaving the suburbs to come and work in Montreal? Will large parking lots still be relevant? "I'm not sure," says the CEO, who already knows about thirty workers on the Technopôle Angus grounds who have bought a house or condo in the area and now walk to work. In addition, with all the technologies that are being developed, will workers really need to physically go to their office from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., five days a week? And will there always be more self-employed workers? "Before, people became self-employed because they lost their jobs. Now, it's a choice! However, that doesn't mean that these people always want to work while being isolated at home and meeting their clients in their kitchen," notes Mr. Yaccarini. And there's the whole work-life balance issue, with shared custody situations on the rise. "What will work-life balance mean in 2020?" wonders Mr. Yaccarini. These are the kinds of questions the SDA team is trying to answer. To do this, three committees have been formed, internally and externally, to better understand where society is going and what the next major changes will be. Sociologists of work are involved, as are researchers linked to research chairs in sustainable development and open source software, people who work for the development of new technologies, but also people from the population and more particularly young people. "Because, let's be realistic," says Mr. Yaccarini. "I'm 51 years old. We're not developing this project for people of my generation. It's young people who will benefit from it." Mixed-use buildings We can already identify a few elements that emerge from this major reflection that began a few years ago. First, we're talking about mixed-use buildings. "We won't build row houses and, further down, a commercial rental building. We are leaning more towards buildings that would include, for example, condos, different types of workspaces for businesses and rooms for self-employed workers with local businesses on the ground floor," explains Mr. Yaccarini. He sees this central island as a very urban and very dense space that will not empty after 5 p.m. Several multifunctional buildings would therefore be built on the land next to the park. One would have a cultural vocation and another, which would probably be the first to be built, by 2013, would be dedicated to sustainable development. "It would be a kind of centre of excellence in sustainable development, in which we would try to facilitate the transfer of thinking about sustainable development to practice. Because there is still a lot to do in the field," says the man who is working with the École Polytechnique on the project. This building would therefore house conference rooms and even a hotel. "In the East, there is no place where we can host conferences," notes the developer. And, of course, we always talk about LEED buildings and innovation. "There's no question of repeating what we're used to doing," he adds. "We want to try new things. It's very stimulating." The development of the central island represents a major investment for the SDA. For the moment, it's about $140 million. \*\*\* Contributor to Le Devoir

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1147

To mark the 20th anniversary of the World Wide Web, BBC Two is broadcasting the first part of a four-part documentary on the history of the Web this Saturday. The "old lady" has given itself a 2.0 facelift by experimenting with a new form of "open and collaborative" documentary on the way the Internet is changing our lives. Throughout the production of Digital Revolution (working title) which began on July 10, Internet users were invited to participate in its development, since "the Web is people, people connected by computers", as Jay Rosen, a specialist in citizen journalism, points out. "It would be stupid to make a documentary about the Web without involving those who were named by the Times as the 2006 Person of the Year, "YOU", "explains the BBC. The team wanted to open up the production process "as much as possible", communicating in all directions with Internet users via a blog and all the paraphernalia at their disposal (Twitter, Delicious, Flickr, YouTube). And this at all stages of production. A simple marketing ploy to capture an audience, or a real consideration of contributions? "It is wrong to think that a participatory documentary can do without an author's vision," tempers Dan Gluckman, one of the producers. Our ambition has never been to integrate lots of extracts filmed by a crowd of people or to write the script with multiple hands. We are "open source" in the sense that we give access to our sources: our debates on the themes of the program, our online research, our rushes. It is possible to involve an Audience in multiple ways. And in my experience, people prefer to participate in a specific framework rather than being faced with a blank page." During preproduction, Internet users were able to send their links, images, comments, suggestions and stories intended to fuel reflection. They were invited to debate with web personalities ("Is the blogosphere dead?" "Is Wikipedia elitist?" "Does Google make you stupid?"), to submit questions to web stars. The rushes filmed by BBC reporters were made available as they were produced, raw extracts from the interviews. The cast is prestigious but expected: Chris Anderson from Wired magazine, Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple, Tim Berners Lee, the father of the web, but also Daniel Schmitt, from Wikileaks, a site that publishes confidential documents, or the sociologist Danah Boyd, one of the rare women. These rushes could be commented on, downloaded, shared, remixed, according to a license inspired by Creative Commons. "Internet users will be able to edit their version of the documentary, tell their own vision of this digital revolution with these images," writes Dan Biddle, in charge of hosting the blog. They were invited to express their creativity in a competition of short films and trailers, as well as to the "namestorm" on the final title of the documentary which will result in this sadly banal The Virtual Revolution. In addition to the classic linear documentary intended for the BBC, the project is also expected to be declined in an interactive form. The first chapter on the counter-cultural roots of the Web is broadcast this Saturday evening at 8pm on BBC Two and will be exceptionally available worldwide on iplayer. Www.bbc.co.uk/digitalrevolution www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1148

What is the role of a festival in the digital age? For a few years now, the Rotterdam Film Festival (IFFR), which opens today, has been struggling with this nagging question. For this 39th edition, it is launching a new initiative, Cinema Reloaded (Cinemareloaded.com/en): three short film projects directed by independent directors subsidized by Internet users. Faced with the pessimism of the film industry, which fears suffering the same scourge as the record industry, the IFFR wants to show its faith in the future, if not of the industry, at least of independent cinema. "Never have we listened to so much music, half the planet has an MP3 player or a smartphone. The same effect is foreseeable for cinema, with greater access to films and a wider choice," says the press release. In addition to lower production costs, free and easy access to distribution and marketing means, "the most exciting thing for those who love cinema is that the Internet offers a chance to bridge the gap between the director and his audience." Process. With this new project, the IFFR claims to put "the active audience" at the heart of the future of film. Evil tongues will say that it is above all a way to pick the pockets of the Internet user since the bulk of his "participation" is limited to co-financing his favorite film. He will have the possibility of buying coins (minimum 5 dollars, or 3.50 euros) on the dedicated website and investing them in the short of his choice (with a budget of 30,000 euros). He will not be able to intervene in the creative process of the directors (the Argentinian Alexis Dos Santos, the Malaysian Ho Yuhang and the Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist) nor hope for a return on investment. In exchange for this donation, he will be able to follow the film's progress via the director's blog, see the film's premiere on video on demand (VOD), have his name in the credits (provided he pays at least $25) and be invited to the premiere in theaters (depending on the number of seats available). Nothing very revolutionary in short, "crowdfunding" initiatives are proliferating on web 2.0, whether it is to finance a film, a video game, a documentary, an album (Indiegogo, Kickstarter, Touscoprod, Peopleforcinema...). Some "open source" films (A Swarm of Angel or El Cosmonaut) go further in involving the viewer, who can participate as an extra, assistant, composer. The festivals that could have been the place for the revival of independent cinema are lagging behind. For the new director of the IFFR, Rutger Wolfson, Cinema Reloaded is an "experiment" that he hopes will be rich in lessons and that will give rise to a report. "This project is not intended to find a definitive business model, but to fuel reflection." "Idiot." Another avenue that has been cautiously explored is instant distribution. Until January 31, the Sundance festival is experimenting with alternative distribution methods for the first time. Sundance Selects, its VOD service available on American cable, is offering three films, the documentary The Shock Doctrine, the autobiographical comedy Daddy Longlegs and the thriller 7 Days, on the day of their premiere in theaters to 40 million homes for a month. The mecca of American independent cinema no longer wants to be just the must-see event for professionals but to reach the public directly, wherever they may be. A crucial condition for independent filmmakers. Hollywood contracts have become a rare commodity. Most of the major studios have withdrawn from the independent scene. In 2008, less than half of the films presented at Sundance were honored on the big screen. "Festivals themselves are going to become part of a film's distribution strategy. We're going to see a lot of films in the future that are going to jump straight into distribution and use the festival as a launch pad," says new director John Cooper. Whether in cooperation with the festival or on their own initiative, several producers are experimenting with immediate distribution. Rather than hoping to sell their film in a saturated market, they're hoping to use the festival's buzz to find an audience. For example, Linas Philips's Volkswagen truck road movie Bass Ackwards will be available on VOD in the United States as soon as the festival closes. The film is selected in a new section, NEXT, dedicated to low- and no-budget films. "Our film only cost $30,000, so we can take the risk of doing something totally stupid that goes against the grain," says producer Thomas Woodrow in a video posted on YouTube. The feature film is also one of the five films offered by YouTube in partnership with Sundance, on its new VOD service (for 4 dollars). An offer that is ultimately very poor, valid only during the festival and in the United States, even if the online video platform has expressed its wish to become on the Net the new channel for independent films in need of distribution, where directors will be able to set the price and rental conditions while retaining their rights. To be continued.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1149

Richard Stallman has identified the four essential freedoms that define free software: the freedom to run the program for any purpose; the freedom to study how it works, and to adapt it; the freedom to redistribute copies, and the freedom to improve the program and publish these improvements. These are the pillars of a movement that has changed computing. On January 21, Richard Stallman and the Free Software Revolution (1), the French version of a biography by Sam Williams, published in 2002, will be released. At the request of the Framasoft association, Stallman himself participated in the update. This genius has spent more than a quarter of a century fighting for his convictions, paying close attention to his words. For example, he uses "privateur" to describe software that others call "proprietary", to emphasize the fact that it deprives users of their freedom. Meeting with obligatory informality, at his request. You participated in your own biography, what was your state of mind? I had never read the first final edition. When I was asked to intervene on the French translation, I accepted. But a lot of changes were needed. It was delicate, I didn't want to lose Sam Williams' point of view. So I decided to keep all the quotes, except a few that had nothing to do with me, and to preserve all the author's personal impressions. By correcting many other things. Do you think that free software would exist without your action? No. There would perhaps be a few free programs. But today we have free operating systems, it is possible to do computing normally without any proprietary software. And that is the result of the movement that I launched in 1983. Today, free software has a very important place. But our movement has not won. The goal is the liberation of all users. And the majority continues to use Windows or Macintosh, two proprietary operating systems, therefore unfair. The use of free software by the greatest number does not seem to be your priority... That's true. I want everyone to be free. But is it more important to convince a few people to use free software, or to educate more people to value their freedom? To have the basis for lasting freedom, you have to educate people to demand this freedom. The world offers many opportunities to lose it. And if you don't see why to resist, you accept them. I fight to educate users to appreciate freedom. To no longer accept proprietary software. The majority does not see the problem, does not see the difference, because they have never imagined the idea of being free. You have to be able to tell the difference. An example? If the four essential freedoms are not there, the developer exercises control over the use. He can do what he wants. He can put harmful elements in his program to monitor you, to impose limits on you... We have discovered backdoors in major proprietary programs, such as Microsoft Windows, or Amazon Kindle. What are the major advances in recent years? Office programs, for example, are good and widely used. Graphical interfaces also work well. Some states and regions are migrating their institutions and schools to free software. So we have had significant advances, even if we have not yet won. The early fight over free software and sharing has now shifted to content... I don't like the word content for works of art, it depreciates them. This word assumes that the works are not important, that they are used to fill a box with anything. Sharing is fraternity, and it is everyone's right to share exact copies of published works, if it is not commercial. Sharing must be legalized, including on the Internet. Any law to prohibit it is unjust and has no moral authority. Hadopi is a tyrannical law! I am in favor of helping artists, but in a way that is adapted to the network. The current system is not working well: a few stars earn a lot and the majority earn almost nothing. I proposed establishing a tax that would be distributed, but not in a linear way. Stars would earn more than others, but in more reasonable proportions. What do you think of all those who consider that you have too rigid a personality? It is easy, for someone who has no principles and is willing to sell anything, to consider others as rigid. (1) Editions Eyrolles, 22 euros.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1150

If proof were needed of the unpopularity of finance, Le Débat (November-December) provides it beyond all expectations. This journal, edited by Marcel Gauchet, a usually level-headed intellectual, publishes five articles on the "post-crisis" that some might consider to be as many scathing articles more at home in Alternatives économiques than at Gallimard. Three are new - that of the economist and anthropologist Paul Jorion (well known to readers of "Le Monde Economie") on the "exit from capitalism", that of the economist Jean-Luc Gréau "for a new banking system", and the very interesting but slightly offbeat reflection of Michel Volle, a specialist in economic history, on the consequences of computerization on finance and even beyond. Two contributions are translations: a famous article, published in the spring in The Atlantic, by Simon Johnson, former head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), entitled "Coup d'état en douce" and, finally, that of Geoff Mulgan, a close friend of Tony Blair, on "after capitalism". Common point to the five authors: no one believes that the crisis was only temporary. On the contrary, for all, it more or less calls into question the functioning of capitalism or more precisely the system that we thought we knew and called liberalism. Simon Johnson's article, comparing the fate of American bankers and the fate of Russian oligarchs or large Thai families, victims of the passage of the International Monetary Fund in their country, is devastating. Like him, Paul Jorion returns to one of the characteristics of the Obama plan to rescue the banks: in all cases, the administration chose the option most advantageous to Wall Street. Both authors believe that the banking system owes its survival only to public intervention and that it is therefore, in fact, nationalized. But where Johnson sees it as a political choice, Jorion believes that there was no alternative. Similarly, the latter analyzes in detail the reform of the banks' balance sheets, a change that went unnoticed during the G20 in London but was decisive for the sector's return to good fortune. With Jean-Luc Gréau, the reader is invited to delve into the toolbox of this maverick who rightly notes that central banks are no longer the lenders of last resort to commercial banks but the lenders of first resort, which amounts, he says, to a "de facto nationalization of the credit system". We are not obliged to follow him when he recommends placing central banks under the supervision of the States, but his proposal to prohibit operations carried out by banks on their own account and his presentation of the responses that Maurice Allais would provide to the crisis are very stimulating. The fact that one of Tony Blair's minds is announcing to us, with rejoicing, the end of capitalism confirms that the situation is serious! "Just as the monarchical idea has become marginal, capitalism will lose its influence on our society and our culture. From master, it will become servant," he predicts, relying on the successes of Wikipedia, free software, cooperatives, etc. Mixing technology and foresight, this dossier complements that of the Esprit magazine (in November), more devoted to macroeconomics. Those who consider these challenges to capitalism excessive will delve into Sociétal (1st quarter) from the Institut de l'entreprise, whose subject is: "After the crisis, a new era of liberalism?" A bold angle in these times.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1151

I swear, in 2010, I will not leave traces everywhere on the Web, which identify me for sure, say my tastes, my travel plans, my political opinions, who I hang out with... Who say me. If she had followed this wise advice, Stacy Snyder, a 25-year-old American, would be a teacher today. With her degree in hand, she was waiting for a posting when, bang!, the administration said no. By reproaching her for her inappropriate behavior. A few months earlier, Stacy had put a photo of herself on MySpace, a sea dog hat on her head, a plastic cup in her hand, with this caption: "The drunken pirate". Her friends had found it funny. Not the university authorities. Her, a teacher? What an example for students! Viktor Mayer-Schönberger tells this story in Delete (Princeton University Press, 2009), a brilliant essay devoted to the dangers that everyone runs when exposing themselves on the Internet. Delete: throw away everything that identifies you. This is the friendly advice that this American researcher, a specialist in the right to be forgotten, gives to Internet users, his peers. There is work to be done: many Internet users are more inclined to exhibition than to discretion. They give themselves a pseudonym to "chat" on a political forum but do not hesitate to publish photos of themselves partying on their Facebook page. Unconsciously or ignorantly, only a minority use the confidentiality parameters that social networks make available to them. 61% of Facebook users make themselves visible to everyone, whereas with a click, they could reserve the most personal part of themselves only to their loved ones. A discussion is underway within the government, led by Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, to better protect the anonymity, so overused, of Internet users. In a few days, the State Secretariat for the Digital Economy will open a site where Internet users can "post" their thoughts on the subject. In Libération, the minister has already put forward an interesting idea, that of a label that would be attributed to each site according to the degree of protection it offers to Internet users. Anyone who goes to an adult address must be able to do so anonymously. Conversely, on Impots.gouv.fr, the identity of the Internet user must correspond exactly to their civil status. The idea is interesting, but there are others. In Delete, Viktor Mayer-Schönberger proposes assigning an expiration date to all documents that Internet users store on their hard drive. A right of amnesia often synonymous with amnesty. All this is well and good, but the time it takes for the Internet regulatory authorities to agree on a solution, for Microsoft and Google to follow suit, for every operator in the world to play the game... It will take years. In the meantime, I have resolved, for 2010, to travel masked on the Net. I cover my tracks by arming myself with a false identity whenever possible (I don't go to Impots.gouv.fr every day). I adopt Tor, a free software that sends data across the Web in a random trajectory and thus erases traces of my browsing. I click on the Google Dashboard, a page where all the sites I have visited, via the search engine, over the years are listed. There, I see that on September 4, 2006, at 9:08 p.m., I connected to the SNCF site (why?). I check the "delete web history" option. This way, no one will know that on January 1, 2010 at 2:37 in the morning, I was consulting Nostradamus.com. I teach my family, especially the youngest, not to expose themselves thoughtlessly on Facebook or MySpace. To "anonymize" themselves. To be responsible Internet users. Because their private life is also a bit mine.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1152

A "googol", in mathematics, corresponds to the number 10 to the power of 100, or a 1 followed by one hundred zeros. According to legend, this misspelled word is the origin of another word: Google, perhaps the most famous of this decade, precisely... the zero years. The term is much more complex. It first designates a flourishing globalized company with nearly 20,000 employees posting, in 2008, a profit of more than 4 billion dollars (2.8 billion euros). All thanks to a search engine that has taken over half of the global market for ten years. A business whose growth limits no one can measure. Because the fabulous profits generated by the multinational have always been used as a launch platform for a multitude of other software products. A dazzling expansion, in its speed and scale, which has left many competitors behind: Yahoo, AOL, Ask.com... However, despite the feeling of omnipresence that it gives off, Google has only recently arrived in our lives. Founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, two young geniuses from Stanford University, the company has developed at high speed since 2000. Its triumph is based on the strategic choice of inventing a search engine that analyzes the intersections and affinities between the sites themselves and their own links rather than the number of times the search term appears on a page. Brin and Page developed the ideal algorithm to serve this intuition. And the confirmation that they had hit the mark was not long in coming. Firstly by the relevance of the results obtained, but above all by the meteoric adoption of Google by Internet users, the search engine often even becoming the home page of their browser. A patent filed in 2001 by Larry Page records this ranking mechanism under the term PageRank. The miracle algorithm and its perpetual development in the retorts of the Googleplex in Mountain View (California), which became its headquarters in 2003, are part of the mythology attached to the firm. Legends that can also be found in some current controversies about Google. Behind the mysterious algorithm, somewhere between a golden ratio and a philosophical formula, we believe we recognize questions of encryption, even cryptography... From its inception, however, Google has never stopped developing strategies to inspire confidence. The company wants to be moral, useful and reasonably greedy. The company's unofficial slogan is a monument to New Age capitalism: "Don't be evil." It is embodied in a social model that still serves as a renowned showcase, with Google employees remaining among the best-cared-for in the Californian high-tech industry, regardless of the vicissitudes of the crisis, and the same goes for those at the Paris headquarters, Place de l'Opéra. The creation of the Google.org foundation, its philanthropic armed wing, is part of the same logic of the Empire of Good: under the high authority of Dr. Larry Brilliant and Megan Smith, it aims to fight climate change and global poverty. Richly endowed at its inception in 2004, it is also fueled by capital gains made on the stock market on Google shares (introduced on Wall Street the same year), in accordance with the in-house charter to which any purchaser of these shares subscribes. We also find traces of this culture of capitalism "with a clear conscience" in the personality of Eric Schmid, an old hand at Silicon Valley, who Larry Page and Sergey Brin wisely put at the head of the group in 2001. An unofficial advisor who was very involved with Obama during the 2008 American campaign, he notably proposed to the future president a plan to move the automobile industry and the entire United States to renewable energy... Ecology is another aspect of the politics and its advertising practiced by Google. Like the solar panels in Mountain View or the Data Center that the company has just built near a river, in order to use the water for its cooling system (tens of thousands of servers are connected to it). Because its model is based on making all its services free for users (but selling to advertisers the spaces that these services create), Google has thus been able to embody a form of tolerable and almost experimental American capitalism. Moreover, it was Microsoft's first serious rival: a free alternative where a paying monopoly was exercised. But recently, Google has itself become the contested Goliath, the sprawling and intrusive hydra that is accused of wanting to know everything, put everything into parameters and store everything. Even if it is always "for free". This is the main fuel for the concern raised by Google: how far does the Mountain View colossus intend to grow, what fields of application is it preparing to invest in? Impossible to estimate as its growth allows it to invest in different registers. It has already conquered online mapping and GPS location, office automation, social networks (via YouTube, which it bought), video sharing, it is launching a browser (Google Chrome), supporting the development of an operating system (OS Chrome) that has just taken off on mini-PCs and testing a bunch of software products in its in-house laboratory, Google Labs. New territory: the mobile phone market, for which analysts predict a dominant market share within three years for the Android operating system that Google launched this year. All smartphone manufacturers are invited to adopt it, again in open source, i.e. for free. The same goes for all developers who want to create applications under Android, just to make Apple understand who its new rival is. In the decade that is opening, we will undoubtedly find excellent opportunities to develop a certain anxiety, or paranoia, about the titanic enterprise. However, the most serious quarrel is the one that has opposed Google to publishers since the firm undertook to digitize the entire world's printed collection and has been sued and condemned for copyright infringement in court. We can consider these condemnations legitimate and consider that Google remains indispensable to our lives as Internet users. This bipolarity is the whole ambiguity of our relationship with the beast Google. From this point of view, Google is a perfect modern symbol of a very old chessboard: at the same time the theater of a fight and the grid of a problem. We cannot really untangle the indissoluble unity of opposites. Google is as much the rational tool of our clear intelligences as the disturbing demon of our nocturnal imaginations. In this dialectic that fuels our fascination, the usual, everyday engine that no one would want to do without is also the abyss of security phobias and the very symbol of the oppression that may be coming. What are these prior conditionings preparing us for, the most far-sighted wonder? What broader abandonment of responsibility are we thus being trained for? Is Google's vocation to put every atom of the world into parameters? Google will have nevertheless rendered us quite a few services and familiarized us with concepts as not very obvious as navigating the streets of the world's cities "street view", that is to say on the roof of a car. It will have led us to the more or less conscious practice of cloud computing, this storage of data, sometimes personal, remotely, which sees us entrust all our miserable little piles of secrets to distant and anonymous servers lost in the ether of the Internet. The word Google entered the Oxford English Dictionary in 2006. It is a verb. It means "to search for information on the Internet."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1153

The Socialist Party has been preparing its community site since this fall. It is still under construction, but already has a name: Lacoopol.fr THE NAME When announcing it at the end of August in La Rochelle, Martine Aubry stumbled over the name of the new Internet social network of the PS, a sort of Facebook open to activists and sympathizers. Coopol evokes both the agricultural cooperative and the digital kibbutz and does not hide its left-wing political nature behind its little mouse. Difficult to pronounce, a little austere in its presentation, Coopol is extremely clever in its design, entrusted to Netscouade, the start-up of Benoît Thieulin, at the origin of the sites Désirs d'avenir of Ségolène Royal in the presidential election and of Europe Ecologie in the European elections. If activists seize it, Coopol could become an electoral war machine. "On the Web, cooperation is a rising value, as shown by the free software movement, or crowd sourcing: calls to the masses of people, or to experts via Twitter," explains Benoît Thieulin. Aubry wanted to get the PS back to work. Coopol is his tool. The Coopol Concept is built on a dual observation. "The PS has a lot of difficulties at its head, but at the base a few tens of thousands of activists are doing their job well. The 3,700 sections crisscross the territory," notes Thieulin, also a member of the PS's ecological pole. Except that the socialist has the blues because of the wars between leaders and sometimes feels very alone. Coopol is a toolbox to restore confidence and get the troops moving again. Another problem that affects all parties: making these social sites exist. "It is much easier to reveal a community that already exists," explains Thieulin. Switching to Coopol, the PS activist network, allows the virtual network to be populated quickly and massively: an overwhelming majority of its activists are Internet subscribers. The objective On the front of the screen, each connected user sees the following written: "My section, my messaging, my friends, my groups, my diary". In the middle, the local and national "events" of the party that he chooses scroll by on his "control tower" by clicking "I participate, I do not participate, maybe". The section secretary can therefore, in three clicks and a few SMS messages, deploy five activists at the exit of the metro, while others take care of adapting the Solférino leaflet to the local microclimate. And a third group goes door-to-door. And not just anywhere: the election maps will be integrated into the system to target leafleting, mailings for example on left-wing constituencies affected by abstention. Based on the "mybarackobama.com" model, Coopol aims to "merge online and offline": to articulate the virtual campaign and field actions. The Coopol project also aims to be a catalyst for internal debates. As on Facebook, each activist is invited to detail their profile and make lots of "friends" among members and sympathizers in their section and beyond. Thus Michel X, a PS card-carrying schoolteacher in Calais, can create a group specializing in education. He will be able to sponsor Zina, his "friend" sympathizer, a retired teacher in Dunkirk, to participate in the group, think about measures, go leafleting or go door-to-door during campaigns. The goal is to transform each friend into a "peer to peer" recruiting agent, according to Internet jargon, by gradually getting sympathizers to join the party. "Coopol is a membrane that blurs the line between sympathizers and activists. We tell them: "you don't pay before you join." And on this platform we have tools for exchange and debate to prepare a program," explains Benoît Thieulin. Meritocracy With its free circulation of ideas, Coopol promotes meritocracy, to which the first secretary is very attached. Groups producing original texts and actions should see their work recognized. It is also a way to challenge the baronies and inertia within the PS. "There is a power issue within Coopol," acknowledges Thieulin, who presented it to all the motions. Rather than each presidential candidate setting up their own social network, the issue is that each party's troops take a position within Coopol. "Those who are the most active, post the most videos, build their legitimacy and notoriety," says Thieulin. But complete transparency and decompartmentalization are a bit scary. During the presentation of Coopol to the Parisian sections, voices were raised: "People were worried in the mode 'the management will be able to spy on our exchanges'", said one participant. An Anti-Fraud Weapon With its profiling of activists and sympathizers, Coopol is a dream sign-in list for the future PS primaries. If the vote takes place with paper ballots, "the network can control the dissemination of results from the field to the top", notes Benoît Thieulin. An electronic anti-fraud check. the Budget "The PS does not want to communicate on this. The UMP spoke of 1.8 million euros. Coopol will cost much less, but we do not want to enter into a competition of who has the biggest. We can be innovative without a lot of money", continues Benoît Thieulin. Conclusion: the Web is changing politics.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1154

These days, we celebrate the anniversaries of events that have shaken the world: the 80th anniversary of the last financial crisis, the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II, or the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. It is also the anniversary of the commissioning of the network of the American Department of Defense's Research Projects Agency (ARPA). On October 29, 1969, in the computer room of the computer science department at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), there are no journalists, photographers, or businessmen. Just a group of students, doctoral students, their professors, and an engineer from the BBN company who has been entrusted with developing the software for the network's packet switches. Professor Leonard Kleinrock is at the controls, surrounded by students from the Network Working Group (NWG), he types on a simple terminal a first character from the Sigma 7 computer to that of the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) near San Francisco, then a second. On the third, the software "crashes". That was forty years ago. I was the only European in the group. A utopian project, led by academics, without industrial participation, was taking shape. We were more or less aware of participating in the emergence of a project rich in promise. However, none of us would have dared to imagine the future of the Internet. Through many twists and turns, from the ARPA network (the name Arpanet only appeared in 1972) to "Web 3.0", the Internet has since established itself as an essential tool in the world of today and tomorrow, if we are to believe Joël de Rosnay's projections for Web 4.0. What genetic characteristics have allowed this little shoot to become such a baobab? His luck was of course the implementation of digital communication technologies, the miniaturization of circuits and the triggering of the virtuous circle, a reproducible and increasingly dense technology, offered to an increasingly wide audience, and therefore less and less expensive. His luck was also the deregulation of telecommunications and the globalization of the economy, of which it was, moreover, a strategic tool. But why did the Arpanet and its successor the Internet ultimately sweep away competing projects? The ingredients for success were already in the embryo of the ARPA network born from the meeting of diverse, even contradictory, visions, objectives and personalities: military, academic or libertarian. The military-inspired concern was invulnerability, hence the choice, for the transmission network, of the packet switching technique: information can pass through any path of a mesh network of packet switches; if one of them is destroyed, communications are not disrupted. Academics provided the first sites, developed specifications in complete independence from manufacturers and major telecommunications operators, and invented the first applications. ARPA contracts ensured them the necessary financial independence. Sharing resources, in hardware, software, data and human resources was a major objective. Added to this was a culture of exchange. The network quickly also became a means of submitting algorithms to the user community to verify, programs to test and data to archive. It would become a lever for promoters of free software. It was able to galvanize disinterested energies and intelligence, both individual and collective. Finally, the young researchers at UCLA were not insensitive to the libertarian spirit that reigned there. The winter of 1969-1970 was also one of protest in American universities: a sort of May 68 against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, which was increasingly poorly supported by students, and the revolt of ethnic minorities. The philosophy that they instilled in the network through its specifications was based on independence, freedom, transparency, sharing and pragmatism. From the outset, in May 1968, they institutionalized a system of open and public specifications, based on competence, mutual recognition and consensus, which later proved to be one of the major success factors of the project. The "request for comments" (RFCs) have defied time: 5,689 RFCs have been published in forty years, and always with the same sobriety of presentation. All the RFCs available today on the Internet constitute an extraordinary "memory" of the collective process of construction and evolution of the network. Freedom of expression will become a hobby horse of the pioneers of the Internet: on the network, everything must be able to be said, it is "forbidden to forbid"; it is up to everyone to show critical thinking, to filter and cross-check information. The initial exclusive use of the English language shows how monocultural these genes were... Twenty years later, a European research team introduced the World Wide Web, a web on which one can navigate by following links that connect information, wherever it is found. This application will complement the assets of the Internet, and will allow it to make its entrance at the beginning of the 1990s on the global political, economic, social and societal scene, and to eliminate competing industrial networks. Their pragmatism is finally well characterized by the famous statement: "We reject kings, presidents and votes. We believe in consensus and programs that work." We owe the success of the Internet to the good initial choices and the dynamics that resulted from them: the collaboration of tens of thousands of students, or volunteers, such as for example these hundreds of people who continually enrich online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia. In France, some had detected the promising young shoot, had seen in Arpanet a weak signal, bearer of the future. Unfortunately those who perceive are not those who decide, and those who proposed an approach modeled on the Internet were not followed: by sticking to technical economic arguments, or national independence, with Transpac then Teletel, and while scoring points in the short term, we chose to withdraw into our own backyard, and ignored the human springs that allowed the Internet to finally prevail. Over the years, the Internet has been a continuous creation that has been able to minimize the constraints of use. It offers powerful tools that are accessible to all, which has greatly benefited organizations that do not have significant financial means to communicate: the associative sector has thus been a major beneficiary, when it has been able to appropriate it. Today, the Internet has become a strategic tool for global solidarity, perhaps the source of a more participatory citizenship, even if we should not be naive: good and evil, narcissism and conviviality, order and disorder can be expressed there. Nevertheless, why not dedicate this fortieth anniversary to these very many passionate but obscure contributors, who, over the years, have devoted their free time, day and night, to weaving this Web, bringing it an element of structure, or content, filling it with their know-how and knowledge, animating it and imposing it as the tool of universal knowledge and communication. In recognition of this pioneering role, the user must be able to retain a right of inspection over the Net and its developments, of which he is a co-owner. At a time when the Internet is becoming an essential pillar of the organization of our society, when the development of a democratic culture on the Net could be threatened, and when their accessibility could be the pretext for profit-making companies to appropriate components of what until now was considered common goods, the Web must be recognized as a public good, and the freedom to access it as a fundamental right.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1155

The transfer of clean technologies from rich countries to those of the South is a key and taboo subject. Launched in Rio in 1992, it has been put into practice since Kyoto in 1997. Since then, there has been a fight over intellectual property rights. What is at stake? The matter is "crucial", according to a Brazilian negotiator. "Secondary", for a French diplomat. Maria Mutagamba, Minister of the Environment of Uganda: "These transfers are vital. We have sun, water, wind. But very few means to channel renewables. So, we cut down wood." She is irritated by the pressure from rich countries on the preservation of forests. "We have to survive. We need everything." The countries of the South make the climate a global public good. And ask for exceptions such as for access to medicines. "The comparison does not hold up," says Anne Chetaille, of Coordination Sud. There is no monopoly situation and many green technologies - apart from carbon capture and storage - are already in the public domain." But, "unlike medicines, notes a French expert, where duplication is possible on a fax and a physical formula, climate technology is expensive, even without a patent." Maria Mutagamba assures us: "We need solar, high-capacity wind turbines, biomass, 2nd generation biofuels. And we want there to finally be an international legal framework for this." Eight billion dollars per year feed the 1,500 clean development mechanisms (fewer than 30 projects go to Africa). "In the meantime," says Cheikh Ndiaye Sylla, a delegate, "we make do with the means at hand. We have just launched the construction of a coal-fired power station with Sweden. Problem: it does not meet European standards." Africa is not the issue, say the rich countries. The big emerging countries are. "China is already in the world's top 5 patenters of green technologies," laments a Canadian delegate. It is not necessarily the most technologically advanced. "The fact that China or India do not have 5-megawatt gigawind turbines like Vestas in Denmark is not a tragedy," sighs Brice Lalonde, French climate ambassador. If necessary, adds a European, "they will pirate them. We are not going to give away our companies' secrets!" The reality is more nuanced. "We could export coal-fired power stations with a 35% efficiency," notes a Frenchman. "The Chinese make 25% maximum." In any case, the companies are keeping a close eye on things. "More than 2,500 business delegates are on edge and are putting pressure on them so that the patents do not come out of the negotiations in tatters," says Yiorgos Vassalos, from the Corporate European Observatory network. How do we get out of this? "Not by suspending patent protection, as the Philippines, Indonesia and Bolivia dream of," rebuffs a German delegate. The G77 (133 developing countries) is campaigning for a multilateral fund for climate technologies, which could come out of Copenhagen. "The idea is to set up a patent pool with a source of funding to compensate for the loss of income for high-tech companies," notes an NGO expert. Offering clean technologies without paying royalties. With the risk of a new gas plant: who will fuel it? How? By how much? "We need at least 40 billion euros per year to develop and especially disseminate green technologies in the South," reminds Karine Gavand of Greenpeace. Money is lacking, and the aid plan of 10 billion per year until 2013 is not likely to reverse the situation. Developing countries are talking about doubling their public and private investments by 2012. Rich countries are talking about quadrupling them by 2020. This does not solve the problem of intellectual property rights, which will explode with the rise of green tech. As a result, other ideas are emerging. "We also want to create 5 regional centers for technological innovation," says an Indian. "We can also develop compulsory licenses, like what is done for medicines," believes Pedro Roffe, from the International Center for Trade and Sustainable Development. In France, the Center for Strategic Analysis (CAS) argued at the end of November for the copyleft model that applies in the world of free software (open source). "Example: the Eco-Patent Commons initiative launched in 2008 by the World Economic Council for Sustainable Development," notes the CAS. Since then, companies have joined the project and hundreds of ecotechnologies on "energy efficiency, wastewater treatment and recycling" have emerged. The future? Nnimmo Bassey, president of Friends of the Earth International, sees it this way: "If we want to get out of this, we have to put competition on hold. And talk about partnership, cooperation, solidarity. Otherwise, we will patent barbed wire to contain climate refugees."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1156

James Cameron has always had something of a Marxist about him: for him, everything is political. So when he tells us that Avatar "is a political commentary on the history of humanity", he is not making a special glance at the red Libération, he is stating the obvious that could apply to all his films. Avatar is political in a more frontal way than one could imagine, a very 21st century way, that is to say ecological. As chance would have it, we met James Cameron on the opening day of the Copenhagen summit, and he himself had not missed the objective coincidence: "Yes, it is a film about this feeling of the loss of nature that we all share today", he slips in between two remarks on the "culpable delay taken by the United States under the Bush administration" and "the universal conscience that is finally expressed today". The planet Pandora where Cameron takes us to plant his Avatar is a small, marvelous and literally heavenly Earth, where animal, plant and humanoid species live in a silky interlacing of symbiotic fluids. Pandora, to its great misfortune, is colonized by an earthly army that is especially after its magnificent mineral resources. The confrontation that will take place there, telluric, is that of industry against nature, of waste against sustainability, of respect against exploitation, of technological civilization against a harmonious and immaculate wild state. Since, perhaps, Kubrick's Eyes Wide Shut, no film has been as eagerly awaited as Avatar. It's probably Titanic's fault, since it earned Cameron the halo of the greatest success in the history of cinema: $1.8 billion in worldwide box office receipts. Not necessarily easy to wear, nor the best angle from which to be expected at the turn: how can you do better than that? Independence and financial autonomy Cameron himself is also to blame, who has never stopped presenting his new project from the angle of all the challenges: developing the exclusive camera capable of giving shape to his dream, bringing global exploitation into line to force the hand of 3D theater equipment, bringing an entire industry into digital harmony by announcing, well in advance, that his film would revolutionize the history of cinema techniques. As a result, we probably attribute more to James Cameron than he can assume: the "visionary of entertainment" remains a fallible artist, like all the others. But he is still capable of inventing both the economic system and the technological framework in which his cinema is possible. And he is probably the only one in this case. The only one to have allowed himself so much independence in his choices, autonomy in his finances and finally freedom, even if it is a freedom under pressure, proportional to the risks and investments. As for Avatar, the question remains whether Fox and Cameron can make money with a film based on an original and unknown story (whereas blockbusters derived from licenses like Harry Potter, Spider-Man or Twilight have a prior notoriety in their favor), a film that also does not have real Hollywood superstars - despite all our respect for Sigourney Weaver - and which will not be able to count, as in the past, on making a comeback thanks to a DVD market that is drying up. The film will need an exceptional attendance in theaters to be able to cover the costs, estimated at 500 million dollars, including around 200 million for marketing (or respectively 339 and 136 million euros, according to cross-checked and plausible figures, but not confirmed by the main parties concerned). Budgets or revenues of such a height, today, are not found in the rest of the film industry but in the video game industry, of which Cameron is also an excellent connoisseur. All categories of entertainment combined, it is indeed a game released a month ago, Call of Duty Modern Warfare 2, which holds the record for immediate profits with 550 million dollars collected in the first five days of its launch. Cameron is better aware than any other filmmaker that it is with such products that he now finds himself in competition. The refusal to compromise One of James Cameron's singularities, and probably the main reason for his dizzying rise, is due to an obsessive taste for perfection. On a set, behind the scenes, he controls everything, checks everything, masters everything. This character trait is common to most filmmakers, but this omnipotence assumed without complex by Cameron is as much in the financing aspect as in the choice of actors, the construction of ultra-sophisticated shooting equipment or, obviously, in the excellence of the special effects of which he supervises the smallest step. In this, Cameron has a family resemblance to Stanley Kubrick, whose film 2001: A Space Odyssey was both an adolescent shock and a revelation for the author of Titanic. Kubrick could wait years, or even abandon a project, if the conditions necessary for its realization were not met. The recent release of a book by Taschen reminded us that Kubrick finally abandoned the idea of making his Napoleon, a project that literally tormented him, in the absence of sufficient funding. This is even the reason why he founded his own company: to never again have to deal with studios, subject to chronic fickleness. Similarly, Kubrick preferred to indefinitely postpone his Artificial Intelligence, AI, project, because he was waiting for progress in robotics to be sufficiently advanced to entrust the main role to an authentic robot. Spielberg, less patient, did not have the same requirements. He went to get Haley Joel Osment, the leading man of The Sixth Sense, to direct AI. While the refusal to compromise seems to be the common characteristic of the two filmmakers, the fundamental difference between Kubrick and Cameron is that the latter generally gets his way. No other contemporary director, without a doubt, could have completed an enterprise like Titanic and, even more so, like Avatar. To complete Titanic, Cameron gave up his salary ($8 million) and put his royalties on the line. It was not the first time and, in Hollywood, everyone knows that money is not the right lever to make Cameron give in. When he directed the first Terminator, in 1984, he had put his last dollars into additional scenes, had given all the rights to the producer Gale Anne Hurd for a symbolic dollar and slept in his car. The story ended well since just after filming, he married the producer. For Avatar, the context is a little different. How can you refuse something to someone whose previous film broke all records? Nineteen weeks in a row at the top of the American box office, a DVD release while the film is still being released exclusively in theaters. Paramount, which was the exclusive distributor of Titanic (and which, for that, had contributed $65 million to the film's budget), even received countless requests from exhibitors for new copies because theirs were so worn out. In short, how can you say "no" to the director of Titanic? Sophistication and perfection Jon Landau, producer of Titanic and Avatar, carefully sidesteps the question, which is also a way of answering it. "We have to talk. I've known Jim for a long time and we've had countless arguments about budget and the feasibility of certain scenes. Like everyone else, he accepts compromises but only if he is absolutely convinced that it doesn't harm the story he wants to tell. Never otherwise. For example, when we made Titanic, the hydraulic system that tilted the ship was extremely expensive. The script called for three angles of tilt for specific shots. One flat, obviously, one of three degrees, and one of six degrees. Each of the installations cost a million dollars, and that was a big problem. Jim decided that we were going to do without the three-degree tilt. It was a compromise, a million-dollar compromise, that didn't jeopardize the coherence of the film or his own vision." In the case of Avatar, James Cameron's vision was intimately linked to the sophistication of computer-generated images. For nearly four years, alongside Hollywood technology master Vince Pace, Cameron developed the camera and digital technologies necessary for the film, at a development cost estimated at $14 million (9 million euros). He paid particular attention to motion capture shots, perfecting the system to achieve perfect realism of the Na'vis, these slender humanoid creatures, three meters tall, with blue and slightly striped skin. He did indeed succeed. Just as he had demanded, and obtained, the development of an underwater camera allowing shots in great depths. This machine, now used by underwater expeditions, was designed by James Cameron's brother, Mike, with the help of the manufacturer Panasonic. Just as he had pushed the engineers of his own company Digital Domain to their limits for this astonishing scene in Abyss, when a water tentacle penetrates the underwater station, taking on the physical appearance of those it meets. At that time, in 1989, no one had done that. Cameron himself was so unsure of the outcome that he wrote the script so that the scene could be cut without affecting the dramatic flow. "Don't get me wrong, if what I need already exists, I'd rather buy it than make it," Cameron says. "I don't do this for fun. But if it's necessary, then I'll do it. Besides, if I hadn't been a filmmaker, I probably would have chosen a career in science, as an engineer or in basic research." And he adds, giving back to the geek generations who made him king: "These tools that we have created are open source: they are available to everyone, for other films. I want everyone to take them and improve them, so that I too can benefit from more advanced technology when I make my next film." The filmmaker's intransigence remains legendary, however. A reputation as a dictator that has earned him some rather harsh score-settling with actors who were mistreated on set and especially with the technicians whom he never spares. Thus, when Kate Winslet swore by all the gods that she would never work with Cameron again because she had nearly drowned on the set of Titanic, the director remained very phlegmatic: "We let her believe that she was drowning, it's not the same thing. You can't take into account a few splashes... But the real question is: "Will Kate do a film with me?" And the answer is yes, certainly. She's a very talented actress." This reputation is not a legend. Starting his career with the king of tinkering, Roger Corman, in the 70s, Cameron commented on his first steps in the dream industry: "After three weeks, I had my own department [special effects, editor's note] and everyone who worked with me hated me." Two years later, Cameron made his first feature film, Piranhas 2, which he described as: "The best flying piranha film ever made..." Not only was the film a script disaster, but it was also a battleground between Cameron, hired just so that the credits would include an American name, and producer Ovidio G. Assonitis, a famous pheasant and notorious maker of trash. The shoot was a path of suffering and, towards the end, Cameron was thrown out like a dirty dog. The producer confiscated the reels, but Cameron obviously didn't see it that way. He went to Rome and sneaked into the studios at night to re-edit his film. The result was so catastrophic in any case that Cameron would never again speak of it except in a bitter joke. Stubborn as a mule In this conflictual register, the peak was reached on the set of Abyss. Actress Elisabeth Mastrantonio lived through, she would say, an ordeal. Fatigue, nervous tension, and Cameron's detestable relationship with the technical team invaded the entire set. Ed Harris later recounted that he was prey to inexplicable crying fits when he found himself alone. Mary Elisabeth Mastrantonio was on the verge of a nervous breakdown, frankly pointing to Cameron as the person responsible for this state. An incident lit the fuse. While the actress, traumatized by the idea of faking her own death, made a superhuman effort to shoot the scene, she left the set, swearing that she would never set foot there again. She would only learn a few hours later that the scene had to be reshot because there was not enough film in the store. As for the technicians, they had a range of T-shirts made with slogans as charming as "Son of Abyss" or, better still, "I can take anything, I worked with James Cameron." Ambiance. On the subject, Jon Landau has a little idea. "The truth is that Jim doesn't expect more from those who work with him than he expects from himself. Is he demanding? Yes, no doubt, but never without reason." He knows something about it. If there is a socio-professional category with which Cameron has regularly argued, it is that of the producers. As soon as Terminator was filmed, he got very angry with John Daly who wanted the film to end with the epic (and expensive) scene of the tanker truck explosion. "Fuck you. The film is not finished," James Cameron loudly replied in front of a group of petrified technicians. Not only did he shoot the ending he wanted, when the android dies crushed in a hydraulic press, but he still found a way to shoot additional scenes, on his own money, without the agreement of the production and even less that of the local authorities. For a day, he plays hide-and-seek with the police in the streets of Los Angeles with a camera and Arnold Schwarzenegger dressed in leather from head to toe. Cameron stubborn as a mule? Certainly, but not as caricatured as that, according to Jon Landau: "He always accepts all the good ideas, wherever they come from, from an actor, a technician and even a producer, that's saying something. This is probably one of the reasons why so many people, in the technical, the sets, the costumes have worked with him for so many years. The only thing you should never do with Jim is tell him that you don't agree without a very very good reason." It seems that no one had a valid reason to prevent him from taking four years of work on his Avatar. Landau confirms. "He managed, and I helped him a little, to convince people that this film needed that. In Hollywood, the norm is to run before you walk. We had the opportunity to learn to walk before we started running." In Avatar, it is the paraplegic hero Jake Sully who, at the beginning of the film, relearns to run once his human soul has been transplanted into a body of the indigenous Na'vi species. Despite its commotion and feverishness, this scene is one of the most moving in the film because it concentrates all of its complex, grandiose and ambiguous dream. It's a bit like James Cameron needed to design worlds and creatures that were definitively foreign and to experience their otherness as much as possible (a Terminator, blue aliens), to better reflect ourselves in their mirror. A complex dream In Avatar, the Na'vis are other selves, a projection, a metamorphosis, the simulacrum of a humanity that would have branched off differently, a hypothesis. James Cameron is like that himself. At once a Renaissance man who invents his tools and whose craftsmanship advances an entire industry and a worried filmmaker. At once a visionary and a petty tyrant for whom the end justifies the means. At once an affable guy and the sincere citizen of an ecological world that he calls for. Both aware of our impasses, which he brilliantly metaphorizes in Avatar, and hungry for expensive technologies. Both the last of the Hollywood classics and the first of the moderns of the digital age. Moreover, to resume the conversation with him where we had started it, Cameron reaffirms: "Yes, Avatar is a political commentary on ourselves. But it is above all entertainment!" We are all reassured.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1157

"I am delighted, on the occasion of my LeWeb conference, which will take place in Paris on December 9 and 10, to give you a brief summary of the different trends that are currently occurring in Silicon Valley, in San Francisco, where I moved two years ago. The first, and also the theme this year, will be the Web in real time." It was in a video and in his slightly arrogant style that, at the beginning of October, Loïc Le Meur presented the problem at the heart of his new conference (1). Today and tomorrow, in the premises of CentQuatre in Paris, 2,000 people from all over the world - entrepreneurs, business angels, venture capitalists, Internet companies and bloggers - will come to exchange, form partnerships and do business around the Web in real time. Symbolized by Twitter, this notion, in full mutation, designates both a new tool and a new form of immediate communication. The interest for the brands and services present at LeWeb 09 (including, of course, Seesmic, Le Meur's company) is that this "ecosystem" allows the creation of open and real-time communities. In addition to the debates "Twitter-Facebook, who will win the battle?" and "How will the giants Google, Microsoft and MySpace react?", we will also talk about mobility, the culture of free and micropayments. But let's talk about the star guests of this sixth edition. During five-minute speeches or during debates, the founders or directors Jack Dorsey (Twitter), Chad Hurley (YouTube), Marissa Meyer (Google), Jean-Philippe Courtois (Microsoft), Mike Jones (MySpace) will take turns, as well as star columnists Michael Arrington (TechCrunch) and Robert Scoble (Scobleizer), Her Majesty Rania of Jordan (why? Because she is very connected on the Internet, with more than a million subscribers to her Twitter account, specifies the organizer) and the American author and blogger Violet Blue, of OpenSource Sex, a famous podcast dedicated to sexuality. In addition, workshops are also planned (organized by Google, Facebook, PayPal and... Danone), a "DemoZone" to exhibit its new products or even a "start-up stage" which will see the applications developed by 1,200 start-ups compete in the hope of winning a nice crystal trophy. And above all, to be noticed by a potential financier. For latecomers, there are still a few tickets at 1,995 euros (yes, but for both days). And for those who are broke, all the conferences will be broadcast live on the Web. "One of the special features," explained the organizer on France Info on Monday, "is that we don't do any advertising. It's really word of mouth. It's organized a bit like a rave party." Holy Loïc. (1) To follow on leweb.net

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1158

According to economic theory, the price of innovative products, initially high because their manufacturer wants to recover their development costs as quickly as possible, falls as they are distributed. Robert Solow (Nobel Prize in Economics in 1987) demonstrated that the capacity of computers increased each year while remaining at a constant price, which allowed the productivity gains they bring to be rapidly distributed throughout the economy. But in reality, where the weight of social and political power relations weighs as much as the "laws of the market", this virtuous cycle does not necessarily hold true. First of all, innovative firms do everything they can to maintain their margins by conquering monopoly positions (Microsoft, Google), or by multiplying the functionalities - more or less useful - which allow them to justify maintaining high prices. For their part, the firms dominating the sectors threatened by the emergence of new entrants work to slow down their progress. The diffusion of innovations and their beneficial effects are delayed by this amount, because their prices remain high. As the economist Daniel Cohen shows in the report "Towards the emergence of new growth models" (October 2009), France's entry into the "knowledge economy" has been slowed down above all by the insufficiency of household income to acquire innovative products that have remained too expensive. The process will also be slow to move to a "sustainable" mode of production. The Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) has calculated that the average French consumer's basket includes 5 euros of eco-labeled products, 32 euros of organic products and 4 euros of fair trade products... per year! It is to correct these market distortions that the public authorities intervene, in two ways. On the one hand, it strives to lower the price of innovations by financially supporting research and by limiting monopolistic situations by providing aid to "innovative SMEs"; On the other hand, it tries to increase the price of obsolete technologies to influence the cost-benefit trade-off of economic agents. In the case of the transition to "green technologies", it is a question of reflecting in the price of products and services the cost of their impact on the environment (their "carbon content"). This is what is called the "price signal". There are two ways of issuing it. The first consists of creating a market where economic actors buy certificates or rights reflecting the "carbon content" of their activities. The most virtuous earn money by selling their rights to the least virtuous. In 2005, the European Union created such a market between the most polluting companies. But the limits appeared quite quickly. The price of carbon has undergone variations due more to investor speculation or pressure from industrial lobbies than to the real performance of companies. Above all, these remain very difficult to evaluate, which creates an asymmetry of information that is harmful to the market. This financialization leads a growing number of economists to prefer the other transmitter of the "price signal", taxation, which makes it possible to determine a fixed and predictable price and to more easily guide the choices of economic actors. But it increases the price of the most used goods and services, which is politically and socially delicate; unless there are alternatives that are both "decarbonized" and... cheap. Alternative models are therefore increasingly often put forward. That of free software offers a way of disseminating innovation that is free from market constraints; that of "compulsory licenses" allows States to have drugs manufactured without paying royalties to pharmaceutical laboratories in the event of a health crisis; that of public service innovation makes it possible to make available to the greatest number a tool deemed to be of collective interest by the State, like the Internet health service designed by the British National Health Service...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1159

OTTAWA - (QMI Agency) The Canadian government could save up to $18 million a year by using Open Office software instead of dealing with its usual suppliers who require licensing fees for their software, according to a Public Works and Government Services Canada document obtained by researcher Ken Rubin under the Access to Information Act. Ottawa spent about $90 million over a five-year period to obtain the rights to use software from Microsoft, Corel and IBM. However, the federal government could save money by using open source software, it is argued. Open Office, for example, offers word processing, electronic calculation and graphics software, and is considered secure. Open source software This document is part of a federal government initiative to use open source software. The Treasury Board website mentions this, noting that Canada appears to have some catching up to do in this area. Open source software is software that can be obtained for free by downloading it. The user normally has the right to copy, distribute, or modify the software as they wish.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1160

(MAG) The LinuQ group held a day yesterday to promote the Linux operating system and the world of free software. Interested people were able to install, completely free of charge, the system that replaces the classic Windows or Mac OS, sometimes even coexisting with these two giants, while offering impressive stability and reliability. Other activities of the same type take place during the year and are listed at www.agendadulibre.qc.ca.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1161

For the past four years, Poitiers has hosted a cutting-edge international festival at the crossroads of art and programming, for all lovers of lines of code. Make Art strives to popularize practices in digital arts and the philosophy of free software. This new edition, entitled What the Fork?, uses a computer metaphor (fork means fork) to promote a decentralized way of working. "Copy, patch, improve, experiment, change direction, inspire! Forking is not just about hacks, but about creating a space for experimentation," explain the organizers. On the program: exhibitions, concerts, creative programming, presentations (not to be missed are British artists Simon Yuill, Wayne Clement, Foocorp, etc.), and above all the opportunity to get your hands dirty during workshops. Make Art from December 8 to 13 in Poitiers. http://makeart.goto10.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1162

Brussels blocks Oracle COMPETITION According to Bloomberg, Brussels could block Oracle's $7.4 billion acquisition of Sun. The Commission's concerns relate to MySQL, a Swedish subsidiary of Sun that the Commission says could be eliminated by Oracle because it competes with its products. Oracle would then have "total control" over the source code and intellectual property, the Commission worries. If Oracle and Sun are merged, it would make it the world's second-largest enterprise software publisher, behind IBM. Oracle CEO Larry Ellison said the delay requested by the Commission to conduct its investigation is costing Sun $100 million per month. He said the Commission's objections reveal a "profound misunderstanding" of competition in databases and the dynamics of open source. On Friday, Oracle asked the European Commission for an additional week to complete its file. According to the Commission, this delay would bring the end of the investigation to January 27.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1163

"I draw Xkcd, an online comic strip about stick figures who do math, play with staplers, have fun on the Internet, and have a lot of sex. About three-quarters of it is autobiographical." So confided Randall Munroe, the author of Xkcd, one of the most famous comic strips on the Internet and a reference for the so-called geek population, to the New Yorker. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at midnight, he publishes a drawing. A reflection or an anecdote about life. About love as well as the game Guitar Hero. About death as well as the free software guru Richard Stallman. One day in September 2005, when he was 22 and a robotics consultant for NASA, Munroe came across the drawings and scribbles he had covered his math class notes with. He decided to scan them and put them online. Given the success of the site, he decided to "get more serious about drawing." In a few months, the cult was born. Today, Xkcd.com receives up to 500,000 visitors per day, and supports three people. Xkcd is not an acronym. Munroe is amused by this choice, which represents nothing more than four characters. Xkcd is a few boxes, characters sketched very simply, most often in black and white. It is a tone, sometimes sarcastic, sometimes tender, often absurd and funny. And it is a range of themes: Facebook, velociraptor attacks, sex, Wikipedia, fractals, sudoku or Ninja turtles. Most of the references are understandable to everyone. Such as the "Scrabble" board. In the image: a game of the famous game in subjective view. On the board, two letters placed: "MI." In the narrator's hands: "CLTORIS." In the comments: "It always happens to me when I play Scrabble with my family." Published under the Creative Commons 2.5 license (which authorizes the duplication and remix of a work for non-commercial purposes), Munroe's boards are translated voluntarily by fans around the world. There are (unofficial) versions in Spanish, Russian, and German. And in French too: Philippe Gambette had the idea of developing a collaborative interface. Anyone can propose a translation, moderators validate it and 98% of the boards are available. Xkcd has just had its ultimate consecration. On the American site Wired, blogger Matt Blum published "The 10 Geek Laws That Should Exist But Don't." And Munroe's law ranks number 1: "In a geek debate, the one who can cite Xkcd to support his position automatically wins." http://xkcd.com In French: http://xkcd.free.fr

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1164

Whether you're new to the Mac world or not, everyone wants good software that lets you do everything you want for free, right? The OpenSource Mac site offers a list of software for chatting, transferring files, playing videos, editing photos, and more. The software is "free", meaning it's developed by a community that works hard to make everything work as well (if not better!) than commercial software. The site is in English, but most of the software on the site can be installed in French. opensourcemac.org

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Whether you're new to the Mac world or not, everyone wants good software that lets you do everything you want for free, right? The OpenSource Mac site offers a list of software for chatting, transferring files, playing videos, editing photos and much more. The software is "free", meaning it's developed by a community that works hard to make everything work as well (if not better!) than commercial software. The site is in English, but most of the software on the site can be installed in French.opensourcemac.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1166

All over the world, Internet users celebrated the fifth anniversary of the Firefox browser this week. A look back at a software that changed the web. Five years ago, everything suggested that Microsoft had won the web browser war. About 95% of those who accessed the Internet did so by clicking on the Internet Explorer icon. Microsoft's software had soundly beaten its competitor Netscape, which had dominated the market until the end of the 90s. In the shadows, however, a project was taking shape that would reignite the war. The Mozilla Foundation was working on the design of a new browser. First called Phoenix, then Firebird, the first version of the browser was released on November 9, 2004 under the name Mozilla Firefox. Its main feature: the project is "free". Thousands of programmers from all over the world collaborated on its development. All have access to the code and can modify it. As early as 2005, the specialist magazine Wired was raving about it. "The Firefox browser is an impressive piece of software. It's easy to use, easy to look at and more secure than Internet Explorer." Firefox had just dug up the hatchet. Since Firefox's arrival, Internet Explorer's market share has gradually eroded. According to the most recent data compiled by the firm Net Applications, nearly a quarter of Internet users now use Firefox to go on the web. Five years after adopting the browser, the president of Île sans fil is still enthusiastic. "We were stuck with Internet Explorer for years. Firefox relaunched the market and Internet Explorer was forced to adapt. That's why we have a richer web today," says Laurent Maisonnave, also an Internet marketing consultant. Firefox claims 330 million active users. The software has been downloaded more than a billion times. Free software advocates are pleased that this project has rallied so many Internet users. "Firefox is exemplary in terms of organization because it is a non-profit foundation. It is an extraordinary technological platform because it runs on Windows, Linux and Mac. It was a huge gamble, which has paid off. Now, we can say that it is the leader," says Cyrille Béraud, president of the Association for the Collective Appropriation of Free Computing (FACIL). Laurent Maisonnave believes that Firefox has brought credibility to all free software. "Before, we used to say that free software was something that geeks developed in their corner, that didn't work in companies or at home. Mozilla has demonstrated, with marketing worthy of a large company, that free software is just as good, if not better, than proprietary software." The Mozilla Foundation, which oversees the development of Firefox, plans to release version 4.0 of the browser in a year. In addition to Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Apple's Safari browsers, Firefox now has to face competition from Google, which launched its own browser, Chrome, in September 2008. Competition that Laurent Maisonnave sees favorably. "Today we have much more choice. There is diversity, there is competition, there is more supply. Everyone is happy. The web is much richer and it is very much appreciated by users."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1167

Five years after its launch on November 9, 2004, the Firefox browser is used by one in four Internet users worldwide. At the expense of the American computer giant Microsoft and its Internet Explorer, which has lost its monopoly on this niche of software for connecting to the Internet and displaying Web pages on a computer. How did Mozilla, the publisher of Firefox, a non-profit foundation created by a handful of unemployed computer scientists, achieve such a feat? First, thanks to the qualities of Firefox. From the first version, the reception was enthusiastic: the software was considered much faster and more secure than Internet Explorer. It offers new functions, including "tabbed browsing" allowing you to keep all the websites open in the form of tabs in a single window. And a multitude of additional functions (7,000 to date) that can be added to the browser (Google search bar, messaging, etc.), to customize it endlessly. The fact that Firefox is free software - anyone can access its lines of code - explains these qualities. The founders of Mozilla, pioneers of navigation, in fact chose to call on the global community of developers so that, on a voluntary basis, they could contribute to the "core" of the browser that they wanted to improve. This core came from the company Netscape, for which they had worked but which was knocked out by Microsoft in the late 1990s, when the computer giant decided to distribute Internet Explorer for free, while Netscape was paid. As a result, thousands of computer scientists, passionate about free software and often anti-Microsoft, began working on the project in addition to their usual activities. "Firefox is divided into modules. Each module has its "expert" chosen by his peers, responsible for coordinating its improvements. There are about a hundred of them and they work with up to 1,000 contributors, who write lines of code. Between 10,000 and 20,000 others are testing these lines almost live," explains Tristan Nitot, President of Mozilla Europe. The lack of involvement of Microsoft's teams in Internet Explorer has also left the field open to Firefox: "After killing Netscape, at one point, they even redeployed their teams to write the Vista operating system," assures Mr. Nitot. The competition is waking up But the situation is changing. Of course, Firefox's audience could still grow: Windows 7, Microsoft's new operating system, offers not only Internet Explorer but also its competitors by default. It will therefore no longer be necessary to go to the Firefox website to download the browser. However, the competition has woken up. Microsoft has started working on its tool again. And the online search giant Google, although a partner of Firefox (it pays the browser for the traffic that the latter sends it), launched a competing browser in 2008, Chrome, which already captures between 2% and 3% of the audience. "The browser is increasingly strategic: it is the first gateway to the Internet and it now allows applications (spreadsheets, messaging, word processing) to be run without going through the operating system of the machines. That is why Google is getting involved," according to Laurent Geffroy, of Greenwich Consulting. "What the Google teams want above all is to counter Microsoft. They believe that Internet Explorer, because of its technical limitations, is holding them back: Internet users who arrive at their engine via Microsoft's tool cannot benefit from all their innovations," believes Mr. Nitot.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1168

French researcher Francis Muguet was found dead on Wednesday, October 14, in his Paris apartment, probably the victim of a heart attack. Born on April 30, 1955 in Paris, he was a doctor of science from the University of Texas and a law graduate. From 1993 to 2009, he was a researcher at the Ecole nationale supérieure des techniques supérieures (Ensta). In cooperation with Richard Stallman, a major figure in free software, Francis Muguet developed the concept of "global patronage" in 2009. This mechanism for financing creation on the Internet, designed to counter the mechanism of what would become the Hadopi law, proposed to facilitate donations from Internet users to artists, rather than repress illegal downloading. A society for the acceptance and distribution of donations (SARD), adopting the principles of global patronage, was created in September. Very involved in Internet governance, Francis Muguet also proposed technical solutions to open the domain name system to more competition. This system, which allows the unique numbers of computers' IP addresses to be associated with the known nominative addresses of Internet users, is managed by ICANN, an American organization. Francis Muguet tested the viability of his research with the International Telecommunications Union in Geneva, and as a privately funded research director at the University of Geneva. Chairman of the civil society working group on scientific information, and coordinator of the group on patents, trademarks and copyright at the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva (December 2003), then in Tunis (November 2005), he managed to have free access to scientific information included in the document. Committed to multilingualism on the Internet, he was also active in the Global Network for Linguistic Diversity. In France, he was one of the 40 co-founders of the French Internet Society. Laurent Checola

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## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1170

Users of Druide informatique's linguistic suite, Antidote, will not be lost in the interface of this tool when switching from the RX version to the HD version. While the mechanics have been greatly improved, the interface has simply been reworked to make room for the new functions. The first interesting element is the ability to directly correct a single word or sentence in the corrector interface. The correction tool works quickly and efficiently on both Mac and PC with word processing software such as those in the Microsoft Office suite, or page layout software such as Quark or InDesing, or even free software such as Open Office and Neo Office, even with the Explorer and Firefox browsers. "anti-OOPS!" The "Anti-Oups!" technology, for the main email software, works very well with Mail software on Mac or Outlook on PC. On the other hand, with Entourage for Mac, I did not have conclusive results. In addition to the function of correcting messages before sending, Antidote adds this famous "Anti-Oups!" to avoid forgetting the attachment. This is a brilliant idea. Another interesting element comes with the consultation of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia to learn more about a concept, a word or an idea. Druide puts the warning that it is not responsible for the online content. This is perfect, because we cannot validate beyond any doubt what is written by Internet users in Wikipedia. This gives an interesting additional avenue of exploration, especially since the consultation is done directly in the Antidote interface. As with the direct correction in the interface, the consultation of Wikipedia is done without leaving the software. Another very good idea. Among the other new features, there is the performance of the filters of the analysis "prism", the addition of the historical guide which gives the evolution of a word over time with the etymology of 90,000 words. At the same time, there is a new dictionary of 6000 illustrations of the Visuel nano dictionary, but you can integrate the Dictionnaire visuel de Québec Amérique by purchasing the module on the Druide website. Antidote HD deserves an excellent rating for its qualities and ease of use in all linguistic sauces. The software works in Mac, Linux and PC environments. Cost of the update: $70. The full version on DVD sells for $130. Rating: 5 stars ytherrien@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1171

Who has never scribbled some practical information on a city map? A cross to indicate the exact location of their home, an arrow for the recently created one-way streets, or the layout of new escape routes. What if all these precious details, added by everyone, were grouped together on a single map that would be distributed free of charge... This already exists online, for example with Google Maps, which Internet users can complete as they wish, provided that they do not use it for commercial purposes. Similarly, the GPS manufacturer TomTom "asks its users to update the database," observes Thierry Joliveau, a geographer at the University of Saint-Etienne (Loire). The updating technique is used in countries where maps remain imprecise and addresses imperfect. For example, in Beirut, Lebanon, the map publisher Zawarib suggests that residents report changes to the road network or the appearance of new visual landmarks, such as stores. The main cartographic project based on user contributions remains OpenStreetMap. Created in 2006 in the United Kingdom, this geographic database functions as a "Wikipedia of the map", with everyone being required to modify, clarify, or even invalidate a base map available online. The document, more or less detailed depending on the cities and countries depending on the assiduity of local Internet users, is not the prettiest map, but it has the advantage of being, like free software, usable without restriction. Nicolas Dumoulin, 30, a computer scientist in Aubière (Puy-de-Dôme), in the suburbs of Clermont-Ferrand, regularly completes the database of the French version by adding the location of glass recycling containers, pharmacies or mailboxes in his town. "The printed maps distributed by town halls are rarely complete and stop at the boundaries of the towns", he notes. While some "mappers" - as they call themselves - use their GPS to position a road or path, others, on returning from a walk, point out public toilets, cafes connected to a Wi-Fi access point or the names given to buildings within a residence or university, data that is essential to pedestrians but which does not appear on any map. Anyone can take part in the project, provided they are computer literate and accept the endless online discussions about whether or not to invent a new symbol to materialize roads in poor condition, for example. In practice, most contributors are men, students or thirty-somethings, computer scientists and activists for free software. "There are also a lot of sportsmen, hiking enthusiasts," observes Mr. Dumoulin. They all meet up for "mapping parties", literally "mapping campaigns" that last a day and consist, sometimes with the encouragement of a local authority, in covering an area as best they can. At the same time, the services of certain States make data available to OpenStreetMap. It includes American geographical surveys or the French land register, but not the database of the National Geographic Institute (IGN) which jealously guards its data. Contributors for their part refrain from copying elements, even the most basic, found on commercial maps. "You have to base yourself on observations on the ground", argues Guillaume Allègre, 35, a mapper in Grenoble (Isère) for a few months. "Sometimes, existing maps are misleading", he observes. Initially designed to help motorists find their way, OpenStreetMap could be useful for cyclists, as explained by Pascal Rigaux, in his twenties, a Parisian activist for the association Mieux se déplacement à bicyclette. "A detailed plan, including cycle paths, impassable streets or dangerous places, such as the Concorde, makes it possible to produce a reliable itinerary. The tool has great potential," he assures. "Ultimately, thanks to the combination of geolocation and human contributions," specifies Thierry Joliveau, "we will be able to locate ourselves from the screen of our mobile phone and do without the map. This abstract and complex object will once again become a tool for maniacs," adds the geographer.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1172

Berardo Carboni, Italian filmmaker and author of the controversial film Shooting Silvio (where the hero wants to assassinate the media tycoon Berlusconi) has just finished his machinima feature film VolaVola, which will be previewed at the Géode next Monday as part of the Atopic festival. He tells us about the shooting. How did this project start? I thought I would make a traditional film about virtual worlds and compare the way the Internet generation lives with previous generations. Then I read Mario Gerosa's book on Second Life, called him up and that was it. Why did you choose machinima? At first, I thought I would use machinima to make an animated storyboard for a traditional "in real life" film. The resulting machinima was much more exciting than I had hoped. I ended up considering it a film in its own right. Where was it shot? The film was shot entirely in Second Life for two reasons. I fell in love with some of the characters Gerosa described in his book. And Second Life is the persistent world that gives the most possibilities for invention and interaction with the creativity of other residents. How does filming in a virtual world work? Mario introduced me to some famous avatars and programmers. With the help of Fau Ferdinand, I started casting the "cast" and crew for the film. By the end, I had assembled a group of twenty avatar-actors and a team of ten technical artists from around the world. We were all together on Second Life for eight months full-time. We had our own virtual island where most of the sets were built for the film by Stella Costello. We also used pre-existing locations by asking the owners' permission to film there. Stella also made most of the props and we bought some from Second Life stores. Same for the costumes and avatar designs (made by Honey Fairweather) and for the animations programmed by Medhue Simoni. All the shooting and choice of locations were done according to the needs of the story. I worked with Evo Szuyuan who did the “machinimatrography” [which is similar to the role of the director of photography in a classic film, editor’s note]. What was your experience as a director? It was strange. I am used to directing a film in the real world, but in the virtual world I was a total noob, which made my task difficult. But I had a wonderful team who fully invested themselves and worked with passion. During the shooting, there were even love stories between some avatars: on the last day, one of them was crying and another told me that it was the most beautiful and important experience of his life. Technically, everything was done with the tools provided by Second Life, although we added some visual effects in post-production. The camera work was done by Evo with a special joystick. He was sitting next to me, so I knew exactly what we were shooting and it was easy to give directions. We were also lucky enough to use lipsync [lip synchronization] developed by the Second Life open source community before it was even available in the official tools. Is this machinima just the first step of the project? We will shoot another version of VolaVola in the real world in 2010. The scenario will be slightly different and will take place in Rome and Sicily. Shooting two films with the same scenario was the original idea. The second film will be more of a "mixed reality" film, because it will also incorporate scenes shot in Second Life. I am also thinking about using augmented reality techniques, allowing an avatar to move from the virtual world to the physical world. What do you think of machinima as a cinematographic technique? I think machinima is an opportunity for the future of animation. The possibilities are incredible, it is very cheap. I think we can go much further, make a kind of new interactive films. Something that can't be reduced to animation or traditional cinema. The biggest limitation for now is the animations, the movements of the avatars, their facial expressions. It's still difficult to convey an emotion, but it will probably improve very quickly.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1173

"Fouquet's, here we come!" Tonight, the restaurant on the Champs-Elysées, symbol of Nicolas Sarkozy's election, is hosting the release of the book La Bataille Hadopi. Some forty personalities (politicians, teachers, lawyers, journalists, artists, sociologists, etc.) are returning "to the epic of a law that mobilized all citizens around the problem and the future of the dissemination of works and freedoms on the Internet." Among them, Jacques Attali, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Richard M. Stallman and Jérôme Bourreau-Guggenheim, who intend to fight against "a company that controls Internet techniques and uses." Published by InLibroVeritas, under a free license, the book will be available this evening as a free download (1) and sold, printed, in three versions at 9, 19 and 49 euros. (1) inlibroveritas.net/la-bataille-hadopi.html

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1174

Quebec, a city open... to free software? The idea did not come from Mayor Régis Labeaume or his opponents, but those who campaign in favor of free software are asking candidates to take a first step in this direction by signing the "Free Software Pact". Others have already done so. Projet Montréal, the party led by Richard Bergeron, has already adopted two resolutions at its convention to make Montreal the "free software capital of North America", and to favor free software and open standards during calls for tenders and software renewals, which is what the pact recommends. The cities of Nanaimo, Toronto, Washington DC, San Francisco and more recently Vancouver are no longer at the stage of intentions. They have adopted open motions by which they commit to making their databases accessible to citizens wherever possible, to adopting open standards and to using free software as a matter of law. The Association for the Collective Appropriation of Free Software (FACIL) is demanding nothing less than a similar commitment from candidates in the Quebec City elections. "In a context of economic crisis where the question of favouring local purchasing keeps coming up, we want to remind people that using free software creates jobs locally and strengthens the competitiveness of Quebec businesses," says Cyrille Béraud, president of FACIL. "We want to make elected officials aware that using Microsoft or Apple products is not neutral for the community, even if they are all quality products." delay While other large Canadian cities have come out in favour of free software, Cyrille Béraud is concerned about the delays taken by Quebec municipalities in terms of electronic administration. "We think it has an impact on democratic life," he says. He gives the example of the scandals that have rocked the Montreal administration. These are often cases related to administrative management, he observes. New technologies put enormous power in the hands of managers, but the use of open standards and free software, as well as public access to data, will make municipal management much more transparent, he says. "Each project could be built as a collaborative project thanks to the Internet. We could create a forum, access the complete file, the financial impacts, ask citizens to participate. The municipal council could even allow citizens to participate via the Internet. This is already happening in some European countries." passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1175

London Special Envoy - Hosted by the London Film Festival, the "Power to the Pixel" forum brought together for the third consecutive year professionals in "transmedia", this nebula of audiovisual projects, often interactive, available on all sorts of media, from the cinema to the mobile phone, and which have proliferated since the advent of Internet 2.0. In their most accomplished form, which is now whetting the appetites of broadcasters (whether it be Orange's Transmedia Lab or Michel Reilhac, the director of Arte France cinema), these projects have a name: ARG (Alternate Reality Games). Swedish producer Martin Elricsson presented The Truth about Marika, an ARG designed in response to a TV series inspired by the true story of a young Swedish woman who disappeared. It follows the investigation led by the "real" best friend of the missing person, in this case a "ractrice" (interactive actress) who goes looking for her in bars, rock concerts, political meetings... On the Internet, she publishes videos, collects advice from Internet users, and even meets those who want to in the real world. In theory, these ARGs have advantages: the possibility of building an audience upstream through viral communication, of multiplying sources of income with the different media. In practice, the first episode of Breathe, the only ARG shown as part of the forum, demonstrated the dangers of thinking about broadcasting without questioning the staging - which was, in this case, discouragingly poor. This is not the least flaw of these projects, whose authors, even if they know how to film, are often their own distributors. The boundary between the creative process and commercial considerations is therefore very porous. Beyond these funny games, transmedia has proven to be a formidable promotional tool for traditional cinema. Australian Nina Paley explained why and how she chose to distribute her animated film Sita Sings the Blues as free software, that is, for free, in theaters as well as on television or on the Internet, and how she earned more money than with the offer that a distributor was willing to make her. "The more your film is seen, the more people are willing to support you by buying T-shirts or limited edition DVDs," she insists. "Those who have distributed the film sometimes offer me money, but in the form of support, not as remuneration for copyright. » Another example is the environmental documentary The Age of Stupid, which was the subject of a unique screening on September 21 in some sixty countries, with live broadcast from the "green carpet" in New York, of interventions by Moby, Thom Yorke (Radiohead), and Kofi Annan, among others. Respectively director and producer of the film, Franny Armstrong and Lizzie Gillett have shown that this type of event promotes the distribution of films on television, DVD and the Internet. The Age of Stupid can now be viewed by anyone, thanks to an interface that calculates the rental price based on the nationality and status of the renter, and the number of spectators expected for the screening. At a time when the distribution sector is more devastated than ever, these two initiatives outline two stimulating paths for rethinking the distribution of independent cinema.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1176

Usually, when you go to an event about free software, you end up with a horde of seasoned computer scientists helping beginners install a free system in a very coca-rillettes-laptops atmosphere. So, when you read the address of the Open World Forum, avenue George-V in Paris, a stone's throw from the Champs-Elysées, there is a hint of change. In the opulent premises of the Eurosites George-V, conferences and meetings on the theme of free software were held at the end of last week, but in a suit and tie version. A version that talks about turnover rather than lines of code. Jean-Noël de Galzain, president of the Open World Forum, assumes: "It's an international event in a central location in Paris. We also want to prove that the free economy is an economy of the future, which is still only in its infancy." The program includes workshops, round tables and many informal meetings. "We also want to put SMEs and investors in touch," explains Jean-Noël de Galzain. But today's start-ups have little in common with those of 1999. It's a bit like the speculative Internet bubble had given way to a more sustainable software economy. This is because free software, with its philosophy and rules, is based on innovation, more than on the hope of big profits in the short term. If free software is attractive, it's because it offers obvious advantages. For users, it's the reasonable cost of access to the software used (which is not necessarily all free), but above all the assurance of constant evolution to remain technologically at the forefront. On the software publishers' side, it can also be tempting. They may lose out on the price of their licenses, but they gain more loyal users and, above all, access to a community capable of investing in technical improvements and in communicating about the products. One wonders why there are still proprietary software... "It's not as simple as that," says Andrew Aitken, co-founder of Olliance, a company specializing in the transition to free systems. There are a few precise rules to follow if you hope to be able to move to open source. First, you have to meet a real need, otherwise, no one will be interested. Then you have to build a community, which is probably the hardest part. Finally, you have to continue to innovate constantly. If these conditions are not met, it can be very dangerous to abandon the proprietary model." And when he explains, methodologically, the very concrete solutions for creating a community around an IT solution, we feel that the ideals that motivated the pioneers of free software are far away. Is it really free software, anyway? Andrew Aitken admits: "When I'm facing a client, I prefer to use the word open-source." Historical reminder. The free software movement comes from the GNU project, launched by Richard Stallman in the early 80s, which defined the four fundamental freedoms: being able to run the software, study it, distribute it and redistribute modified versions. This movement has allowed the emergence and development of ambitious projects, in particular because the developers who get involved in it know that they are working for the common good. We can cite Linux, which today allows a large part of Internet servers to run, including those of Google, Firefox - the Internet browser - or Gimp, an alternative to Photoshop software. But for some, the strict rules of Stallman's version of free software limit the economic viability of the whole. At the end of the 90s, we see the emergence of the open-source movement, which keeps a good part of the original philosophy (notably the opening of the code), but by softening it to make the whole thing more pragmatic. A compromise that divides a lot within the free community. In the large room on the ground floor, it's buffet time. Between the appetizers, the discussions are lively. We talk about the economic model, the flourishing future and necessary investments. In one corner, we find, at the Canonical stand, the members of the Ubuntu-fr community, who animate everything that happens around the free system in France. They do this in their free time and don't have much to do with the emerging economy, which is today at the center of the debates. They are in T-shirts. "It's not bad that this kind of event takes place, it gives a certain legitimacy and visibility to the movement, confides Frédéric, from Ubuntu-fr. But we're also here to remind them that without the guys in the T-shirts, they wouldn't be here talking business."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1177

Mark Shuttleworth is the president of Canonical, which he founded in 2004. He is behind the Ubuntu distribution, which, among other things, tries to get the general public to use the free Linux system. He made his fortune by selling his company specializing in computer security for the sum of 575 million dollars (392 million euros) in 1999. In 2002, he was the second "space tourist" and spent a week aboard the international ISS. Since his return to Earth, he has embarked on an ambitious and slightly crazy adventure: to offer a free, and above all attractive, alternative to Windows. Why did you decide to embark on the Ubuntu adventure? For me, it is the convergence of three interests. I am interested in economics, societal issues and technology. Free software represents the software part of a major change in society. A change due to the fact that people are now connected to each other. Connected by voice, but also in their work, in their ideas, in their thinking. And these connections cause a disruption in the economy, in politics, in civil society, in content... Which makes the music industry evolve, the encyclopedia industry, the knowledge industry, the education industry. In the free software community, we call on people who can be anywhere in the world. Passionate, enthusiastic and experts in a particular field. We allow them to collaborate to create a product that corresponds to their expertise. It could be the Firefox browser, the Linux kernel or the MySQL database. What Ubuntu allows is to bring together all of this expertise and make it available for use by anyone. It amplifies the impact of each of these groups. It's interesting, because we have the means to transform the software industry. It's a gigantic industry. Canonical doesn't have the ambition to replace Microsoft, but I think we can succeed in creating a new model. That's really exciting. For me, I'm in a privileged position where I can choose which challenges I want to take on. So I've taken on the hardest one of all, which is also the most ambitious. If I fail, at least I'll have had the satisfaction of having tried. If I succeed, I can be happy that I've had an impact on this evolution. It seems a bit utopian... Some of what we do is certainly utopian, but we're also very pragmatic. For example, we're not fundamentalists about software licensing. We work every day with proprietary software developers, like Oracle or IBM. We would even be happy to work with Microsoft if there was a constructive way for us to do it. We're not just driven by an ideology, we also have an economic ambition. Canonical is not profitable right now, but I think we're going to get there. In terms of social change, maybe it was a pipe dream five years ago when we started, but today I see these changes happening all around me. I see the impact of what we're doing. It's not a pipe dream anymore. How does a free software economy work? If you look at the software economy, part of it is based on licenses, on selling the right to use software. Canonical didn't write most of the code that's used in Ubuntu. It's written in Firefox, in MySQL, etc. We're not going to charge for that code! But another part of this industry is based on expertise and experience. So our business model is based on services. Part of those services are provided online, part of them are provided in person. So we help institutions or companies that want to use Ubuntu. But if a company has this expertise in-house and they don't need us, they have no reason to pay us. What about the general public? If we want to change the way people think about the software world, we have to change the software they use. The experts, the people who run data centers, for example, are already convinced, they use Linux every day. What I want to do is change the way people who are not experts think about it, which is why it is so important to get to personal computers. Is that the goal in the next few years? In a few years, I want to be able to walk into a store and see computers that are sold with Ubuntu next to those that are sold with Windows. I would like the average consumer to take some time to think about the system they want and sometimes choose Ubuntu, because of what the software offers. I would like to play a role in the emergence of an operating system that is so easy and so enjoyable to use that everyone would want to try it. Not because it's the cheapest platform; not because it's recommended by experts; not because it's secure, but because it's beautiful and exciting. It has to be the future of software that people want to use. Then, we have to grow the business side of Canonical by offering services to governments and large organizations. Finally, I mostly want to have fun, to do what I love to do. With all that, I have plenty to keep me busy. Listening to you, it seems like free software is a grassroots movement and that the fight is almost won... If I were sure that free software was going to win, I wouldn't spend so much time working on it. Because it could win without me. What I am sure of is that it's a fun fight and that it is possible to win. Free software offers such value, such innovation, that there are real reasons for people to choose it. And I believe I can make a difference in that regard.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1178

Already available for Android smartphones (an open source operating system designed by Google, free and open to all manufacturers or operators) and on Apple iPhones, applications allow you to display the streets you have visited on your mobile phone screen, with all the information concerning the real estate market superimposed: two rooms for sale, studio for rent, such and such surface area, such and such price, etc. The first to date, the Meilleursagents.com (photo) and Seloger.com applications are currently sharing this fledgling market.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1179

It was as I dropped off my suitcase at home today that I realized how far I had come in the past week. A world tour that I was taking part in from Shenyang, China, as part of the 5th Internet and Multimedia Summit (IMMS). An event organized by the International Federation of Multimedia Associations and the Shenyang municipal government, under the auspices of the Chinese government and the United Nations. A virtual world tour organized by the president of FIAM, Hervé Fischer, who wanted to provide the participants, mostly Chinese, with an overview of the planet in terms of government and commercial projects as well as the use of the Internet and multimedia, particularly in the context of video games, mobility and digital production as a whole. Three days of presentations to illustrate the dynamism in these areas, despite an economic crisis that has affected all continents. Cooperation was discussed, particularly with the presence of Commonwealth and Francophonie organizations. The latter was particularly notable for its plea for global investment in free software. The participants of the meeting saw the digital efforts of the two linguistic organizations, but also their lack of consultation. A situation that could change in light of the discussions undertaken between the representatives of the organizations in Shenyang. The role of the UN Many UN agencies had also made the trip to present their direct interventions on the ground in terms of computerization of NGOs and the populations served by them throughout the planet. Political initiatives, but also concrete programs to ensure that populations can benefit from the possibilities of digital technology on the economic, social and educational levels and avoid too great a digital divide. The SMIM 2009 was also marked by the theme of innovation in the multimedia and creative design industries with many presentations that clearly illustrate the Chinese desire to move from the famous "made in China" to "created in China". And in this sense, the presentations by Quebecers Denys Tremblay, from the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi and the NAD Centre, as well as that of Luc Couchesne, from the SAT, illustrated the know-how and the desire for collaboration between these Quebec institutions and the new Chinese digital industry. Moreover, holding this summit in Shenyang was no coincidence. The city of 7 million inhabitants, 30 million with its suburbs, is seeking to develop a new sector of expertise. The fourth largest city in China, recognized until now as a major industrial and manufacturing zone in China, this northeastern city wants to fully embark on the digital era and is taking drastic measures to do so, by creating a vast digital industrial park to accommodate new Chinese creative companies, but also to welcome international partners. Investing in China In this context, the presentation by the Chinese head of the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec was appropriate, while Patrice Dallaire, the former delegate general of Québec in Beijing, confirmed to Chinese representatives Québec's interest in investing more than a billion dollars in China, particularly in the real estate sector. A way to continue Québec's presence in China that began under the administration of Lucien Bouchard and Bernard Landry. For my part, I was invited to provide a portrait of the development of cell phones on the North American continent in the context of the emergence of the new mobile generation. This generation of young users who entered school almost with a cell phone in hand and who today could no longer do without this device that provides a link with their friends and parents. After the highly acclaimed presentation by Toronto professor Derrick de Kerckhove, the heir to Marshall McLuhan, on the interconnection between intelligence and practice in the digital context, the appearance by Senegalese artist Oumar Sall, from Groupe 30 Afrique, was probably the most powerful moment. The Summit organization had decided to bring the participants back down to earth after three days of reflection by inviting this artist who had only one wish: to find help to use computers, cell phones and digital music players to share a message of peace on the African continent. According to him, there is still a window of five to ten years to implement concrete actions before exasperation takes over a large part of the population as in certain parts of the Arab world. All the technological development would be useless if the continent had to continue to experience wars and revolts as in the past, a past that is still not so distant. \*\*\* bguglielminetti@ledevoir.com \*\*\* Bruno Guglielminetti is a producer and new technology columnist at Radio-Canada. He is also the editor of Carnet techno (www.radio-canada.ca/techno).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1180

The other day, in the profuse locker of a second-hand bookseller on the banks of the Seine, we came across a unique book, Le Phénomène humain, by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Chance does things well. Teilhard has aroused renewed curiosity since the prophets of the Internet presented him as one of their own. A curious destiny, an unexpected return to grace. Who would have predicted that half a century after his death in 1955, at the age of 73, this Jesuit priest, rather poorly regarded by the Vatican, would be considered a visionary? As a theoretician of the links that, every day, connect men more closely together. For the Church, he reeked of sulfur. For his contemporaries, he was a virtual unknown. Teilhard only emerged from anonymity the day after his death, when a handful of the faithful took his manuscripts to the Seuil publishing house. He himself had refused, out of discipline, the Vatican being reluctant to grant him its imprimatur. The man had bearing and manners, inherited from his father, an aristocrat who had graduated from the École des Chartes, a gentleman farmer by atavism. Raised in Auvergne, Teilhard developed a passion for geology and mineralogy at a young age. A renowned paleontologist, co-discoverer of Sinanthropus, the fossil man of China, he was elected to the Academy of Sciences in 1950. A scholar therefore, but also a philosopher and a theologian, with the faith of a child of Mary. These multiple facets did not always find agreement - the man was subject to sudden depressions. But they give all their value to his intuitions. Published in 1955, The Human Phenomenon is the culmination of the scholarly priest's reflections on the origin and future of man. It is composed of articles and conferences written or delivered at the end of the 1930s. Their modernity is obvious. Unlike the Church, which had long been hesitant on the subject, Teilhard was an enthusiastic Darwinist. He referred to the laws of evolution and extended them, explaining that after the appearance of man, an equally irresistible process was set in motion, which mixed psyche and matter. And pushed humanity towards ever greater convergence. Teilhard speaks of "socialization" to designate this propensity of humans to organize themselves into ever larger communities, increasingly dependent on each other. He calls "Noosphere" these conscious groups that surround the planet with ever more thoughtful thought (noos means "thought" in Greek). Early on, as we understand, Teilhard had the intuition that modern means of communication, from aircraft to radio waves, would foster a "collective consciousness of humanity." Here we are. The Internet completes this process. Teilhard was right. We are not obliged to subscribe to all his conclusions, which mix scientific certainties, anticipatory hypotheses and Christian faith. Teilhard, for example, explains that the Omega point towards which the Noosphere converges according to him is the god of the Catholics. Whether or not they agree with this article of faith, many media theorists recognize a debt to him. In The Gutenberg Galaxy (1962), for example, the Canadian Marshall McLuhan refers to him to affirm that "the new culture of electricity," opposed to the printing press, gives "a tribal basis to our lives." Like Teilhard, even if their words differ, he speaks of the planet as a "global village." Very new age, today's references to Teilhard's work are sometimes complicated by approximations. For some, the Noosphere and cyberspace are one and the same, when they do not enlist the austere Jesuit under the banner of free software... The best thing, in order not to get lost on these side roads, is to refer to the work itself. Without waiting for the chance of a visit to a second-hand bookseller. Teilhard's main works are available in paperback (Le Seuil, "Points/Sagesses").

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1181

There was excitement in the art world last spring: David Hockney, 71, the most influential British painter of the 20th century, a figure of English pop art, was painting on his iPhone! "Hockney is addicted and has even invested in a mini wooden easel to rest his iPhone on," reports the Telegraph. A Bloomberg journalist describes him as "digitally shaving" with his high-tech toy that goes "brrrrzzzzzzzt." But it is mainly the application that allows him to doodle on the screen with his finger (Brushes App) that keeps him busy: "I draw flowers every day and send them to my friends, so they have fresh flowers every morning." Hockney is not what you would call a newbie when it comes to new technologies, since twenty years ago he was already making prints with a fax, collages with Polaroids and drawings on a computer. Just like Warhol, who was asked to launch the Amiga with great fanfare in 1985. He used the personal computer's graphic palette to paint live in front of an ecstatic press the portrait of Debbie Harry, singer of Blondie. Today it is the iPhone's turn to be knighted by Hockney, "a consecration, if any were needed, of digital technology as a medium of contemporary art", we read in the New York Times, which speaks of a "small sensation". Just that. The many artists who have been using and questioning these technologies for a long time will not be offended. "energy". Apple could not have dreamed of better advertising for its touchscreen mobile. The bouquets scribbled by the painter are not, however, the only artistic experiments on this platform. Since Apple released its iPhone software development kit (SDK) in July 2008, it has been possible to create applications, which are exclusively sold on iTunes or the App Store. The "apps", most of which range in price from free to €1.99, offer a new distribution platform (with its 40 million users) for artists. Android, Palm webOS, Blackberry and Nokia are not yet close to competing. "I am pleased with the number of downloads," explains Lia, a pioneer of Net art, who has just adapted one of her online works for the iPhone. "In the 90s, people like me produced (and still produce) art online completely free for anyone with Internet access. The very affordable price of the iPhone application (€2.39, less than a beer in a bar) is a way to recover some of the energy that was needed to create the piece." Pocket money, then, but not yet a business model. Especially since 30% is paid to Apple, which has complete freedom to accept or reject an "app". Still in its infancy, what some already call "iPhone art" is trying to gain visibility among the 75,000 "apps" available for download in the App Store, as essential as snorting a line of coke, playing the harmonica or, more prosaically, finding a restaurant. It is because "Apple does not yet offer an art section in its store and it is almost impossible to find them on your own" that Lia has started to list artistic "apps" that she likes on a dedicated site, Iphoneart.org. It includes her own creation PhiLia 01, which allows the user to generate abstract audiovisual compositions by touching or tilting the screen. "The iPhone is another way to distribute my software art, it has qualities that a classic computer doesn't have: multitouch, the accelerometer (which allows you to move, shake the object), and it's very easy to transport, which means you can take the work with you," explains the Austrian artist who partly developed this application with the open source software Openframeworks and is already working on PhiLia 02. Sound toy. Her site offers about ten applications including that of Miltos Manetas, digital artist and painter, who also adapted his successful website, Jacksonpollock.org, into a mobile application. Instead of clicking, you tap the screen to create multi-colored drips. In the same genre, Fat Tag by Theo Watson allows you to draw graffiti that liquefy. More literary, For All Season by Andreas Müller offers a poetic text per season that morphs into abstract animations made of letters. Pretty but rather anecdotal: you download them, manipulate them for 5 minutes and never come back to them again. More sophisticated in terms of digital wallpaper, Reflect, programmed by the pope of web design, the American Joshua Davis, allows you to generate infinite kaleidoscopic patterns with your fingertips, each user obtaining a unique creation. Other pieces combine sounds and images in fun interfaces such as Eliss by Steph Thirion, both a sound toy and a musical creation tool made of small "planets" to assemble. Or Synthpond by the New York artist Zach Gage, consisting of placing objects from which emanate colored circles that create sounds when they meet another object. A frenetic sampler, Jason Forrest has just released a pocket synthesizer, Star6, which took almost a year to develop. A real live musical instrument, the €5.99 application lets you manipulate sound loops and apply a whole range of effects to them. The program offers ready-to-use samples concocted by the Berlin musician, but also lets you download his sounds, record and share his creations. "The next step is to allow you to stream sounds via Bluetooth, which would allow several people to play together," Jason Forrest explains to De-Bug magazine. Indeed, these applications do not currently make much use of certain specific features of the tool, in particular its mobility. The artist Jonah Bruckner Cohen, who has also listed artistic applications for the Rhizome site, cites RJDJ of Reality Jockey who uses the iPhone as a generative sound system. The application uses the iPhone's microphone to capture ambient sounds during the day. With headphones on, you choose one of the "atmospheres" proposed by musicians and then get going. The sounds captured live by the microphone and/or the speed of movement feed and influence the music played.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1182

Series, films, music and photos, it's starting to be a mess in the computer. And what a shame to leave all that in disarray, when you could watch these pretty things on your TV thanks to a dedicated machine. But until now, this solution was far from affordable. This is changing with the arrival of Nettops that you plug into your TV, compact and silent computers (and fixed counterparts of Netbooks, these small low-cost laptops). At less than 400 euros, they make perfect multimedia centers. You just need to install XBMC, a free and open source software that will take care of classifying and making accessible the audiovisual clutter. Reference. XBMC, for Xbox Media Center, was born in 2002, shortly after the release of the Xbox, Microsoft's first console. Innovative when it was released - it had a hard drive and an Internet connection as standard - it is based on relatively standard computer components. The result was not long in coming, the console's protections were quickly bypassed, opening the way to piracy, but especially to the development of applications designed by users. Born from the merger of several video player projects, XBMC developed rapidly, transforming the console into a low-cost living room PC. To free itself from the limitations of the aging console, the software was put on Linux (free operating system) in 2006, then in 2008 on Windows and Mac, resulting in a tenfold increase in audience. The project is now run by around twenty volunteer members spread across the planet. Major decisions are made by an elected "board of directors", but developers are free to tackle any innovation as long as they have notified the others. Thus, XBMC has become a reference for media center software. It is very simple to use. After installation, you just have to indicate where the media files (audio, video, photo) are and it takes care of classifying them. But it doesn't stop there. It downloads posters, summaries and other information taken directly from the Net just by analyzing the name of the file. Result: an interface that is pleasant to look at, designed to be used on a television and controlled with a remote control. "Skins". But the strength of XBMC lies above all in its community, these hundreds of enthusiasts who modify or enrich the software via plugins - which will for example allow you to watch your favorite shows, retrieved more or less legally from the websites of the channels - or skins that modify the appearance (photos above). The user sometimes wipes the plaster a little, but it is the assurance for XBMC to stay years ahead of better known commercial software like Microsoft's Windows Media Center. http://xbmc.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1183

The video logbook in Greenland by Laure Noualhat, a journalist in the Earth service, who accompanied Greenpeace on a scientific mission for two weeks. Video game chat. At 5 p.m., ask your questions to our specialist Erwan Cario. "I have the flu A". Testimonies to listen to on LibéLabo.fr. Cries and whispers. A photo gallery on the exhibition of 23 female artists held at the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles in Paris. Interview with guitarist Biréli Lagrène, to read on the blog "Ça va jazzer" by Bruno Pfeiffer. Drupal brick by brick: how a community of developers builds free software. On Ecrans.fr. And always the latest news on Libe.fr, information near you on LibéVilles, blogs and discussion forums.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1184

On July 3, 2009, Serge Aleynikov, a financial software programmer, was arrested by the FBI at Newark Airport, near New York, while returning from Chicago. He was accused by his former employer, the investment bank Goldman Sachs, of stealing very valuable computer programs. That same evening, the police raided his home and seized his computers. Until then, this 39-year-old computer scientist had led an uneventful life. He lived in a beautiful house in a posh suburb of New York, with his wife and their three young daughters. After a brilliant career, he was hired by Goldman Sachs in May 2007 with a salary of $400,000 per year (280,000 euros). A fine career for this Russian immigrant, who arrived in the United States at the age of 21 with a modest diploma from the Moscow Institute of Transport. In June 2009, Serge Aleynikov decided to leave Goldman Sachs and go to work for a Chicago-based financial firm called Teza Tech - a start-up that had not yet started operating, but which was already promising to triple his salary. Teza's founder, Mikhail Malyshev, is also of Russian origin. He had just left a senior position at Citadel, the large hedge fund also based in Chicago, to start his own business. In early June, just before leaving Goldman Sachs, Serge Aleynikov made copies of some software he was working on, then uploaded them to a free storage website, as well as to Teza's server. Fifteen days later, during an audit of its security systems, Goldman Sachs discovered the unauthorized transfer, and filed a complaint. During his interrogation, Serge Aleynikov stated that he believed he had downloaded only free software (in the public domain), and had inadvertently copied some programs belonging to Goldman Sachs. He claims that he never intended to sell them or give them to anyone. However, the prosecutor asks the judge to remand him in custody, a very rare decision in this type of case, insinuating that he is part of an international spy network: the site on which he sent the software is hosted by a server located in Germany, and belongs to a man living in London, whose name sounds Indian. In addition, he still has family in Russia, where he goes regularly. Finally, the judge decides to release Serge Aleynikov, against a huge bail of 750,000 dollars (525,000 euros). He is not allowed to leave the New York region and must not access the famous stolen software under any circumstances. Shortly after, he is unemployed, Teza gives up hiring him. At the same time, another legal case has started in Chicago. The hedge fund Citadel is suing Mikhail Malyshev, its former employee who recently created Teza, for violating a non-compete clause in his employment contract. Citadel's lawyers are referring to the Aleynikov case, which they interpret as an aggravating circumstance: if Malyshev had decided to hire a software thief, it is probably because he had robbed Citadel in the same way, or was about to do so. Citadel is outright demanding that Malyshev be banned for life from any professional activity in finance. In general, these battles between large investment banks and small start-ups remain confidential. But this one is making headlines in the financial press, because, at the beginning of summer 2009, the media and some politicians are waging a new campaign against Goldman Sachs, accusing it of making gigantic profits while the country is sinking into crisis. The Aleynikov and Malyshev cases raise two questions: why is this stolen software so valuable? And how do banks manage to make so much money in the middle of a recession? By consulting the CVs of Aleynikov and Malyshev on the Internet and the forums in which they participate, journalists discover that both are specialists in high-frequency trading. Since the complete computerization of stock market transactions, the ultimate weapon of speculators is speed. Ultra-fast buying and selling programs, based on increasingly complex algorithms and running on increasingly powerful computers, have become decisive tools. We are witnessing a fierce arms race between operators. In 2008, more than a quarter of stock market transactions in the United States were carried out using algorithms. The latency time (the time between the issuance of an order and its execution) is of the order of a millisecond, and the profits thus made are estimated in billions of dollars per year. Supercomputers scan dozens of platforms in milliseconds to detect market trends, then place orders at the speed of light, leaving traditional investors, who are much slower, behind. They can also detect the ceiling price set by a buyer (the price above which he stops buying a stock). Immediately, they snap up all the available shares before the legitimate buyer has had time to act, and resell them to him at a higher price, generally at the maximum price - that is, 1 cent below his ceiling. In addition, the various stock exchanges, which are increasingly in competition, pay a bonus to any operator who chooses their platform as a priority to launch transactions on a stock. Here too, the fastest trader is rewarded, even if he made a quick round trip for the sole purpose of collecting the bonus. To meet this demand for maximum speed, small automated trading platforms have emerged, operating with a few dozen employees and installed in cheap offices, far from Wall Street. Some have already become formidable competitors for traditional stock exchanges. In July 2009, the New York Stock Exchange only carried out 28% of stock market transactions in the United States, the Nasdaq 21%. Two companies unknown to the general public, BATS in Kansas City (Missouri) and Direct Edge in Jersey City (New Jersey) are vying to establish themselves as the third largest American stock exchange, each with 10% to 12% of the market, depending on the calculation method. BATS (Better Alternative Trading System) was created in 2006 by about fifteen computer scientists and engineers from the Midwest, like an ordinary small start-up. In one year, the company has made a name for itself among hedge funds, thanks to its low costs and its execution speed: 1 to 3 milliseconds per transaction. Today, BATS processes more than 1 billion shares per day. For the month of June 2009, the value of its transactions reached 540 billion dollars. Attracted by its success, clients such as Citigroup, Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank and Morgan Stanley have bought shares in its capital. Recently, BATS opened a small office in New York, just across from the Stock Exchange. The geeks (fans of new technologies) have set out to conquer Wall Street. For its part, Direct Edge now claims more than 11% of the market in volume, against only 7% in January. Its shareholders include Citadel, Knight, JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs, who make extensive use of its services. BATS acquired legal status as a full-fledged stock exchange in August 2008. Direct Edge applied for it in May 2009. Among the innovative services offered by these platforms, the most controversial is flash orders. This consists of letting a few good clients consult orders on certain securities a fraction of a second before they are made public. These privileged ones have a head start on other investors. Flash orders were introduced by the Chicago Board Options Exchange and Direct Edge in 2006. In 2009, Nasdaq and BATS imitated them. By revealing to the public this new way of getting rich quickly, the media revived the scandal, because, for many observers, flash orders are similar to insider trading. The Democratic senator from New York State, Charles Schumer, has made it a personal crusade. He wrote to the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission, the regulator of the American stock exchanges) to demand the elimination of flash orders. If the SEC does not act, the senator threatens to introduce a bill to ban them. The SEC responds that it will study the problem, as part of a broader investigation into other practices, in particular dark pools (private markets where transactions are anonymous, and where a variant of flash orders is practiced). In August, Nasdaq and BATS announced that they would voluntarily abandon flash orders and kept their word as of September 1st. On the other hand, the CEO of Direct Edge, William O'Brien, has multiplied interviews to explain that flash orders are a beneficial innovation, and that he will offer this paid service to all interested professionals. For its part, the SEC recognizes that its investigation is only in its early stages and that no binding measures will be taken in the short term. On the judicial front, the Aleynikov case seems to be bogged down in a procedural battle. As of early September, Serge Aleynikov had still not been formally charged.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1185

NOBODY saw it coming. But in a few months, Twitter has established itself as the most popular and useful social network of the moment. Two years ago, no one really understood the point of "saying what you're doing" in 140 characters - the original principle of this microblogging platform. But users quickly diverted this question into a broader invitation to share thoughts, links, photos, various requests - from a restaurant for the evening to choosing a bank. Twitter has thus become a source of information as valuable as a search engine like Google. With a real advantage over its powerful elder: the feedback of information in real time. Twitter has thus imposed this tempo on the entire Web. The media have adopted the service to recount events minute by minute. The social network, like Facebook, has transformed its home page into a news feed where the "news" of members and their entourage are chased by fresher news every second. The development of Internet access from a mobile and the appearance of variants has greatly facilitated the growth of this real-time Internet or real-time web. A service like Qik allows you to broadcast videos on the Internet live from your mobile. And while Twitter is preparing to integrate the geolocation of messages into its site, a service like Foursquare already offers to limit the sending of messages to people located within a limited perimeter, to better target its information. With these practices, communication on the Internet has become a sort of continuous information chain of one's digital life. The concept of lifestreaming, inaugurated in 1997 at Yale University by Eric Freeman and David Gelertner to talk about the classification of electronic documents, is being brought back into fashion. It is undoubtedly at the crossroads of these two uses - real time and digital life thread - that the next Twitter will be found. Google on the offensive Among the possible candidates is a site like Tumblr. This microblogging platform allows you to publish a short message like on Twitter, but also a simple photo, a link, a video, a quote from an article. Aggregators also have their chance: the Storytlr site allows you to bring together your online publications, applications like Seesmic, created by the Frenchman Loïc Le Meur, and Tweetdeck are used to bring together your Twitter and Facebook accounts in a single place and to create filters to organize your multiple contents. But the service likely to bring them all together and supplant them all could also come from a Web veteran. Google has promised the launch of Google Wave by the end of the year, a conversation tool that can be enriched with documents, to allow "real-time collaboration". This interface, accessible from an Internet browser as well as from a mobile, developed in open source - therefore likely to be quickly improved and enriched by the community - will allow you to converse live with your contacts as in a classic instant messenger, to easily insert documents such as photos or maps, or even various applications, such as a chess game for example, to play live. These conversations, visible continuously by the user, can also be published on Internet sites, thus bypassing publication platforms. One hundred thousand privileged users will be able to test Google Wave from September 30, and determine if it will be the new killer app of Web 2.0.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1186

What is a knitting conference doing in the middle of a hacker convention? The scene is set in December 2007, in Berlin, on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Chaos Computer Club, one of the most influential hacker organizations (1). In front of a virile audience of programmers, Rose White, a plump sociology student, weaves links between knitting and computer science, demonstrating how the contemporary practice of knitting is close to open source programming. Alienation. Before the 1960s, knitting was largely confiscated by the industry that marketed and controlled patterns via specialized publications. These instructions intended for housewives did not indicate the quantity of yarn necessary to make a sweater, but the number of balls of their brand. "If you use our yarn and needles and do exactly as we tell you, you'll get the sweater in the magazine," says Rose White, who believes the knitting industry has alienated thousands of users from their expertise. "It's like comparing Linux to Windows, Linux is a 'folk culture' that thrives on shared knowledge among its users. Windows is a proprietary culture, it gives people very powerful machines but takes that power away from them by forcing them to do as they're told." In the United States, the Linus Torvalds (creator of Linux) of knitting is Elizabeth Zimmerman, a "geek before her time" who revolutionized the art of knitting in the 1960s by making it "open source" again. The woman who wielded needles in all situations, including astride the back of her husband's motorcycle, published books with generic patterns that did not require a particular brand of yarn and were not under copyright. Her motto was "Knit with confidence and hope, through all crises." Her goal: to give power back to knitters by allowing them to modify patterns, to improvise from a model. Guerrilla warfare. At the same time, feminists were throwing balls of yarn in the trash. They considered them a tool of patriarchy to keep women at home. It was not until the beginning of the 21st century that knitting made a surprising comeback. Grandma's hobby became trendy. The Internet has largely contributed to this revival, via blogs, social networks like Ravelry (2) or community sites like KnitML (3) which attempts to define a universal standard for describing patterns. Enthusiasts show their work there, find advice, and share their knowledge. Those who thought that the horizon was limited to garter stitch discovered the extraordinary labyrinth patterns of Debbie New or the hexagonal ones, inspired by the biological life of Norah Gaughan. Some people take DIY to the extreme, going so far as to spin their own wool from their dog's hair. In fact, people no longer knit exclusively to dress themselves but to express themselves, what Rose calls Guerrilla Knitting. Artistic collectives like the Texans Knitta Please (4), pioneers of wool graffiti who wrap city poles in colorful scarves, or the Wool Warriors of Knit the City, who decorate London's telephone booths. Another game of knitwear, a community makes red mittens for the statue of Lenin in Seattle or socks for the bronze horses in Central Park. The artist Dave Cole has a giant American flag knitted by two cranes handling wooden poles in the courtyard of Mass Moca. Thousands of anonymous people give free rein to their imagination, posting their creations on the Web, like this knitted digestive system, a real anatomy lesson or this uterus in candy pink wool. Some of these creations are offered for sale, such as these adorable cephalopods by Hansigurumi, which can be purchased via online shopping sites such as Etsy (5) or Folksy. These platforms, which allow artisans to sell their handmade creations (clothing, jewelry, etc.), are experiencing a real boom. In 2008, sales of goods on Etsy brought in $88 million, compared to $26 million in 2007. More than 200,000 sellers have their own small shops and more than two million customers are registered. Customization. A craze that reflects a certain weariness for mass-produced products, cast in the same mold. If the 90s were the years of brands brandished in big letters on the chest, today, people are looking to differentiate themselves by wearing something original, unique, estimates Clive Thompson in a column for Wired. "Digital culture has always been about customization and individuality: we blog our thoughts, we put our lives in photos on Flickr. After years of shaping the digital world to fit our style, it's no wonder we want to do the same in the physical world." According to Thompson, thanks to this micromanufacturing revolution, the objects around us will become increasingly personalized. This service already exists at Etsy or Ponoko: the customer describes what he wants (a sweater, a bag, a table), says how much he is willing to pay and artisans can offer to make it for him... (1) http://events.ccc.de/congress/2007/Fahrplan/events/2358.en.html (2) www.ravelry.com (3) www.knitml.com (4) www.knittaplease.com (5) www.etsy.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1187

A small arrow painted on the asphalt signals the entrance to the Hacker Space festival (1), on the edge of the RER line, in the nauseating fumes of the chimneys of the Sanofi Aventis pharmaceutical complex in Vitry-sur-Seine. The unfriendly environment does not seem to undermine the enthusiasm that reigns in the cellar at 6 bis, an artistic wasteland in a disused railway depot, which houses the first French hackerspace, the /tmp/lab (2). In this buzzing public workshop for creating technologies and research, people handle soldering irons, modify electronic circuits, program, but also learn how to make a solar-powered oven, a wind-powered electricity generator, soaps and sodas or even cultivate their own bacteria to obtain kefir "Ensemble". The hundred or so participants, artists, coders, activists, came from a dozen European countries to share their know-how during this second edition which took place at the end of June. A hacker festival, in the broad sense of the term, which goes beyond a simple gathering of computer whizzes. "For many, hacking is the illegal intrusion into a machine. That's very reductive. It's more of a creative, uninhibited and demystified use of technology," its organizer Philippe Langlois, an expert in computer security, is keen to point out. "In all areas, we try to do things with our own means, without depending on a big company. It's a bit like open source, if something is defective, we find a way to fix it. Together, we are able to improve it." Do it yourself (DIY), but with others. Hackerspaces, which are flourishing all over the world (there are more than a hundred of them), are temples of resourcefulness, committed to access and reappropriation of technological tools, open source activists, fighting against proprietary knowledge. Recycling. In the basement, Alexandre Korber, a web designer, is assembling a 3D printer, a device that can build a three-dimensional plastic object based on a digital model and from molten plastic threads. "Usually, these rapid prototyping machines are reserved for high-tech industries and are very expensive," explains Alexandre, "we wrongly think that this type of technology is inaccessible." Alexandre is a follower of the RepRap (Replicating rapid prototyper) movement (3) initiated in Bath, Great Britain by Adrian Bowyer, an idealistic academic who wants to give access to this technology, aimed at creating a self-replicating machine, to the general public, whose slogan is "wealth without money." He brings together, around the open source project, an active community of people interested in robotics, artists, and programmers. Seduced by this possibility of "realizing digital forms", Alexandre built his own with salvaged materials (motors from old inkjet printers, an old PC power supply), a bit of electronics to drive the motor and a spool of plastic wire bought in a DIY store. "For less than 300 euros, you can make a machine that can already make trinkets out of raw plastic, cups, sandals. The ultimate goal is to obtain a machine capable of reproducing itself entirely", explains Alexandre, who believes that this is a first step towards "a small plastic craft". The DIY movement, which has been growing for two years, has taken off beyond the hacker community that saw its birth. In these times of recession, DIY is a way to reduce costs and offer alternatives to mass production. Providing technologies that allow "manufacturing almost everything" on site is also the goal of Fab labs (fabrication workshops), a program initiated by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), whose goal is to support innovative projects in the Third World to transform them into functional prototypes. For example, there are some in India, specializing in the manufacture of 3D scanners and printers for local crafts. Draft. Another international network is that of Brico labs (4), workshops that are deployed around the world to introduce participants to free technologies. Like the Bricophone project, led by Jean-Noël Montagné, which aims to create a very low-cost mobile phone, independent of private operators, or the open-source washing machine (5), to relieve most women in the world who wash their clothes by hand. A first low-tech draft powered by a solar panel was developed as part of a workshop with students from the Aix-en-Provence art school, using recycled materials (bicycle wheel, bamboo and an electric motor from an old photocopier). Presented at the Lift conference in Marseille, entitled "Future: do it yourself!", the washing machine could be assembled quite easily in developing countries. Unlike in our countries, DIY is not a lifestyle choice but a necessity and hacking is second nature. This is demonstrated by the incredible ingenuity of the inventions listed on the Afrigadget blog (6), from the sheet metal helicopter to the oven made from a video distributor. Ghana even hosted the first African Maker Faire (7) from August 14 to 16, to celebrate and draw inspiration from these everyday DIY enthusiasts. (1) www.hackerspace.net (2) www.tmplab.org (3) http://reprap.org (4) http://bricolabs.net (5) www.oswash.org/ (6) www.afrigadget.com (7) makerfaireafrica.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1188

Tomorrow, opensource knitting

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1189

Washington - The world's number one mobile phone maker, Finland's Nokia, announced yesterday that it had entered into a partnership with the American IT group Microsoft, allowing it to equip its devices with Office office software. "Under the terms of their agreement, the two groups will begin immediately to collaborate on the design, development and marketing of mobile phone IT solutions," Nokia and Microsoft said in a joint statement. Microsoft's professional applications in the areas of e-mail, intranet and management (Microsoft Office Communicator Mobile suite), then the consumer office software of the Office range, will be integrated into Nokia's Symbian operating system. "Both Microsoft and Nokia have a rare combination of experience and understanding of consumers, and they will use these strengths to develop a series of new tools for users of future Nokia phones," added the statement. This partnership will allow Microsoft to increase its presence in the mobile phone sector, at a time when it is fiercely rivaled by Nokia in the field of mobile phone operating systems. This agreement comes at a time when Microsoft is seeing its Office range (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.), the new generation of which is due to be launched in the first half of 2010, facing strong competition from free software or online applications offered free of charge by the internet giant Google. For its part, Nokia is facing, in the multifunction telephone market, the success of the BlackBerry from the Canadian RIM and the iPhone from the American Apple, but also the arrival of devices running the Android operating software developed by Google.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1190

Because of the flexibility it offers, distance learning continues to gain popularity in Quebec. According to the Comité de liaison interordres en formation à distance (CLIFAD), between 1995 and 2008, the growth in enrolment at the three levels of education can be summed up as a gain of 252% for secondary schools, 44% for college and 85% for university. "Our programs that are currently generating the most interest are in the field of human resources management and administration," said Denis Gilbert, press relations officer at Téluq. The institution is constantly creating new courses in line with current events. For example, the Ethics and Religious Culture course was recently created for teachers who must teach the new course to elementary and secondary students. HEC is tempted Even HEC Montréal is being seduced by distance learning with a hybrid pilot project that will involve a few certificate courses for adult clients. "Students will sometimes have to go to class, so they will have interaction with the professor and other students. However, part of the training will be given online, which will provide great flexibility for this student clientele who works full time and often has a family," explained Ruth Dupré, Program Director at HEC Montréal. If the results of the pilot project are satisfactory, the hybrid formula could become much more widespread in the years to come at HEC Montréal. College is not left out. Several institutions are offering more and more online courses, as is the case at Cégep André-Laurendeau. At Cégep@distance, the big new feature this fall will undoubtedly be the use of the social software Osmose - a free software similar to Facebook - for a few courses, as part of a pilot project. "The use of this software has real educational aims since it will make it easier to carry out team work and have access to one's tutor. The goal is also to break the isolation, a common problem experienced by distance students," emphasized Martine Chomienne, educational advisor, research and development, at cégep@distance. If all goes as planned, the use of Osmose should soon be extended to all courses offered by cégep@distance.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1191

Code of ethics, good governance and transparency have opened the municipal elections. Rightly so! Each week brings its share of scandals that further erode citizens' trust in their institutions. The comments are numerous, but they only target one person: the elected official. Is there only one culprit? However, the laws already strictly regulate the actions of our elected officials. By the admission of specialists in these matters, the remedies recently proposed are only intended to reassure citizens. However, a quick overview of the latest scandals (Housing Office, Montreal IT department, awarding of questionable contracts, etc.) seems to show that the involvement of elected officials is rare or secondary. In most cases, the slip-ups are rather the work of executives and senior civil servants. However, for not having been able to effectively control municipal civil servants, the elected official, alone facing the media and his voters, receives all the blame. But did he really have the means to act? What has been new in the last 20 years that makes codes, laws and ethics committees ineffective and makes the position of the people's representatives so fragile? What is new is that a civil servant, in 2009, has at his desk, through the computer and the underlying information systems, a colossal power of calculation and information processing. This new power allows him to build files of extraordinary complexity and refinement. It allows him to be very efficient for better or... for worse. Faced with this new power, the citizen and his representative remain helpless to carry out their control mandate. What individual is able to grasp, within the two hours of a board of directors or a municipal council, the complexity of these files and the mass of information to be processed with only his notebook and pen as tools? Accessible to all To address the new problems linked to the growing technological power of administrations, the tools of democratic control and counter-power will have to be technological. Rather than further framing and limiting the power of elected officials, it is by strengthening them and providing them with the appropriate tools that we will be able to cure this cancer that is undermining our society. The information systems of public bodies must be accessible to all: transparent with regard to data, but also transparent with regard to their processing. By making the processing of data accessible and transparent, we make the actors in the decision-making processes accountable and we guarantee the traceability of all decisions. We enable and encourage real-time interactions between citizens, elected officials and the administration. This is where free computing, made up of open file formats, open and free technologies, as well as proven collaborative working methods from the Internet, will make a necessary and decisive contribution to the new challenges of our democratic societies. Already projects We are very far from a utopian idealism. Many initiatives in the world are already moving in this direction. A few weeks ago, the New York State Senate announced to all citizens and their elected officials full access to the organization's information systems. At the beginning of the summer, the City of Vancouver committed to becoming an "open" city by providing all of its data in free formats and by publishing all of its applications under a free license. Toronto is preparing to move in the same direction. The future elected officials of Quebec municipalities will have to renew a pact of trust with the population. This pact will have to be nourished by new practices and new tools allowing ordinary citizens to participate in the management of the city. More than simple tools, free software and collaborative working methods of the Internet carry within themselves the values of sharing, transparency and efficiency that will guarantee compliance with this new pact. Cyrille Béraud: President of the Collective Appropriation of Free Computing (FACIL)

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1192

In a rapidly changing IT environment, Microsoft, whose turnover and profits declined in 2008 - a first! - is forced to move. On Friday, the software giant had to make a major concession in Brussels, regarding its Explorer browser. A few days earlier, it had "donated" to the Linux community the source code of 20,000 lines concerning three device managers. A brutal change of direction for a company whose boss, Steve Ballmer, recently attacked the world of free software, referring to this "anti-capitalist cancer". Interview with Alexandre Zapolsky, CEO of the software publisher Linagora, a major player in free software. Is this really a turning point? This is not the first time that Microsoft has shown signs of openness towards the free software community... The event is that they have chosen a GPL license, a completely free license, the most commonly used in free software. This gesture, more forced than chosen, shows to what extent the open source market, or open code, has become mature. So essential that the company that fought it for so many years is now using it as an element of conquest! Where Microsoft has been overtaken by its competitors, as in the virtualization market, it no longer hesitates to adopt a "disruptive" model of distribution of its innovation, totally foreign to its culture. Who would have believed it just a few years ago? How would you define this "disruptive" model of free software and how does it threaten Microsoft? Until a few years ago, when we developed an innovation, we did everything to protect our intellectual property and our secrets. Microsoft has always defended the idea that this model, because of its simplicity and immediate profitability - I sell a license, I get my royalties - was the only one capable of guaranteeing investments and therefore innovation. By choosing to share their secrets to gain other, indirect advantages elsewhere, Microsoft's leaders demonstrate that this argument no longer makes sense. It is becoming more interesting, even for Microsoft, to share its secrets rather than to keep them to itself! But what matters above all, isn't it the company's position on its various markets? Of course, when you are a rentier, as Microsoft is in Windows and PCs, you frankly have no interest in competition. But when you are a challenger, as in this virtualization sector where Microsoft's rival, VMware, holds an overwhelming market share of 89%, it is in your best interest for the competition to be as open as possible. The position of an actor on a market counts much more than its preference for this or that model; realism is what counts. Free software currently represents barely a tenth of the global IT market. Aren't we heading towards a radical change in the months and years to come? That is the whole question. Microsoft remains the best positioned today to resist the growing influence of free software, with its two highly profitable product lines: Windows for the operating system and the Office suite for office automation. Today, these two activities can finance all of its investments and authorize research and development spending among the highest in the world. They are certainly starting to be shaken up by Google and free software - which is still in its infancy - but this will take time. And what does this mean? Microsoft's openness to open source will continue but on more secondary activities, on which the company grants itself great freedom of action. Like virtualization. On these new markets, Microsoft must show its credentials. But if the company converts to free software in this area, one can legitimately ask why it does not do so elsewhere? Increasingly, the market will demand accountability from Microsoft and the company will have to manage the danger of free software spreading to its various activities. The famous cancer that Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer spoke of is now beginning to spread inside the patient's own body, and its progression will be increasingly difficult to control.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1193

- Its name makes you dream: a "virtual inventory room" should be opened on the Web in three years. The wealth of documents as varied as the Merovingian papyri of the 7th century, the notes of the General Intelligence Service or the files of the Legion of Honor could be accessible online. "Our information system will allow them to know what exists here," explains Isabelle Neuschwander. All the inventories, that is to say the descriptions, codes and information on the documents, will be available for consultation as well as a large number of old documents. Two companies won the call for tenders launched at the end of 2007 to build this world first worth 12 million euros. Logica, an IT services company, has joined forces with Klee Group, a publisher of software for physical and electronic archives. The National Archives wanted to use open source software and pushed Klee Group to open the source code of its software called Spark Archives to the administration to enable the creation of custom applications. "The virtual inventory room should offer the same services as the physical reading room," explains Stéphane Batiot, from Logica, who supervised the call for tenders. It is in these rooms, similar to those in large libraries, that "readers" reconstruct their family tree or advance research work. By early 2013, 7 million digital documents will be available for consultation.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1194

Google challenges Microsoft by launching an operating system. To control the Internet, the Californian giant only needs to manufacture computers. This is one of the last weapons that Google still lacks to hope to one day completely dominate the Internet. The American group announced on its blog on Tuesday, July 7, that it was working on an operating system for computers, a program that will ensure the link between the machine (its processor, its memory, etc.) and the applications (word processing, video games, etc.). Chrome OS - that's its name - will be based on "open source" technologies (that external developers can modify as they wish). Google promises that it will allow faster access to PC applications. It will initially be intended for "netbooks", these portable computers costing less than $500 designed for checking emails and surfing, and whose sales have exploded in recent months. Chrome OS should be available in the second half of 2010. This announcement is a declaration of war on Microsoft: Google is attacking its core business, and what's more with free software, while Microsoft's operating systems are paid. Google and Microsoft are already competing on several fronts: office software, search engines and operating systems ("OS") for mobile phones. But Microsoft, the world's leading software publisher (60.4 billion dollars in revenue for the 2008 fiscal year, or 43.2 billion euros, and 17.7 billion dollars in profits), derives its power from its arch-dominant position on the PC OS market, with the Windows range (which equips 9 out of 10 computers in the world). Sergey Brin, Larry Page and Eric Schmidt, the leaders of Google, seem to have a very clear vision of the goal they want to achieve with their group. "Since its beginnings, Google has bet on maximizing its audience by offering free services, then by promoting this audience to advertisers. All its attempts at diversification can be measured by this yardstick," explains Laurent Geffroy, from the Greenwich Consulting firm. Google began to implement this strategy with its search engine. To this day, this tool is still the most popular on the Web (840 million unique visitors in May, according to the Comscore institute), despite the attempts of the competition (the latest being the launch of "Bing", Microsoft's search engine). With its associated advertising offer, sponsored links, Google has succeeded in transforming its engine into a real money-printing machine. The group (21.8 billion dollars in turnover in 2008 and 4.2 billion dollars in profit), captures approximately 40% of the total online spending of advertisers. Still with the aim of maximizing its audience, the Californian group has launched communication tools (Gmail, Google Talk), office software (Google Docs) and the Chrome web browser. "The engine allows you to find information on the web. The browser allows you to access the Internet and the OS runs the browser. It is therefore logical that after the engine and the browser, Google is now launching its OS," analyzes Mr. Geffroy. But these attempts are not all successes. Of course, Gmail has managed to break through, with 146 million unique visitors in May, according to Comscore (compared to 343 million for Microsoft Hotmail). Android, the OS for mobile phones, already equips around twenty terminals. But Google is struggling to sell the audience of YouTube, its video sharing site. Google Docs is far from having dethroned Microsoft's Office suite. The same goes for Google Talk, the instant messaging service, which only had 8.3 million unique visitors in May (Comscore), compared to 323 million for Microsoft's MSN Messenger. As for the Chrome browser, it only has a market share of 1.8%, compared to 65.5% for Microsoft's Internet Explorer, and 22.5% for Firefox, the free software from the Mozilla Foundation. Arrival of Windows 7 As for PC OSes, Microsoft is far from being on its knees yet. In the "netbook" segment, the Seattle group has managed to regain the advantage over Linux freeware, which - for cost reasons - equipped most of the first machines launched on the market. Microsoft could further consolidate its dominance over all PCs with Windows 7, the new version of its OS, scheduled for October 22, which has been very well received by professionals. "It will take time for Google to develop an OS that works and is compatible with other hardware on the market," predicts Bruno Lakehal of Gartner. What will be the next step for Google, whose ambition seems excessive? Manufacturing machines? "That's logical. But I don't believe it. Only Apple, in the IT sector, has really managed to have a foot in both professions," believes Mr. Geffroy.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1195

This is one of the last weapons that Google still lacked to hope to one day completely dominate the Internet. The American group announced on its blog on Tuesday, July 7, that it was working on an operating system for computers, a program that ensures the link between the machine (its processor, its memory, etc.) and the applications (word processing, video games, etc.). Chrome OS - that's its name - will be based on "open source" technologies (external developers will be able to modify it as they wish). Google promises that it will allow faster access to PC applications. It will initially be intended for "netbooks", these portable computers costing less than $500 designed for checking emails and surfing, whose sales have exploded in recent months. Chrome OS should be available in the second half of 2010. This announcement is a declaration of war on Microsoft: Google is attacking its core business. What's more, with free software, while Microsoft's operating systems are paid for. Google and Microsoft are already competing in several areas: office software, search engines and operating systems ("OS") for mobile phones. But Microsoft, the world's leading software publisher (60.4 billion dollars in revenue for the 2008 fiscal year, or 43.2 billion euros, and 17.7 billion dollars in profits), derives its power from its arch-dominant position in the PC OS market, with the Windows range (which equips 9 out of 10 computers in the world). Sergey Brin, Larry Page and Eric Schmidt, the leaders of Google, seem to have a very clear vision of where they want to take their group. "Since its beginnings, Google has bet on maximizing the audience by offering free services, then by promoting this audience to advertisers. All its attempts at diversification can be read in this light," according to Laurent Geffroy, from the Greenwich Consulting firm. Google began to implement this strategy with its search engine. To this day, this tool is still the most popular on the Web (840 million unique visitors in May, according to the Comscore institute), despite competing attempts (the latest being the launch of "Bing", Microsoft's search engine). With its associated advertising offer, sponsored links, Google has succeeded in transforming its engine into a "cash machine". The group (21.8 billion dollars in turnover in 2008 and 4.2 billion dollars in profit), captures approximately 40% of the total online spending of advertisers. Still with the aim of maximizing its audience, the Californian group has launched communication tools (Gmail, Google Talk), office software (Google Docs) and the Chrome Web browser. "The engine allows you to find information on the Web. The browser allows you to access the Internet and the OS runs the browser. It is therefore logical that after the engine and the browser, Google is now releasing its OS," analyses Mr. Geffroy. But these attempts are not all successes. Certainly, Gmail managed to break through with 146 million unique visitors in May according to Comscore (compared to 343 million for Microsoft Hotmail). Android, the OS for mobile phones, already equips about twenty terminals. But Google is struggling to sell the audience of Youtube, its video sharing site. Google Docs is far from having dethroned Microsoft's Office suite. The same goes for Google Talk, the instant messaging service, which only had 8.3 million unique visitors in May (Comscore), compared to 323 million for MSN Messenger, from Microsoft. As for the Chrome browser, it only has a market share of 1.8%, compared to 65.5% for Internet Explorer, from Microsoft, and 22.5% for Firefox, the free software from the Mozilla Foundation. ARRIVAL OF WINDOWS 7 As for PC OS, Microsoft is far from being on its knees yet. In the "netbook" segment, the Seattle group has managed to regain the advantage over free and open source Linux software, which - for cost reasons - equipped most of the first machines launched on the market. Microsoft could further consolidate its dominance over all PCs with Windows 7, the new version of its OS, scheduled for October 22, which has been very well received by professionals. "It will take time for Google to develop an OS that works and is compatible with other hardware on the market," predicts Bruno Lakehal, from Gartner. What will be the next step for Google, whose ambition seems excessive? Machine manufacturing? "That's logical. But I don't believe it. Only Apple, in the IT sector, has really managed to have a foot in both professions," believes Mr. Geffroy.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1196

The future Chrome OS operating system will be based on Linux, free software (i.e. usable, modifiable, duplicable and distributable without constraint) created by Linus Torvalds in 1991, and intended for PCs. While some netbooks run on Linux, more than 90% are equipped with Windows XP. Chrome OS is not the only one to bet on open source (a designation that includes free software, but broader). The Moblin project designed by Intel was also, and the French Tariq Krim, creator of Netvibes, is preparing to launch Jolicloud (in reference to "cloud computing", the theory of the dematerialization of services, now entrusted to the network, such as online storage). Jolicloud is an operating system based on Linux whose operation is designed for the Internet, with its online applications and its interface inspired by that of the iPhone.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1197

There is no limit to Google's ambitions. The search giant announced yesterday that it plans to create its own operating system for mini-laptops, thus triggering an almost philosophical war against Microsoft and its ubiquitous Windows. The confrontation between the two giants, long anticipated for anyone interested in the rumors that have been circulating on the Web for months, will pit two radically different conceptions of what computing should be in the Internet age against each other. Google's new operating system, unlike Windows and Apple's Mac OS-X, will run entirely within the computer's Internet browser. In other words, no more software to install: under Google Chrome OS (that's the provisional name that Google has given its project), software will be loaded like web pages. A Linux kernel, developed with the help of the open source community, will bridge the gap between this web-based software and the hardware that makes up the computer. "The user interface will be minimal, so as not to overload your environment and leave room for what matters most today: the Internet experience," the company wrote on its blog yesterday. Google, which already offers, with Gmail and Google Docs, a vast suite of free software running entirely in the browser, is initially targeting the netbook market with its new operating system. The company plans to install Google Chrome OS for free on several of these ultraportable computers starting in the second half of 2010. This fast-growing market is currently dominated by Microsoft, which has managed to impose its old Windows XP operating system on these devices, which cost between $300 and $600, but for which buyers pay around $45 for the license. According to the New York Times, Google is aiming to make its new type of operating system powerful enough to run on the rest of the PC range. A first salvo "This is a first public salvo that Google is sending to Microsoft, in a war that has been going on behind the scenes for about two years," notes Michel Dagenais, director of the computer engineering department at the École polytechnique de Montréal. According to him, the idea pushed by Google that an operating system can "live" entirely in a browser could well please a majority of users. "What most people want is a system that starts in 5 or 10 seconds, plays music, manages photos and goes on the web. That's what Google offers, and it meets the needs of 70% of users," he says. Colin Surprenant, principal architect at the Montreal developer Praized who himself has developed many products according to this philosophy of software "living in the browser," believes that Google's system will gradually make Windows obsolete. "There are huge advantages to such an operating system. For users, they require no installation and no maintenance. For developers, the model makes work much easier: it is much easier and faster to develop for the web than in the classic model, where you have to deal with complex libraries, drivers and a host of heavy elements to manage." "In my opinion, Google Chrome OS even has the potential to dislodge Windows, but it will take a few years," believes Mr. Surprenant. Quite a challenge, when you know that Microsoft alone holds 90% of the operating system market. Yesterday, on the NASDAQ electronic stock exchange, Google shares gained US$5.86, to US$402.49, while Microsoft lost 3 US cents, to US$22.56.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1198

The bottom line. Google revealed yesterday that it would launch its own free and open-source operating system, called Chrome OS, by 2010. The context. The world's number one search engine is taking on Microsoft head-on, the world's leading software company, whose Windows operating system powers 90% of the world's computers. The stakes. The announcement is just another escalation in the war between the two giants, as Google confirms its aggressive strategy of all-out development.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1199

On Tuesday evening, the number 1 search engine announced, to everyone's surprise - or almost - the launch in 2010 of Chrome OS. This operating system will be free and initially intended for netbooks, these low-cost mini-portables whose sales have exploded in the last two years. Chrome is above all the name of the web browser offered by Google in September, a direct competitor to Internet Explorer and Firefox. With 30 million active users worldwide, according to Google, Chrome's market share is around 3%. "Not bad for a browser launched less than a year ago," said Michael Arrington, founder of the specialist site Techcrunch, yesterday, who does not mince his words in describing this announcement: "Google is dropping an atomic bomb on Microsoft." Dominant position. The computer operating system market is often summed up, a little hastily, as the eternal battle between Microsoft and Apple, respectively behind Windows and Mac OS. This is to make light of open source solutions like Linux, but the figures tend to justify such a shortcut: 90% of computers in the world actually run on a version of Windows (XP and Vista, for the vast majority), 5% on Mac OS, the rest being made up of machines based on Linux and other derivatives. You had to be called Google to rub shoulders with this domain marked by the hegemony of Microsoft, regularly tackled for its dominant position and its tied sales policy so decried by consumer associations. On the official Google blog, Chrome OS is presented as "an attempt to rethink what operating systems should be". What do we know for the moment about this new operating system that is competing with Windows on its own turf? Not much, except that it will be centered around the Web and online-only applications, open source (see box). Announced as "fast, simple and secure" by Google, Chrome OS will be based on the Linux architecture, that is to say modifiable by any motivated volunteer who is competent enough in computer tinkering. Google plays it modest by assuring that it "needs them to accomplish this vision". Competitor Microsoft is implicitly targeted when Google declares that "current operating systems were created at a time when the Internet did not exist". Or again when it talks about the long hours spent "configuring machines to install new hardware, taking care of constant software updates". Gazelle. The date of the announcement was apparently not chosen at random. Next week, Microsoft will hold its Worldwide Partner Conference in New Orleans, a big gathering where new information on its future Windows 7 will be revealed. This operating system, successor to the controversial Vista, will be released in October. A rumor is also circulating about the announcement of a project in development in Microsoft's research laboratories. This is a brand new web browser, with functions similar to those of an operating system. Its name: Gazelle. We would then better understand Google's surprise announcement to praise its still distant project. Welcome to the jungle of the Net.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1200

90% of computers are equipped with Windows, Microsoft's operating system. 5% run on Mac OS (Apple), the rest being open source systems such as Linux.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1201

A long grey building on a quiet street in the centre of Vienna, near the city hall. The windows of the mezzanine are permanently lit, because Metalab, the main hacker space in the Austrian capital, is open day and night. The tone is set as soon as you enter this club of libertarian computer scientists: the telephone box looks very ordinary, but it allows you to make free calls around the world, because it is connected to a computer server that transmits communications via the Internet. Created in 2006, Metalab now has around a hundred members, who pay a subscription of 40 euros per month to cover rent and technical costs. Since May 2009, it has been run by Christian Benke, a 28-year-old computer scientist, elected by his peers for a year: "I have little power," he explains with a smile, "just accounting and legal responsibilities. Here, everyone does what they want." » The main room, decorated with Internet-controlled light effects, serves as a collective work room and conference room when an outside expert comes to give a presentation. This evening, an Englishman living in Fontainebleau, who came from France by bike, explains a vast project to unify and secure all the social networks existing on the Net. In a corner, Mika, a computer security consultant, has come to help a young hacker unlock an iPhone to install software not approved by Apple: free telephony via the Internet to bypass the GSM operator, and encryption of conversations to prevent any interception. At the end of the corridor, the small library is occupied by two very noisy students, who are making a war game for mobiles. The Metalab also has an electronic music studio and an arcade games room: the console was entirely built here, and all the games were downloaded for free. Another large room houses the workshop, which is packed to the brim: workbenches, toolboxes, spare parts in bulk, gutted computers... Here, hackers come to build their own electronic machines. Astera, recognizable from afar thanks to her multi-colored hair, piercings and nine tattoos, has undertaken to house a voice-controlled music server inside a celluloid mannequin. Further on, Marius, a burly man dressed all in black, is assembling a "3D printer", a bulky device used to make objects from molten plastic threads. Marius is a follower of the "RepRap" (replicating rapid prototyper) movement, initiated in Great Britain and New York: "Our ultimate goal is to design a machine capable of completely self-reproducing." In the short term, the RepRaps want to give the general public the means to manufacture all sorts of plastic objects in an artisanal way, thus breaking the monopoly of large industry. In addition to their ultra-hip projects, young hackers are maintaining the great tradition established by their elders. They tirelessly search for security flaws in Internet software and servers, and publish their findings to force manufacturers to fix them. In addition, they participate in the creation of systems that allow people to use the Internet while remaining anonymous or invisible. Their goal is to preserve freedom of expression and to protect Internet users from Internet scammers, but also from marketing companies and certain police services, which monitor the network and harvest masses of personal data. They remain faithful to the basic philosophy of the movement: teamwork, knowledge sharing, free and open software. Many lead a double life, computer scientists during the day in a company, hacker-activists at night and on weekends. Some have already created their start-ups: for them, the status of private entrepreneur is not in contradiction with that of hacker-activist, on the contrary, since it makes them independent. The Metalab has also become the anchor point for several techno-political groups, which do not have their own premises. This is where the activists of the association FunkFeuer ("beacon") meet every week, who have undertaken to build a mega-Wi-Fi network in the center of Vienna, free, encrypted and self-managed. Places similar to the Metalab are appearing on all continents. Until the early 2000s, hackers were lone wolves, who communicated via the Internet and met from time to time, at conferences and festivals. Clubs with their own premises were rare, concentrated in a few university towns in the United States and in Germany, with the famous Chaos Computer Club. But the new generation, more convivial, has rediscovered the pleasure of living in a tribe, and of working together around the same table. The founders of the Metalab opened a website, called Hackerspaces.org, which has established itself as the virtual meeting point of the movement on a global scale. According to Astera, which helps manage the site, there are now nearly 200 active hacker spaces in around fifty countries, and around 170 in the process of being set up or planned. Some hackers have become nomads. They go on long tours to visit foreign hacker spaces and set up joint projects. Paul Böhm, 26, the charismatic founder of Metalab in Vienna, has been in San Francisco for a few months. There, he frequents the local hacker space, Noisebridge, which is very similar to Metalab. Astera, who has just left her job after twelve years in a Viennese advertising agency, has already participated in sixteen events since the beginning of the year, in Europe and the United States. At the beginning of this summer, she was in Paris, to participate in the Hacker Festival organized by tmp/lab (temporary lab). The first Parisian hacker space, tmp/lab was launched in late 2007 by a group of friends gathered around Philippe Langlois, 34, a computer security expert and entrepreneur who has lived in California. It is not really in Paris, but 9 km to the south, in the industrial zone of Vitry-sur-Seine, in the basement of a disused railway depot, between the railway tracks and the A86 motorway, a chemical plant and a truck wash station. The building belongs to Réseau Ferré de France, which agreed to lend a bit of the basement free of charge. In the basement, the equipment is basic and the decor leaves something to be desired, but there is a kitchen and a bedroom, and the workspace is vast. The thirty or so hackers who frequent it feel good there, even if some dream of a place in Paris. The festival, which lasted four days, welcomed a good hundred participants, from a dozen European countries, plus a few Americans. The members of tmp/lab had invaded the neighboring cellars to set up a temporary workshop and a meeting room. The days were studious, because the conferences and demonstrations were cutting-edge, but after the (vegetarian) dinner, the party lasted until dawn. The hackers had also come to discuss the future of the movement and compare their experiences. Some Italians and Spaniards, very involved in social struggles, have merged with the squatter movements. The Germans are focusing on technical challenges and political-legal actions. The Swedes, well established, are helping the other Nordic countries to create their hacker spaces. The Athenians, Luxembourgers and Toulousains have not yet found premises, but they are hopeful. The tmp/lab of Vitry presented several projects. The most spectacular is undoubtedly that of N., the brilliant creator of the "Hadopi router": "The expression was invented by bloggers who came up with the concept. We made it happen." The Hadopi law, which establishes a system of surveillance and repression of Internet users downloading illegal audio and video files, is of course the number one enemy of hackers. N., who worked for a while for a router manufacturer, wrote with some friends a program capable of transforming a PC equipped with an ordinary Wi-Fi box into an offensive weapon: "It detects the Wi-Fi networks in the neighborhood, then starts cracking all their passwords. As soon as we have the keys, we can create a virtual access point," that is, use the neighbor's Internet connection without his knowledge. To avoid being detected, N.'s router randomly broadcasts fictitious machine addresses. If a "conquered" router changes its password, the system automatically switches to another Wi-Fi signal in the neighborhood - and immediately begins attacking the new password. The "Hadopi router" also allows monitoring of what users of "cracked" networks are doing, but V., who worked on the project with N., denies any malicious intent: "We just want to publish our software, and make everyone understand that the technical data used by Hadopi to accuse people will not be reliable. Thanks to us, judges will not be able to say that they were not aware." N. is already imagining a more ambitious strategy: distributing dozens of modified routers in a neighborhood, and creating an invisible mini-network, superimposed on existing networks. The new French hacker movement, which had lagged behind its European neighbors, is booming.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1202

Siren Shields, Hehe's exhibition until July 18 at Ars Longa, 67 avenue Parmentier, 75011 Paris. From Wednesday to Saturday. Info: www.arslonga.fr "As a foreigner, what struck me when I moved to Paris were the police sirens that you hear constantly," explains Heiko Hansen, an artist of German origin who forms the duo Hehe with Helen Evans. A haunting "two-tone" siren, the daily background noise of the people of the Paris region, that the duo decided to track down with their Siren Shields device. In recent months, video surveillance boxes have sprung up on balconies that are triggered only by the sirens' songs. Equipped with free software of their own (1) developed with the help of an IRCAM researcher (whose father is a police officer), the device analyzes ambient sound in real time and detects the frequencies of a siren, announcing the imminent arrival of the police. From then on, the cameras begin to record the ballet of police cars. "Pin-pon". These "counter-surveillance" videos are presented at the Ars Longa gallery in Paris, whose storefront is itself equipped with a box. "The pin-pon of the French siren is very close to that of the German police," notes Heiko, recounting that across the Rhine, the police had tried to adopt the American "sinusoidal" siren, but gave up in the face of the mockery of this strident "Kojak siren", an allusion to the American series from the 70s. Hehe is very interested in this relationship that the police have with cinema. The artists wanted to use their device to generate a kind of detective film. "When the flashing light comes on and the siren starts to wail, a choreography is set up around this car which forces its trajectory at high speed through the city, while everything around it freezes." Siren Shields allows this "dramatic" moment to be captured in the city, but also on TV screens. "Our software, connected to TNT, also allows us to automatically record all the sequences where we hear this famous siren." More than 200 files were collected in a single day, fragments of detective series, films, TV news, but also disconnected extracts, like this classical orchestra playing these two same notes. In the gallery, whose entrance is blocked by a giant blinding flashing light, the visitor can mix these different audiovisual extracts sucked in by the software, and create their own clip. An opportunity to take the measure of the extreme codification of the detective film. "The stakes of the police film are not only commercial and cultural, they are also political," notes Olivier Philippe, in Representation of the police in French cinema 1965-1992 (2). Humor. "The imagination undoubtedly contributes to the effectiveness of the police in reality. [...] The role of representations of the police can largely contribute to avoiding the use of force by internalizing the values of order." The same could be said of surveillance cameras. As the theorist Konrad Becker pointed out, "security is not only technological, but an internalized way of thinking. Surveillance cameras do not need to be turned on to work their magic." With humor, Hehe reverses the roles, and gives back control to the citizen who can in turn monitor those who control us, tracking police activity and manipulating the images with which he is inundated daily. As usual, Hehe does not seek so much to denounce as to attract the critical attention of the public. This is the case of his project Nuage vert (Libération, June 2) which, by coloring the emissions escaping from factory chimneys, aims to raise people's awareness of the issue of energy consumption, or waste. Making perceptible what is not... is no longer perceptible, because we have ended up getting used to it. (1) The software can be downloaded from: http://hehe.org.free.fr/hehe/siren/(2) Editions de l'Harmattan, 2000.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1203

Dominique Weber teaches philosophy in preparatory classes. He published Hobbes and the Desire of Madmen in 2007 at the Presses de l'université Paris-Sorbonne. In the Esprit dossier, he analyzes piracy in its political dimension. From pirate radio stations to the Pirate Bay list in Sweden, how did the pirate become a political figure? It seems to me that the perception of piracy began to change with the work of the British historian Christopher Hill and in particular his article entitled "Radical Pirates?", published in 1984. Hill was the first to place it in the political-religious context of the English revolution of the 17th century and in particular the virulent contestation of royal power and the established Church of England by the most radical part of the Puritan Calvinist movement. This movement had many representatives in piracy and its ideals deeply influenced it, even if it is not true to say that English pirates were all religious "dissidents" or that all radicals became pirates. In any case, Hill's article opened the way to a reevaluation of piracy, as evidenced above all in the United States by the important work of Marcus Rediker (1). They teach us that, much more than a way of practicing brigandage at sea, piracy is a political phenomenon, bringing about a real overhaul of social codes concerning authority, the sharing of wealth, social protection, the refusal of slavery or even the status of women. In the General History of the Most Famous Pirates, Daniel Defoe has extraordinary pages to describe Libertalia, a pirate colony in Madagascar with the air of a republican utopia. Nevertheless, you write, the "pirate" is not a "partisan", because he does not seek to make a revolution. I borrow this distinction from the philosopher Carl Schmitt. The initial question, for him, was that of irregular combatants, that is to say, those not belonging to the regular armies of a sovereign state. Schmitt is interested in irregularity because the 20th century is confronted with a new way of waging war: partisan combat, notably according to the theorization made of it by Lenin and Mao. For Schmitt, the partisan acts in a logic of absolute hostility because his finality, dictated by revolutionary imperatives, is to destroy the existing political institution. His goal is nevertheless to succeed in replacing the latter with another. In this sense, he remains deeply anchored in territorial realities: he is "telluric". The pirate is also an irregular fighter, with this double difference in Schmitt's eyes that, on the one hand, he expresses a maritime vision of the world and, on the other hand, that, not claiming to replace the terrestrial institution, he is only a criminal practicing plunder. An analysis which, I believe, minimizes the fact that piracy was also, at certain times, a way of challenging the established order. Can we, without anachronism, compare the pirate to the new activists - the alter-globalist, the free software activist - who, they too, refuse to take power? In any case, we can see that the use of the figure of the pirate by the alter-globalist movements is entirely claimed. An English political collective, called "Do or Die", published a short text a few years ago, Bastions pirates. A libertarian history of piracy. The collapse of Marxism-Leninism left a whole fringe of political activists orphaned, in search of new theoretical and practical models of protest, new utopias. The utopias of the classical age, such as that of Thomas More, proposed what Pierre-François Moreau calls a "novel of the State", that is to say the description of a perfectly rational functioning of the State. However, the pirate utopia is built against the State. In economics or on the Internet, the figure of the pirate brings together in a surprising, even worrying way, the liberal spirit and the libertarian aspiration, both desiring a liquid, "disinstituted" world, freed from the constraints of "telluric" States. But in a liquid world, who will protect the weakest? Human life is not natural, it must be instituted and protected. Moreover, Roman law, which aimed to "establish life," described the pirate as "the enemy of the human race." (1) See on this subject: Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, The Thousand-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic, published by Editions Amsterdam in late 2008.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1204

SINGAPORE - LG Electronics Inc. said this week that the mobile phone market is doing well despite the global crisis and announced plans to launch three phones this year running Google's Android operating system. Android is an open-source operating system for mobile phones. U.S. carrier T-Mobile was the first to market last year with the G1, the first phone running Google Android.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1205

And now, what are we going to do? This question is now agitating everyone's minds, from the center to the far left, and even beyond. For a week, brains and calculators have been overheating in all political headquarters. The good results of Europe Ecologie on the evening of June 7 arouse covetousness, speculation and also fantasies of little arrangements between friends... In a political game that remains sadly classic, I admit that the question is not without importance, nor totally illegitimate. But I prefer, as a precaution, to warn those who hope to see us give in to the horse-trading of the parties that they are very likely to be at their expense. For a week, I have been saying and repeating: Europe Ecologie does not own its voters. If an electoral property right were to exist, it would obviously be that of citizens over the parties that represent them, and not the other way around! Sound evidence that our competitors - and perhaps future partners - should meditate on. Let's be clear: I am not trying to avoid the question of strategy and possible alliances. I want people to understand first that our success is not the result of a mood vote, or even a clever arrangement of our ecological and European convictions. Ideas, no more than people, do not belong to anyone. They are intended to circulate freely, to spread and to evolve through contact with others. Some have already not hesitated to draw on our proposals and many more will do so in the coming months. Let them know that we will judge their sincerity by their actions and not by their words. The pollination of our ideas on Europe will certainly be less obvious, as it is likely to implode the old matrix on which the institutional organization of powers in this country is based. We have made strong commitments to transform Europe and its modes of operation and we have no intention of deviating from them. Quite the contrary! This partly answers the question of what we are going to do now. Only partly. Because we would be autistic if we did not understand that the success of our lists also reflects an intense desire to see the way of being in politics change and a sudden hope to see new and closer links invented between society and those who choose to carry their aspirations within the public space. It is precisely this way of saying and doing that is the most innovative thing in the Europe Ecologie gathering. In its composition, its construction, as in its operation, it manages to embody the spirit of the project of civilization that we carry: that of a society that refuses to sacrifice diversity to uniqueness or fragmentation; that of a gathering where the multiplicity of individual paths produces common values rather than personal ambitions and, ultimately, that of a project where convictions are sources of dialogue and exchange with others, without sectarian drift or dilution of meaning. Politics is a matter of style and method as much as of ideas. Our philosophy of life reminds us at every moment that the ends are also in the means. In other words, we cannot act and carry an ideal without thinking our methods of intervention in full coherence with our project. Unfortunately, incoherence has become commonplace in French political life and this is what explains the relative success of the UMP and the respective failures of the MoDem and the Socialist Party during these elections. Because, if it is not always clearly expressed, Sarkozy's political project does indeed exist and can be deciphered in bits and pieces in each of the multiple decisions with which he floods the country. This project, I affirm, is absurd and goes against the reality of the world in which we live, but it is nevertheless coherent in its absurdity even in the way in which the tenant of the Elysée today embodies power and the hyper-presidentialization of the regime. In his caricatured anti-Sarkozysme, Bayrou sacrificed the ideals of his political family by making the MoDem a "miniature UMP" and himself a caricature of the Sarkozysme he claimed to denounce. For its part, the PS has squandered a diversity that could have made it rich to become an electoral cartel without a coherent project and increasingly "offshore" with respect to the aspirations of those who historically built and supported it. It now resembles a former state enterprise reduced to the rank of a large SME, equipped with an army of executives now less concerned with talking to those who could be its creative force than with tearing each other apart in a presidential competition that, as it stands, remains surreal. So, to the nagging question of "what are we going to do", I answer that we are going to continue to break the logic of the "proprietary system" that dominates our national political life, both at the global and local levels, both through Europe and on the occasion of regional elections. More than ever, we will promote the notion of "free software" applied to politics and society. It is the only serious alternative to the forms of demo-autocratic powers that are proliferating, on the left as well as the right, in France as in Europe. Let us be clear: we do not claim to become a hegemonic force on the left or elsewhere. It is not our culture and we remain resolutely hostile to genetic mutations. We aim precisely to strip political life of this hegemonic temptation which, just like the productivist ideology, has haunted the left and the right for decades. In politics, as in nature, biodiversity is a wealth and any attempt to merge ourselves into a sort of large social-democratic party would be synonymous with impoverishment. We want to spread our ways of doing and thinking about politics to our competitors and potential partners. The result of June 7 gives us, I believe, a pivotal role in the life of this country, in particular between a strong aspiration to renew and deepen the instruments of democracy and an imperative to rebuild social justice and regulatory mechanisms around the urgent need to safeguard the environment and the planet. Since the political forces of this country have not yet led the Copernican revolution that citizens demand of them, we have no other coherent outcome today than that of our political autonomy. For us, the notion of autonomy is not synonymous with closure or going it alone. Quite the contrary. Our gathering is and will remain open at the same time as it continues to develop its roots to make its foliage flourish. The challenge is immense and like the European challenge: it is to succeed in jointly implementing a dynamic of enlargement and deepening. In a tight schedule, well before the regional elections, we have two major meetings with those who would like to become our partners: a European meeting for the construction of a broad coalition aimed at preventing the reappointment of José Manuel Barroso as head of the European Commission; an environmental meeting for the international mobilisation of citizens, associations and political parties, so that the Copenhagen summit on climate change truly results in measures to preserve the future of our planet. We want to prove Edgar Morin right. It is not simply a question of introducing politics into ecology, but ecology into politics. We are on the move.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1206

"I prefer, as a precaution, to warn those who hope to see us give in to the horse-trading of apparatuses that they are very likely to be disappointed." In a point of view, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, European deputy, explains his conception of the means of escaping "the incoherence (...) which has become commonplace in French political life". The clarification of the leader of Europe Ecologie, whose success was the major event of the European elections of June 7, targets the Socialist Party, accused of having "wasted a diversity that could have made its wealth, to become an electoral cartel without a coherent project". The "political autonomy", which Mr. Cohn-Bendit claims, "is not synonymous with closure or going it alone". He advocates the dissemination of his ideas. Two upcoming "major events" could, according to him, bring into reality "the notion of "software" applied to politics and society": the constitution of a "broad coalition" aimed at preventing the reappointment of José Manuel Barroso as head of the European Commission, and a broad mobilization before the Copenhagen summit on climate change.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1207

Nearly a hundred young members of the Génération d'idées group took part in a spontaneous demonstration yesterday morning in the heart of downtown Montreal. On the eve of the commemoration of the Normandy landings of June 6, 1944, dozens of people presented a "War and Peace" scene, referring to the theme of the fourth and final issue of their magazine. Arranged in two parallel rows, facing each other, they approached to... give each other a long hug. A non-profit, independent and non-partisan organization, Génération d'idées offers the next generation a space for thinking and sharing ideas so that they can meet the challenges that beset Quebec society. "We wanted to give a voice to the 25-35 generation, the Passe-Partout generation, because we felt that we didn't find ourselves in the public space much," explains Mélanie Joly, co-founder of Génération d'idées. "It's an OpenSource project, a Wikipedia of ideas. People submit their texts, their ideas, whether on the website or in the magazine," she adds. A Générations d'idées summit will be held within a year. The group promises to "come up with very concrete ideas" on education and the environment, among other subjects.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1208

STOCKHOLM - Buoyed by sympathy for the four guys from the Swedish file-sharing website Pirate Bay, recently sentenced to prison for "aiding piracy," Sweden's Pirate Party could enter the European Parliament next week. Columnist Marie-Claude Lortie interviewed the founder of this rebel party in Stockholm, a few days before the end of the election. Here is an account of an informal meeting. I spot him on the subway platform, wearing a purple polo shirt with the words Piratpartiet and a tiny white computer under his arm. It is Rickard Falkvinge, 37, founder of the Swedish Pirate Party. He chats with passersby, showing them information on his laptop, which is online even in Stockholm's underground tunnels. Mr. Falkvinge, a "free source code writer" turned politician, did not set up camp there to campaign. He's here because he actually took the subway, alone, to get to our meeting and, incidentally, to make sure that the Pirate Party literature at the polling station in the central station was neatly arranged and accessible. Marginal political leader? Not at all. Launched in 2006, the Swedish Pirate Party is currently flying high in the polls. At the end of May, it was projected to be third, behind the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate (conservative) Party, with 7.9% of the vote. That could be enough to win a seat in the European Parliament. We'll find out on Monday. In Sweden, it's the political phenomenon of the moment. What do the pirates want? It's a party that has no official links to the Swedish website Pirate Bay - "apart from the occasional beer here and there" - but which shares its philosophy in its entirety and which is feeding off the revolt generated by the trial and prison sentence in April of those who set up Pirate Bay. Pirate Bay? It is the world reference in terms of free downloading and exchange of files on the web - 22 million members, billions of downloads - and therefore the target of all the multinationals of the record, film and their lawyers, who are outraged to see their content shared in this way without earning them a penny. The Pirate Party follows three principles, explains its founder. It campaigns for the culture of sharing on the Net, the liberation of knowledge and the protection of privacy. Its program does not contain any measures requiring an exchange of money. Its goal is not to take power, but to hold the balance of power. And to influence. Basically, explains Mr. Falkvinge, the world must adjust to the profound structural changes forced by the Internet. Faced with this enormous machine that allows the infinite exchange of information, it is up to the citizen, and not the big companies, to decide where to go. What do we let wander, what do we protect? The party, for its part, responds: we allow knowledge to circulate, but we protect the lives of citizens. In other words, yes to downloading and free exchange of films, music, textbooks or drug formulas. "Patents," says Mr. Falkvinge, "kill thousands of people every day by preventing the manufacture of certain drugs." But no to the circulation and access of Internet users' personal information, whether to find the author of a comment on a blog or to personalize the marketing of an online store. The party proposes, nothing more and nothing less, a redemocratization of access to knowledge. This anti-big business approach appeals. It appeals in particular to young people - half of the party's members are under 25 - and to men who form the majority of the party's supporters of 47,000 members. "Supporters often contribute 100 crowns (about $14)," explains the founder. The anti-establishment approach also appeals to some artists and content authors. "I have never seen the Pirate Party as a party that is hostile to creators," says Eva Gabrielsson, wife of the late Stieg Larsson, author of the bestselling Millennium trilogy that was adapted for the big screen. "Quite the opposite. Their real target is distributors, publishers and anyone who makes money off the backs of creators." Swedish author Lars Gustafsson also gave his support to the party in a letter published in the daily Expressen, in which he expressed concern about multinationals trying to patent living organisms. The ideas put forward by the founders of the Pirate Party are gaining ground. "They don't take a position on all the other social issues, but the discussion they are starting is interesting," says Margareta Stavling, an activist for the Social Democratic Party. Even conservatives admit that the party has started a valuable discussion. "They're silent on the big issues of the day - free trade, organized crime and environmental protection," says Henrik Lundquist, a Moderate Party activist. "But I do share some of their concerns about online privacy."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1209

(January 1986) This teacher was to be the first civilian to go into space, at NASA's expense, but without being part of the astronaut program. Unfortunately, she was killed with all her companions by the explosion of the Challenger shuttle shortly after launch. Toyohiro Akiyama and Helen Sharman (December 1990, 8 days, Mir Station) A Japanese journalist and a British chemist are therefore the first civilians to reach space. However, they did not pay for their own ticket. They had been chosen as part of programs funded by the Russian agency and various companies. Dennis Anthony Tito (April 2001, 8 days, International Space Station [ISS]) The first real space tourist, having paid for his own ticket, around $20 million. After working for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL, NASA), he made a fortune by applying his knowledge to stock portfolio management. He was criticized in the United States for his association with the Russian program; American astronauts had refused to train with him, and his reception at the ISS was frosty. Mark Richard Shuttleworth (April 2002, 10 days, ISS) This British entrepreneur of South African origin is best known for his work in the field of computers and open source software. He sold his first company, Thawte, for $575 million in 1999. He subsequently used his capital to develop Linux products such as the Debian operating system and later Ubuntu. Gregory Hammond "Greg" Olsen (October 2005, 10 days, ISS) Both a scientist and an entrepreneur, Greg Olsen founded an optoelectronics company. He has also invested in wine production, owns a ranch in Montana, and teaches physics at Rider University. Civilians in Space 7 Anousheh Ansari (September 2006, 11 days, ISS) The first woman to fly as a tourist in space, and also the first Muslim woman in space, Anousheh Ansari is an Iranian-American, co-founder of the companies Prodea Systems and Telecom Technologies. Her last name is well known since the Ansaris were the main sponsors of the X-Prize, awarded to the first private company to launch a reusable vehicle into space. Charles Simonyi (April 2007, 12 days; March 2009, 13 days, ISS) This businessman is best known for his work at Microsoft, where he designed the first versions of Word and Excel software, which later formed the Office suite. He now owns his own company, Intentional Software. He has flown to the space station twice. After dating Martha Stewart for 15 years, he married a wealthy Swedish woman, 32 years his junior. Guy Laliberté will celebrate his 50th birthday in orbit on the International Space Station, where he will travel on September 30 aboard a Soyuz capsule. - AFP photo Richard Allen Garriott (October 2008, 12 days, ISS) A computer game designer, author of the Ultima series, he founded the company Origin with other members of his family. This company is recognized as one of the most influential in the world of video games. His father, Owen Garriott, was himself an astronaut for NASA, where he carried out two missions in space.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1210

In Estonia, the election of MEPs is spread over eleven days. Since 28 May, citizens have been able to vote online by connecting to the electoral commission website, day or night, from any computer: at home, at work, at a friend's house, or on a public Internet terminal in a library, bank or internet café. Those with a laptop can have fun voting standing up in the street, because the territory of Estonia is crisscrossed by more than a thousand wireless Internet networks. Hede, married, three children, a marketing consultant, lives in a large house in a leafy suburb of Tallinn. She is comfortable on the Internet, but voting is not a trivial act. She decided to do it at home, in the quiet, early in the morning. No need for a voter card, because like 80% of Estonians, Hede has an “ID Kaart”, an identity card with a highly sophisticated computer chip with a double secret code. She inserts her card into a small USB reader connected to her computer and downloads software in a few seconds. Then she enters her first code to identify herself, and arrives on the page displaying the candidates: 11 lists and 6 independents, for 6 seats to be filled. She clicks on the IRL party (moderate right) and confirms her choice by typing her second secret code, a 5-digit combination which, in Estonia, has the legal status of a universal electronic signature. “And there you have it,” concludes Hede, “it’s true that it’s better to concentrate and read the instructions, but it takes five minutes.” » At the same time, on the other side of town, Kristjan, 28, an anthropology student and graphic designer at a publishing house, voted on his laptop, set up in his favourite bar, while having a drink with a girlfriend: "I was reading a newspaper on the Internet, there was an article about the European elections, with a link to the election website. I voted for the Social Democrats. Seven clicks, one minute of work." Here, the Internet is used for everything. For a decade, the state has invested massively in the creation of IT networks and services, so much so that today, the country considers itself a pioneer in "e-governance" and "digital administration". The example comes from above. Every Thursday, the Council of Ministers is held in an ultramodern room set up in the heart of the old State Chancellery Palace. The ministers arrive empty-handed, and sit around the oval table in front of laptops. Prime Minister Andrus Ansip reads the agenda on his screen, using his mouse. All current projects are published on the government intranet, and preparatory work is done online throughout the week. The Thursday meeting is therefore mainly used to validate decisions and resolve disagreements. Lined up along a wall, six studious young people type at high speed on their keyboards. They are there to report on the progress of the council in real time on the Internet - including quarrels and ministerial crises. Each time a decision is made, they send urgent emails to a list of subscribers, which allows local media to publish the information live, even before the end of the council. For several weeks, they have also been sending alerts on the social network Twitter. The population has followed suit. This year, 92% of taxpayers filed their tax returns online and 98% of banking transactions are done via the Internet. Parents have real-time control over their children's school life, as teachers update individual web pages for each student daily: attendance, grades, assessments, incidents, homework, etc. Various administrative procedures and commercial transactions are simplified to the extreme. Thanks to the ID Kaart's double code, any electronic message can be authenticated, signed, and if necessary, encrypted. The Internet is also used to prepay for parking and public transport: on trolleybuses, controllers check that passengers are in order by placing their ID Kaart in a portable reader connected by GSM to a central server. This system has barely been completed and is already being transformed. New Estonian mobile phones are equipped with a chip that can replace the ID Kaart. Users can therefore carry out various operations directly from their mobile, without a card or computer. Voting on the Internet does not therefore appear to be a revolution. The technical operations were entrusted, after a call for tenders, to SK, a private company with about thirty employees controlled by Swedish banks and telecommunications companies. Tarvi Martens, the technical manager of the project, is already jaded: "It's an additional application of our ID Kaart, nothing more. Everyone trusts the Internet for their daily life, there was no reason to exclude the vote from this bouquet of services. Professionally, it's almost routine work." Tarvi Martens is confident of his shot: "We carried out extensive consultations, everything was checked by various groups of independent experts. We use free and open software, the functioning of which is verifiable by everyone." Even in the event of a hacker attack from abroad, the system, according to him, should withstand the shock: "Estonia is a small country, it would be possible to neutralize an attack by cutting off Internet connections with the rest of the world. » However, when the project was launched in 2005, not everyone agreed. The Center Party (popular center-left) and the People's Union (former Agrarian Party) feared technical manipulations, and especially forced votes, under influence. For example, in the privacy of the home, a domineering husband could force his wife to vote like him. In a company, a boss could organize an election night, and pressure his employees to vote under his supervision. Political activists could go door to door to elderly people with a laptop, and take advantage of this to guide their choice... In addition, some politicians, whose voters were mainly rural or retired, feared that this new system would primarily attract young urban people, who would probably not vote for them. After a heated debate, the supporters of Internet voting won in Parliament, but the President of the Republic immediately imposed his veto. The law was finally promulgated by decision of the Constitutional Council, with various safeguards. The system put in place this year attempts to take into account all the fears. Between May 28 and June 3, voters will be able to vote online as many times as they wish, each vote automatically canceling the previous one. Between June 1 and 3, they will also be able to cancel their electronic vote by going to drop off a ballot in a box, because some polling stations will be open during these three days. On June 7, however, the day of the general election, voters who voted online will no longer have the right to change their minds. Internet voting, which was tested during the 2005 municipal elections and then in the 2007 legislative elections, now seems to be accepted by all parties. Politicians of all stripes hope that it will help to slightly increase the overall turnout, which is unlikely to exceed 30%. MEP Tunne Kelam, 73, head of the IRL party (moderate right), has announced that he will vote online. Enn Eesmaa, an MP from the Centre Party, will vote in a traditional polling station on June 7, to get a little crowd bath. In the meantime, he is going out into the field to encourage the inhabitants of his constituency to vote online. His party, which controls the Tallinn municipality, has taken an initiative that is contested by its opponents. It has set up around ten green and white tents in the city, in which young activists equipped with computers attract passers-by to get them to vote immediately. The tent, pitched in front of the Kristiine shopping centre, in a working-class district, is very busy, especially with elderly people, who are afraid of not being able to do it on their own. An old worker with damaged hands is struggling to follow the instructions, before realising that he does not know his second secret code. A saleswoman in the shopping centre has the method explained at length, then decides she has to come back because she doesn't know who to vote for. A stubborn woman finally manages to understand how the system works, after three trips to the tent. All day long, the young activists tirelessly explain the procedure, all the while smiling. Raivo, 48, an accountant, says he didn't need any help. He decided to vote here spontaneously, after discovering the tent by chance, as he was leaving the shopping centre: "The Centre Party was right to put up these tents, otherwise I might have forgotten to go and vote." Then he adds with a laugh: "That didn't stop me from voting for the right." If all goes well this time, the authorities have planned that for the 2011 parliamentary elections, Estonians will be able to vote with their mobile phones.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1211

In collaboration with HEC Montréal, we publish our weekly column on the challenges facing companies in terms of management. Innovation has become one of the main levers of competition. Today, competition is also being played out in the ways of innovating themselves. Promoted in particular by the economist Chesbrough, and implemented by the largest companies, an open innovation model is establishing itself against the old model of closed innovation. Since the beginning of the industrial era, the idea was that companies should cultivate secrecy, keep their discoveries confidential and limit their interactions with the outside world as much as possible in order to concentrate on their own research and development activities. This approach is being shattered. Inspired by new technologies such as the Internet, companies can access at any time varied and scattered knowledge located outside their borders and combine it with their own. Conversely, they can seek to promote externally (through partnerships, sales of property rights, or the creation of spin-offs) internal ideas that are not used within the company, as 3M or Hewlett-Packard do, for example. They can thus quickly and effectively articulate dispersed sources of knowledge to realize opportunities on the market. Priority is now given to open, collective and collaborative practices, personalized, at all stages of innovation. A real culture of participation is gradually becoming established, exploiting in particular the new applications offered by the web (blogs, wikis, video, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), as well as the new possibilities of social networking. It is about innovating more, together, better and faster, recognizing that the creative spark can form at any point in the innovation process (including among customers) and that rapid access to the different places where novelty emerges and to the different stakeholders is entirely strategic. In this context, traditional strategies - standardization, pressure on costs and productivity - have shown their limits. New management challenges are emerging: flexibility, proactivity, specificity, connectivity, etc. The observation is clear: the old regime of productive efficiency is giving way to a new regime based on creative intensity, fueled by openness to diversity. Large companies such as Procter and Gamble or IBM were among the first to profoundly change their organizational mode to experiment with the open innovation model. Knowledge sharing practices are available in various new forms: open source models such as Linux or Wikipedia, crowdsourcing models that consist of using the creativity, intelligence and know-how "of the crowd", or blogsourcing models, which are based on the idea that the creation of content, projects or the development of ideas is done by using a blog as a collaborative creation platform. But to a large extent the business models of this new industrial regime remain to be invented. One of Montreal's great assets is that it is home to flagship companies that have articulated creative management models that are now benchmarks: Cirque du Soleil, Ubisoft, and Sid Lee, among others, apply profoundly original creative organization solutions. Cirque has successfully integrated the commercial and artistic aspects, in particular by opening itself up to sources of inspiration and creators from around the world. Ubisoft manages its creative talents through elaborate community coordination methods, mobilizing employees as well as player-consumers. Sid Lee has developed a "star" organizational model where the client is at the center and the diverse creative talents of the organization's members occupy the branches of the star. Similar thinking is also being done at the NRC, Bell, IBM Bromont, and IREQ. If it is important to open up to the world in order to innovate today, this openness must also occur locally, to draw on the source of remarkable diversity: Montreal. Our metropolis is indeed rich in multiple industrial clusters, driven by world-class players and a multitude of SMEs, but also teeming with scientific research initiatives, artistic and cultural projects, both established and underground. This potential for combining ideas and talents is just waiting to be expressed. At the initiative of the Conférence régionale des élus (CRÉ), we propose to reflect together on projects that would make it possible to take full advantage of Montreal's creative wealth during a public thematic day on June 15 at HEC Montréal. The authors: Patrick Cohendet is a visiting professor in the International Affairs Department (hec.ca/profs/patrick.cohendet.html) and Laurent Simon is an associate professor in the Management Education Department (hec.ca/profs/laurent.simon.html). They are co-founders of the MosaiC group for research, development and transfer on the theme of management of creation in the innovation society. To learn more about the public thematic day on June 15: hec/ecoleete

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1212

What do the Sherbrooke and Montpellier regions of France have in common? Much more than you might think. So much so that "Montpellier-Agglomération" and Innovation et développement économique Sherbrooke (IDES) signed an economic collaboration agreement yesterday, as part of the Rencontres internationales de Sherbrooke et de sa région, which ends today. This agreement, which also involves the Sherbrooke Chamber of Commerce and the Sherbrooke University Center, will help businesses in both regions develop new markets. "We try to reach agreements with cities that share the same sectors of activity as us and the same development philosophy," summarizes Gilbert Pastor, Vice-President of "Montpellier-Agglomération". Center of excellence We are convinced that we have a center of excellence in Sherbrooke. And my greatest wish is that Sherbrooke becomes the gateway to America for our businesses and that Montpellier becomes the gateway for Sherbrooke businesses to Europe," he adds. Although Montpellier has 412,000 inhabitants, nearly three times more than Sherbrooke, and has centuries of history, the two cities share a common concern for the quality of life of their citizens and culture, focus on innovation and have an economy focused on knowledge, university research and the health sector. As the capital of Languedoc-Roussillon, Montpellier is experiencing the strongest population growth in France. Louis Lagassé, President of IDES, points out that Sherbrooke set itself the goal at the 2007 Summit of becoming a capital of innovation by 2012 and that this type of agreement fits perfectly with this objective. "We have a lot to learn from Montpellier. Like them, we want people here to look to the future, but how can we communicate this better?" he says. "Here, we are being bold in creating businesses. Montpellier businesses need to see what is being done here and our businesses need to know what is being done there," says Mr. Lagassé. For his part, Pierre Bélanger, Director General of IDES, emphasizes that "Sherbrooke will welcome Montpellier businesses as if they were from Sherbrooke and Montpellier-Agglomeration will act in the same way with Sherbrooke businesses." "Our respective organizations will offer "coaching" services, which will result in assistance and advice on feasibility plans, business plans, finding financing and support for administrative creation," he illustrates. According to Mayor Jean Perrault, the signing of this agreement confirms the similarities between Sherbrooke and Montpellier: "It gives us a gateway to Europe and to business networking. In addition, the agreement on the recognition of diplomas between France and Quebec will allow for the mobility of the workforce and we know that we will have 25,000 positions to fill in the coming years," he mentions. Among the delegates from "Montpellier-Agglomération" present in Sherbrooke, there are representatives from five companies, who met with local business people to explore the possibilities of trade agreements or partnerships. "This afternoon (yesterday), I am meeting with Révolution Linux, from Sherbrooke, which specializes like us in free software," says Pascal Feydel, CEO of ADULLACT, a Montpellier company that makes "free" software, that is to say, free of manufacturing secrets, for administrations. The delegation from "Montpellier-Agglomération" also went to Montreal and Laval and will go to Quebec City but, assures Mr. Pastor, the Sherbrooke meeting "is at the heart of our visit to Quebec because that historically there were already agreements between the two cities and our universities." According to the president of the Sherbrooke Chamber of Commerce, Éric Bergeron, the Sherbrooke International Meetings "should lead to the creation of an international network of cities/regions and innovative companies interested in increasing their multilateral exchanges."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1213

Despite a court order issued on March 12, Microsoft and the Régie des rentes du Québec are slow to reveal the details of a $700,000 contract awarded without a call for tenders to the multinational software company. Savoir-faire Linux, a small Montreal company specializing in the implementation of free software, has been contesting in court for over a year the fact that this contract for the renewal of the operating systems of the Régie des rentes' computer equipment was awarded to Microsoft without any call for tenders. The small company believes that the government is thus violating the basic rules for awarding public contracts, in addition to depriving itself of thousands of dollars in savings thanks to the use of less expensive software. On March 12, Judge Claude Bouchard of the Superior Court of Quebec ordered that certain elements of the contract between the Régie des rentes and Microsoft be disclosed to Savoir-faire Linux, so that it could determine "the nature of the contract" and who the signatories are. Two and a half months later, no details of the agreement have been transmitted to the company, La Presse has learned. Savoir-faire Linux, assisted in particular by lawyer Julius Gray, has now once again approached the Superior Court to force the two partners to comply with Judge Bouchard's order. According to documents filed with the Court this week, the management of Microsoft USA (Microsoft Licensing General Partnership) held a teleconference with its Montreal lawyer, Karim Renno, to discuss the case on May 16. "The impression we have is that Microsoft is in charge of the entire file," says Cyrille Béraud, president of Savoir-faire Linux. "That the multinational refuses to send us the contract as required by the Court doesn't really surprise me. But that the Régie des rentes is having so much trouble complying with the court order, I find that more worrying. Is Microsoft above the State?" asks Mr. Béraud. Last April, La Presse revealed that the Ministry of Education also awarded a $1.32 million contract to Microsoft without a call for tenders for the purchase of 1,800 Microsoft Office suite licenses. The possibility for the Ministry to use the Open Office suite instead, a free equivalent that Savoir-faire Linux offers to some of its clients, was not studied. Since then, the Quebec government has tabled a draft regulation prohibiting public bodies from awarding contracts by mutual agreement without first having "conducted serious and documented research" demonstrating that no other supplier can offer a product that meets their needs.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1214

The Quebec Ministry of Public Security (MSP) has created its own Google Maps, using free and open source software. The product, which was originally intended to be used by 9-1-1 centres, could even be of interest to other ministries. Simon Mercier, a geomatics consultant for the Ministry of Public Security, presented the results of the MSP's work yesterday at Géodiffusion 2009, a conference that brings together the main players in the geospatial sector, including two representatives from the giant Google. "Geospatial intelligence, with maps and applications published on the Web and portable devices, will become as essential as our electrical networks or the telephone," began Alex Miller, president of ESRI Canada, a producer of geographic information systems. Geographic tools can be used to monitor the evolution of the recession, he gives as an example. With geospatial tools, the Sears company was able to optimize its delivery service and save $50 million per year, he adds. At the Ministry of Public Security, Mr. Mercier has been working since 2007 to set up an infrastructure to allow call centre workers to use geomatics tools. Unlike other organizations that base their services on Google Maps tools, the MSP instead created its own system using open source tools such as MapServers and OpenLayers. This software allows maps to be created very quickly from the extensive data available in the various ministries, whether it is the health network, SEPAQ, the Director General of Elections, municipal road maps or Hydro-Québec electrical addresses. Another advantage of open source software is that if the final product does not meet expectations, a fortune has not been spent to set it up. By using data from ministries, he adds, "it gives us information that is more up to date than what we sometimes find on Google Maps. For example, there were postal codes that were found in the river..." By merging all this information into a single geospatial tool, service providers such as 9-1-1 can make decisions more quickly and provide better information to teams in the field. Internal interest But this infrastructure is of interest to other ministries, notes Simon Mercier. "We didn't want to work in isolation. We are integrators and we have access to data from almost all ministries. What will this ultimately lead to? We don't know yet." Simon Mercier hopes that other users will be able to benefit from it, but there are still problems to resolve regarding the protection of personal information. "There has already been a big step forward in liberalizing information within the government, but more needs to be done so that other application creators can use it. This data exists and we paid for it, we need to make it available." It is possible to quickly create maps from the many data from different ministries passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1215

Can you legally equip your computer with free programs? While the noose is tightening on those who illegally download music or films from the Internet, the installation of so-called "free" software, often free, remains authorized and is growing rapidly. Appearing as the Web was taking off, free software was often created by academics or young computer scientists wishing to offer an alternative to paid programs. A community of open source software programmers has gradually formed, in reaction to the stranglehold of publishing giants such as Microsoft. Unlike most paid products, the software is provided with the "source code" (programming lines). "In short, the "recipe" of the program is given with it", explains Tangui Morlier, vice-president of the Association for the promotion and research in free computing (April). It is then possible to modify it to improve it or remake it. FIXES AND IMPROVEMENTS In addition to being free, these software programs regularly benefit from new versions that correct potential bugs or provide improvements at a rate that is often faster than paid programs. The most famous free software - present on more than one computer in ten - is Linux. This operating system, which appeared in the early 1990s, is an alternative to Microsoft's Windows. It is adopted by a growing number of companies or administrations who see it as a way to reduce costs, since there is no license to pay. Computer manufacturers have even installed it on some of their machines such as Netbooks. Here too, it is a question of saving money in order to be able to sell cheaper products. Another advantage: "Linux is more secure, because it is less susceptible to virus attacks," observes Mr. Morlier. However, few individuals convert to Linux, "mainly for psychological reasons," regrets Anne Nicolas, one of the directors of Mandriva, a company that offers turnkey solutions that bring together several programs running on Linux. "This operating system is synonymous with complexity for a majority of people who learned to use a computer with Windows," she explains. Specialists recognize that certain peripherals - printers for example - can sometimes encounter problems running under Linux. Mandriva offers a solution that allows Linux to be installed on a machine without having to remove Windows. However, there is no need to adopt Linux to use free software. There is one for almost any function and all run perfectly under the Windows platform or even on a Mac. These programs, available for free download on the Internet, will coexist with paid software. One of the most famous is Firefox, an Internet browser whose performance is considered superior to Microsoft's product. Open Office, an office suite that combines a word processor and a spreadsheet, is also widely used. VLC Media player can play audio files as well as most video files. As for Gimps, it offers a very powerful photo editing program. There are even free software for more specific functions: personal finance management, vector drawing, blogging engines, etc. FAVOR OFFICIAL SITES It is difficult to accurately measure the development of free software. In France, more than 30% of Internet surfing is done via Firefox. According to figures from the Pierre Audoin Consultants firm, the free software market grew by 51.1% in France in 2008 and is expected to increase by 38.8% this year. These figures underestimate the phenomenon, because they only track the development of paid free software. They generally include support contracts and are mainly aimed at businesses. On the other hand, for individuals, "free software" is, most of the time, synonymous with free. Be careful, however, not to be fooled by sites that offer to download software on condition that you send an SMS or call a telephone number, which are generally surcharged. There is a great risk of paying for nothing. It is better to favor official sites, even if they do not appear among the first on the list given by the Internet search engine. n

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1216

On the screen, a Star Wars ship takes off from the ground. Another screen: a handball moves towards the left or right goal. On another computer, the visitor moves through a virtual museum. Nothing out of the ordinary on the surface, at a time when video games are increasingly sophisticated, except that these movements are not controlled by a joystick, but directly by thought. This brain-computer interface works thanks to French software, OpenVIBE. The result of cooperation between the National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation (Inria) and the National Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm), this program was presented on Wednesday, May 13. The project was launched in 2005, at a time when this type of research was not very developed in France. It received funding of more than 640,000 euros from the National Research Agency (ANR), support that will continue. Brain-computer interfaces operate according to a simple principle: collect electrical signals emitted during brain activity, process them and translate them into commands for a computer or to control a machine. The applications are intended for both the video game and assistance fields for people with disabilities. The French Association against Myopathies (AFM) is one of the six partners involved in the project. "FILTERING PARASITIC NOISE" The OpenVIBE system is based on the electrical signals emitted by the brain for a given task, which are collected using a flexible headset equipped with electrodes. First, the user actually performs the requested gesture: moving their feet or one of their hands. Second, they are asked to perform the gesture in thought, without movement. "We start with a data acquisition phase. Then, after filtering the parasitic noise from the signal, comes the data extraction phase. The software "learns". "It classifies the mental state characteristic of the user's thoughts," explains Anatole Lécuyer (Inria). OpenVIBE is then able to transmit the command from the electrical signals emitted when the person imagines an action, while the subject controls the execution of the task he has thought of on the screen. OpenVIBE is also a communication aid tool, in particular through an application that can detect a given letter and, thus, dictate words. The subject faces a screen on which the letters of the alphabet, arranged in the form of a table, are successively flashed. He mentally counts each time the desired letter is illuminated. During the demonstration, once the subject has reached 10, the chosen letter is displayed in a field provided for the text to be dictated. Under these conditions, several seconds are required per letter, but the delay can be shortened by reducing the number of flashes required. The software "can also be useful for trying to communicate an instruction given to a person in a coma or in a vegetative state, in order to detect the cerebral expression of a response," says Olivier Bertrand of Inserm. Similarly, in addition to applications for video games, OpenVIBE could be used for therapeutic purposes for what are called "serious games." For example, "neurofeedback," applied to pain (tinnitus, "phantom limb" in an amputee) or attention deficit with agitation. The technique consists of decoding these brain signals and sending the information back to the person, asking them to regulate their response. "It's about generating cerebral plasticity in relation to a dysfunction linked to a disability, by helping the cerebral cortex to reorganize itself," says Olivier Bertrand. The software also appears to be a neuroscience research tool for exploring the neural mechanisms that support adaptation and cerebral plasticity.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1217

For Petra Friedmann, CEO of Opodo France, Switzerland and Belgium, an online travel agency, the economic crisis has not affected this distribution channel, because it is, according to her, best suited to the constraints that consumers must face to satisfy their desire to escape. After seven years of activity, Opodo is in the top three online travel agencies in France. How is this sector reacting to the crisis and the resulting drop in purchasing power? We are indeed seeing a decline in bookings and departures, but this is still not the case for online travel, which continues to grow. For Opodo, in France, for example, the number of transactions increased by 40% in the first quarter of 2009 compared to the same period in 2008. The crisis is only accentuating a phenomenon that we have been detecting for six years now - in particular thanks to our Opodo barometer on French people's holidays - namely the decline in "travel power" and the trade-offs made by consumers in an effort to maintain it. Purchasing services via the Web is one of the main tools that the French have seized to optimize their spending: 30% of those who go on holiday now buy their trips this way. This formula not only offers competitive prices, it completely revolutionizes the way people approach their holidays by offering unparalleled freedom of comparison and choice. In 2008, you achieved a 52% increase in sales volume, for a profit of 6 million euros. How do you explain this result? In 2005, travel agencies lost the commission paid by airlines on each ticket sold. The industry's responses to this earthquake were varied: specialization in the high-end, diversification, but also a wait-and-see attitude... fatal for some, because the crisis left them no time to carry out a controlled restructuring. On the other hand, our choice was quick and very simple. We had to refocus on our expertise: distribution. Success could only come from maintaining profitability on the sale of the most difficult product: the airline ticket. If we succeeded in the core business, we could also succeed in the rest. So we overhauled our entire activity: the organization, the IT platform, the marketing models, the "pricin g" [pricing]... Initially based in Germany, then in Switzerland, customer relations is now based in France, in a specialized call center where only travel agents working exclusively for Opodo work. The satisfaction rate was felt: 97%. Beyond 2008, it is now that these efforts will bear fruit. We are a low-cost structure, so we can guarantee the lowest price, and generate margins that will allow us to continue to invest in quality and gain market share. While many companies choose to outsource their IT tools, you have chosen to manage them internally. Have you really benefited from this? Yes. Since all aspects of our business go through IT - an efficient and targeted customer service cannot exist without suitable tools - I have tried to apply a simple rule: to react quickly to market changes, to innovate, you have to eliminate all third-party stakeholders. Internalizing the IT tool first guarantees the possibility of defining and controlling your own development philosophy through ongoing dialogue between user teams and IT specialists. It offers incomparable responsiveness and the reversibility of any modification. With us, no project lasts more than three months. Internalization has also encouraged the use of "free" software [developers can freely intervene on the software], factors of flexibility and savings. Finally, it has built a common culture of teams by capitalizing on experiences. Many online travel sites have the same architecture. How do you plan to differentiate yourself in the future? We tend to look for the "killer application", the technological tool supposed to make the difference, but I don't think things work like that. I am convinced that, in the future, success with the consumer will obey the same rules as today: listen to them and provide them with the best quality/price ratio, a very easy-to-use site and quality service. Especially if we think that consumer trends will increasingly focus on the essentials. Are you optimistic for 2009, despite the economic slowdown and the A flu? For the sector, I fear that 2009 will not be a good year. It is very likely that, in the coming months, travel will be less frequent. For Opodo, I remain optimistic, because we are particularly well equipped. But you don't do this job without a good dose of optimism! It also requires a real capacity for resilience. Because if we count, without even mentioning September 11, 2001, how many natural disasters, conflicts, wars, epidemics, immediately (over)publicized, have we experienced since the beginning of the century! And yet, each time, the machine starts up again... Because exchange, travel, leisure, are essential human needs. "Travel more to live more", in a way...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1218

No preamble, no bowing and turning with Christian Paul. In his cluttered and impersonal office in the National Assembly - only a penguin "Paul President", the mascot of the free software Linux, is hanging on the coat rack - this PS deputy from Nièvre attacks head on at the mere mention of the word Hadopi. The speech is ultra-rehearsed and solidly argued, the elocution rich and easy, and there is no other solution, when one wishes to intervene, than to interrupt this perfectly oiled oratorical mechanism. Inexhaustible on the subject, this "download musketeer", as the one who never ceases to advocate the legalization of non-commercial exchanges on the Web is sometimes nicknamed, has once again pulled off a great coup. He and his colleagues from the left have caused the final vote on the "Creation and Internet" law to fail, which, for the trouble, has returned to Parliament for a second reading. This is to say that this former Secretary of State for Overseas Territories under Lionel Jospin, author of several reports on digital issues, is synonymous with nightmare for the two successive Ministers of Culture who have tackled the subject. His opponents at least recognize this quality in him: consistency on an eminently complex subject. "Of all our opponents, he is undoubtedly the most convinced," says a member of the majority. "But he quickly tends to take others for fools when people do not share his point of view. He is not demagogic but tough, sure of himself and sectarian." The commitment to the legalization of a space for "non-commercial" exchanges on the Web of this elected official from a very rural region in which the arrival of broadband was a "resounding event" goes back to 2004. Precisely to a column in Libération in which he did not hesitate to respond to some of his sacred monsters like Patrice Chéreau (he owes him the discovery of Wagner's Ring on television) to denounce illusory "Maginot lines on the Net" and a crusade against "piracy" - he refutes the term which, according to him, falls under "maritime law". "I was a little intimidated to oppose creators whose work I deeply admire," he admits. But since then, the leather has become tanned and I am certain that the artists, who are constantly being exploited, will know how to sort things out when all this excitement has died down." What "saddens" this lover of contemporary art and opera is not opposing the bosses of major record labels such as Pascal Nègre, but having to confront those he calls his "buddies", the independents. "Buddys" who today feel "betrayed" by the left and to whom, he says, have been sold a "security illusion" while the law "is not going to bring in a euro for their artists". Christian Paul belongs to this left imbued with the idea of progress that was yesterday said to be productivist and which keeps all its faith in the future. In this new digital world where "nothing will be the same again", he is certain, different forms of access to culture can coexist in a joyful mix of commercial and non-commercial models. Utopia? "Not at all," says this father of three teenagers who practice "anticipatory legalization" at home without asking himself at each site visited whether it is "legal or not, it makes no sense to them." A great reader - he gets his supplies at the La Hune bookstore in Saint-Germain-des-Prés - this reputed "hard worker" nourishes his discourse with an assiduous reading of the "classics" of post-industrial society, this other name for digital civilization of which Hadopi is said to be "the first great political battle." From the already distant Nora-Minc report on the computerization of society in the 1970s to the American theorist of copyleft - as opposed to copyright - Lawrence Lessig, from the Spanish network sociologist Manuel Castells to Jacques Attali, via the economist Daniel Cohen, this agitator of concepts to whom Martine Aubry entrusted the reins of the new internal think tank of the PS has absorbed a lot to understand how the Internet is radically transforming society. "Our project is based on a vision of the immaterial economy in embryo," he says. "Rather than exhausting its energy repressing a new cultural practice as if it were a "social pathology," the government would be more inspired to convert it into a creative policy." This "creative" person, this "expert in political engineering" as his Burgundian "brother-in-arms" Arnaud Montebourg describes him, is convinced that the left will know, as in the past, "how to find solutions" to perpetuate the French model of cultural exception. "We established a single price for books and maintained bookstores, we saved cinema by having it financed by television," he sums up. I don't see why we wouldn't be able to find mechanisms to allow Beaumarchais' copyright to reinvent itself in the era of networks." Let it be said, this enthusiast for regional planning and specialist in hospital maps does not feel like a "libertarian". "I do not mythologize technology and I am aware of its dangers," he explains. "That is why I have always been in favor of strong regulation of the Internet, but we will not make something new out of something old. Ask Susan Boyle [the 47-year-old Scottish singer revealed by the show Britain's Got Talent, editor's note] if she regrets the existence of the Internet?" The optimist made man, this Christian Paul... It must be said that life seems to have rather spoiled this false nice guy who "sometimes feels like hitting out" at a government "bearer of revealed truth". Born in Clermont-Ferrand in a modest and Christian-democrat background - "I broke off after my first communion" he specifies -, this leader and brilliant student, accustomed to the role of class representative, fell into politics early. A child of Mitterrand and the Common Programme, raised between Althusser and Alain Touraine, he joined the Socialist Party in 1978 in a working-class section. A fine swordsman, the lover of words that hit the mark first saw himself as a lawyer before going to Paris to study Sciences-Po and then the ENA. A classic path that led him to an internship in this Nièvre Morvan region that he would never leave again and which allowed him to go and recharge his batteries every weekend in a very concrete field laboratory. It was there that this former sub-prefect, who worked in various ministerial offices and briefly at Beaubourg, would find his electoral ties and his new job as a full-time elected official, starting with the town hall of Lormes, 1,500 inhabitants, before becoming a deputy and vice-president of the Burgundy region. A man of files rather than apparatus, this former "Jospin baby" has been involved in all the "renovations" of the old house: with his friend Arnaud Montebourg at the NPS, Ségolène Royal and now with Martine Aubry, whom he is pleased to welcome, after the Hollande "extinguisher", that she is putting the party back to work. An original alloy, this neo-rural and progressive intellectual who fell into the digital pot.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1219

We were expecting IBM, but it will be Oracle. By announcing on Monday the acquisition of Sun Microsystems, the inventor of Java (the Internet application development language developed in 1995) by the king of databases, Oracle created a surprise. At $7.4 billion (€5.7 billion), this friendly offer is in fact barely higher than IBM's last proposal, rejected two weeks ago and then deemed insufficient. "I am very, very surprised," reacted Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, as were Deutsche Bank analysts, who considered this transaction "surprising." At first glance, these two companies, although partners for more than twenty years and both born under the Silicon Valley sun in the early 1980s, have little in common. Despite a voracious acquisition spree to strengthen its range of business services ($35 billion in four years), Oracle remains above all a software supplier, number 2 in the sector worldwide behind Microsoft. As for Sun, number 4 in corporate servers, it is above all a giant in the sale of hardware, servers in this case, with which it achieves 60% of its activity. Open source. This marriage of software and equipment, software and hardware, is precisely Oracle's bet to make the new entity a supplier of global solutions capable of competing with the biggest such as HP, IBM, and even Microsoft. "Oracle is now able to provide all the pieces of an assembly of technologies that fit together perfectly," explains Larry Ellison, CEO of Oracle, the third richest person in the United States and a sailing enthusiast since he has already participated in two America's Cups. From hard drives to software, including operating and storage systems, almost the entire information technology value chain will be brought together in a single solution. Which, Ellison specifies, will save customers from having to assemble these usually separate elements themselves. A sort of professional equivalent of what the Apple environment is for the general public. Gems. A strategic shift for Oracle, this marriage also allows it to get its hands on two technological gems from Sun: the Java language, which now extends to smartphone applications, and the Solaris operating system, on which most of Oracle's databases run. Very attached to the proprietary and paid software model, Oracle also gets its hands on MySQL, an "open" and opensource database that Sun had acquired for $1 billion several years ago. With a culture clash and some integration difficulties in perspective, since it is hard to imagine Oracle promoting this free alternative when the core of its activity consists precisely in charging for this type of service. While the 30,000 employees of Sun Microsystems could well pay the price of this marriage (during previous Oracle buyouts such as PeopleSoft or Siebel, thousands of employees were laid off), this operation should, Oracle promises, be immediately profitable, with 1.5 billion dollars of profits in the first year and more than 2 billion by 2011. If the announcement of this buyout logically caused the Sun Microsystems share price to jump (+ 36%), long losing momentum due to the company's continuous decline in recent years, Oracle's strategic shift does not seem to have convinced the markets, which are expecting a significant decline in high-tech investments this year due to the crisis.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1220

B2I The computer and Internet certificate recognizes the skills students acquired at the end of primary school, at the end of middle school and at the end of high school, in the field of digital uses. The system is supplemented, in higher education, by a C2I level 1 that all students must obtain, and a C2I level 2, necessary for any future teacher. BLOG Contraction of Web and log, logbook, notebook. They are hugely popular among French teenagers. Skyblog hosts around 13 million of them. More and more teachers are using them for educational purposes. EAD Distance learning, now synonymous with e-learning. ENT Digital work environment. The ENT is a virtual office on which each member of the educational community has a space, teachers, administrative staff, educational advisors, nurses, students, parents of students. Accessible from home, its rise in power raises the problem of the digital divide (read below). ETWINNING European Commission programme for electronic twinning between European primary and secondary schools around educational projects. France has just exceeded 6,000 registered establishments. DIGITAL DIVIDE The separation between those who are connected and those who are not, often low-income families. Only 47% of households have access to the Internet. It is the paradox of France to be the European leader in broadband access but not among the good students in the development of home computing. GEEK Person, generally a teenager, passionate about computers and video games. To be differentiated from "nolife", who have become addicted. SERIOUS GAMES or serious games. Derived from video games, they have long been used in continuing education as learning vectors. They remain almost foreign to initial training in France. To be published in June, a European study by European Schoolnet on the use of electronic games in schools. OPENSOURCE Software license called free, assuming its free distribution and its open source code so that it can be modified by its user according to their needs. IWB OR IWB Whiteboard, or digital, interactive. A computer screen the size of a blackboard, which is controlled by touch using a stylus. An important technological advance: it combines the teacher's frontal relationship with his class and all digital resources. TICE Information and communication technologies for education. The application of digital technology to school and university systems. WEB 2.0 Use of the Internet that allows the Internet user to interact with the content of Web pages and to identify with a community. WIKI Website that allows you to modify or create your pages without knowing a computer language. The most famous example: the collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1221

ARTS TEACHER at the Mendès-France high school in Péronne (Somme), Bruno Deshayes has been using information and communication technologies for teaching (ICT) since 1998. He is also preparing to show, during the high school's cultural day on April 17, a one-hour film retracing the students' work since 1999. This work was made possible thanks to the equipment made available to everyone in the arts room: fourteen computers equipped with photo editing software (Photoshop), or free graphics software (Gimp), printers, overhead projector, cameras and cameras that can be used to archive each stage of a project. "We were pioneers in this area and we were right," he says happily. For the past three years, students have been able to present three-minute videos and 2D and 3D productions for their baccalaureate exams. It is much more democratic intellectually, because it allows students who do not know how to draw well to get very good grades because they still had things to express." In terms of teaching, everything is also different. According to Mr. Deshayes, movement around the room is freer, which encourages sharing and research. The students do not get rowdy, however, since they are more interested, and they feel valued by the preservation of their work. "The new horizons offered by technology also encourage greater questioning on the part of the students. It gives them openings that were unimaginable before," the teacher continues. They do not hesitate to make short films with video cameras or their cell phones. Of course, I manage all of that, but they are already used to blogs, and know that you don't put just anything online. Ultimately, it is the entire educational relationship that is shaken up. It enriches my lessons and my exchanges with students. Sometimes, they are the ones who show me a new application.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1222

Acer is now playing in the big leagues and is keen to make it known. The Taiwanese computer manufacturer, which in the space of two years has gone from fifth to third place worldwide behind the Americans Hewlett-Packard (HP) and Dell, held a press tour at the beginning of April - Tuesday 7 April in New York, Wednesday 8 in Beijing and Thursday 9 in Amsterdam - accompanied by a massive advertising campaign in the press. The opportunity for its president, the Italian Gianfranco Lanci, to present a slew of new machines and to proclaim an ambition that is striking in this period of crisis: to increase its sales of portable PCs by 30% to 40% in 2009 compared to 2008 and to become the world number one in this segment within two years. A simple assembler for major Western brands in the early 2000s, Acer has managed to make a name for itself thanks to an aggressive pricing policy made possible by very low overheads: the group does not have its own factory or distribution network and subcontracts all the assembly of its machines, mainly in China. It has also conquered a large share of the market by managing to take control, one after the other in 2007, of two well-known American companies: Gateway, particularly appreciated by professionals in the United States, and Packard Bell, well established in Europe with the general public. In recent months, Acer has further reduced the gap with HP and Dell thanks to the overwhelming success of "mini-laptops", computers under $500 with modest technical performance, equipped with a minimum of applications, mainly intended for surfing the Internet. A wise policy: according to the Anglo-Saxon research firm Gartner, in 2009, only this segment of the market will be growing in the IT sector. It was not Acer, but another Taiwanese company, Asustek, who first launched a range of mini-portable PCs, the Eee PC, at the end of 2007. Acer followed suit at the beginning of 2008. The managers of HP and Dell, on the other hand, were surprised by the overwhelming success of these small machines, and their competing products only began to arrive on the market six months later. "At that time, we didn't really believe in PCs with 7- or 8-inch screens and a Linux operating system [free software] that wasn't comfortable enough to use for sales to take off. "We waited until we had PCs with a screen size of at least 10 inches and a Microsoft operating system, which is easier to use for the general public, before launching," explains Olivier Gillet, marketing director at HP France. Thanks to mini-laptops, Acer became number one in Europe in the third quarter of 2008 in sales of laptops, the market segment that professionals are most interested in today, because the desktop PC market is losing ground. It was the launch by Intel, the world's leading semiconductor manufacturer, of the "Atom" processor, which is particularly compact and energy-efficient, that enabled the marketing of mini-laptops. Thanks to offers coupled with telephone subscriptions from telecommunications operators, these machines have been a huge success in Europe. 6 million units have been sold, half of global sales according to Gartner. Operators offer a subsidized machine equipped with a "3G" key, which once connected to the computer allows wireless Internet access via mobile phone networks. "They are perfect as a second device, especially for professionals who travel a lot. They also arrive at a time when consumers are paying much more attention to their spending, explains Bruno Lakehal, an analyst at Gartner. Despite their price, mini-laptops do not yet work in developing countries, where telephone networks are not yet sufficiently developed to ensure a good Internet connection." But the success of mini-laptops has its perverse effects. Their low price has reduced the already low financial margin of manufacturers. As a result, today, Acer and its competitors are trying to increase their margins again by "segmenting" their product ranges, that is to say by increasing the number of limited series, collaborations with designers, technical additions, in order to be able to sell them at a higher price. During its press tour, Acer presented a very thin PC called "Timeline", in the same vein as Apple's Macbook Air, for 800 euros. In the same spirit, HP launched a "mininote" designed by New York designer Vivian Tam and a 12-inch laptop that allows you to use more demanding computer applications than a simple office suite.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1223

"Pay for free and powerful software" is the slogan of the poster available on the Zone libre en éducation website to promote the free office software Open Office. We invite you to print it and display it everywhere, especially in teachers' rooms or computer labs. Giving students the option of using free office software rather than imposing paid software saves money and prevents computer piracy. bit. ly/llEjU

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1224

Specializing in intelligent computer systems for business management, Sherbrooke-based Dunin Technologie Inc. is among the Estrie companies selected as finalists in the 23rd edition of the OCTAS 2009 competition held Wednesday in Montreal. Nominated in the "innovation" category for companies with fewer than 20 employees, Dunin is among the 77 finalists selected. In all, 22 winning organizations will be crowned in as many categories on May 23 at the Palais des Congrès de Montréal. The OCTAS competition aims to showcase Quebec information technology projects. Dunin Technologie was selected for its "Dynamic Scheduling and Real-Time Floor Management" project, which allows companies to save time and energy through closely monitored computer management of their various tasks. "We invested more than three years of research into this project," emphasizes Serge Dumoulin, the company's president. "What is also attractive about this technology is how easy it is to deploy in a company. Our recent interventions were completed in less than three months with a return on investment in the fourth month." The risk is minimal for customers, says Éric Gauthier, Vice President of Dunin Technologie: "In times of crisis, people are more cautious about investing, so we finance our customers ourselves to help them achieve a competitive level of performance by using our solution." In addition to Dunin, among the Estrie finalists is Bombardier Produits Récréatifs in the "infrastructure" category. The Université de Sherbrooke is a finalist twice for "la relève étudiante universitaire", including once for a dynamic malware analysis project in partnership with the Sherbrooke company Révolution Linux. Révolution Linux is also a partner with finalist Plastik MP (from Richmond and Epsilon Technologies in a project in the "free software business solution" category called "adaptation and implementation of OpenERP". Also among the finalists is the company Boréal Informations Stratégiques (Boréalis), from Magog, in the "business intelligence" category. Nmedia Solution, from Drummondville, is also a finalist, in the "consumer electronic business" category as a partner in the RONA Prêts-à-rénover site project.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1225

Without issuing any call for tenders, the Ministry of Education awarded a $1.32 million contract to Microsoft to acquire 1,800 licenses for the Microsoft Office Professional 2007 office suite. In addition to these 1,800 licenses, all school boards in the province will also have to provide their employees with computers equipped with the Office 2007 Professional software "as of this spring." "There was no call for tenders, because only Microsoft provides the Office 2007 software," is the justification given by the Ministry of Education. This explanation makes Cyrille Béraud, president of Savoir-faire Linux, a Montreal firm that specializes in implementing free software in businesses, laugh. "It's as if the government were changing its vehicle fleet for BMWs by saying that only BMW makes BMWs," he says. The Ministry of Education will pay $733 per licence for the use of Microsoft Office 2007. Installing a free and open source equivalent such as Open Office would cost a fraction of that price, estimates Savoir-faire Linux. "The simple fact of putting us in competition in a call for tenders against Microsoft would probably have forced Microsoft to lower its price," estimates Mr. Béraud. "It's a good example of the stranglehold this multinational has on the government. And that's just the tip of the iceberg." In March 2008, Savoir-faire Linux filed a lawsuit against the Régie des rentes du Québec, after the latter announced that it intended to entrust Microsoft, without a call for tenders, with the renewal of the licences for the operating systems of its computer equipment. "The contracts that the government concludes with Microsoft are always very opaque," says Mr. Béraud. According to what La Presse has learned, Microsoft will soon have to open its books, at least in part. In mid-March, the Superior Court of Quebec ordered the Régie des rentes to provide Savoir-faire Linux with certain details of the contracts it awarded to the Silicon Valley multinational. This Superior Court decision comes at a time when governments around the world have begun to adopt open source software to save on licensing fees. In France, the National Gendarmerie and the Directorate General of Taxes have swapped all their Microsoft Office software suites for their open equivalent, Open Office. They each claim to save tens of thousands of euros per year. In the Netherlands, since 2007, under a policy called comply or explain, the government must promote the acquisition of free and open source software, failing which it must publicly explain its choice. "In Quebec, there is clearly a lack of political will for free software to take off," says Louis Martin, holder of the Logiciellibre, finance sociale et solidaire chair at UQAM.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1226

Without issuing any call for tenders, the Ministry of Education awarded a $1.32 million contract to Microsoft to acquire 1,800 licenses for the Microsoft Office Professional 2007 office suite. In addition to these 1,800 licenses, all school boards in the province will also have to provide their employees with computers equipped with the Office 2007 Professional software "as of this spring." "There was no call for tenders, because only Microsoft provides the Office 2007 software," is the justification given by the Ministry of Education. This explanation makes Cyrille Béraud, president of Savoir-faire Linux, a Montreal firm that specializes in implementing free software in businesses, laugh. "It's as if the government were changing its vehicle fleet for BMWs by saying that only BMW makes BMWs," he says. The Ministry of Education will pay $733 per license for the use of Microsoft Office 2007. Installing a free and open source equivalent like Open Office would cost a fraction of that price, estimates Savoir-faire Linux. "The simple fact of putting us in competition in a call for tenders against Microsoft would probably have forced Microsoft to lower its price," estimates Mr. Béraud. "It's a good example of the stranglehold that this multinational has on the government. And that's just the tip of the iceberg." In March 2008, Savoir-faire Linux filed a lawsuit against the Régie des rentes du Québec, after the latter announced that it intended to entrust Microsoft, without a call for tenders, with the renewal of the operating system licenses for its computer equipment. According to what La Presse has learned, Microsoft will soon have to open its books, at least in part. In mid-March, the Superior Court of Quebec ordered the Régie des rentes to provide Savoir-faire Linux with certain details of the contracts it awarded to the Silicon Valley multinational. This Superior Court decision comes at a time when governments around the world have begun to adopt open source software to save on licensing fees. "In Quebec, there is clearly a lack of political will for free software to take off," says Louis Martin, holder of the Logiciellibre, finance sociale et solidaire chair at UQAM. "The problem is that there is a profound lack of understanding of what this software is. It is obviously not a panacea, but it is a solution that deserves to be studied seriously," he believes.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1227

(TM) From one school board (CS) to another, the most popular sites on the Web are judged differently. YouTube is thus authorized in the establishments of the CS des Navigateurs, but not in those of the Découvreurs. Overview of the different techniques and the "logic" underlying the blockages. The Commission scolaire (CS) de la Capitale uses the services of a firewall software managed by an external firm. Thus, a category of sites and subjects deemed controversial are blocked. "This is the case for sites with the words: sex, violence, adult material or hacking," specifies spokesperson Marie-Hélène Dion. The software is updated regularly. Claude Lajoie, director of IT services, recognizes that "the line can be thin" and that the software can censor a sex education site by confusing it with an adult site. "A web link that describes a panda's sexual organ is not necessarily pornographic," he says. At the CS des Navigateurs, on the South Shore, communications coordinator Louise Boivert explains that blocking is done through a subscription to blacklist.org. "It's free software with the Linux system that costs us $600 per year," she says. "It detects and blocks thousands of sites according to their theme: drinking, firearms, gambling, aggression and pornography." Sites that take up too much bandwidth can also be blocked. The sharing line remains the "educational content" of Internet references. This is why the social networking site Facebook is censored for "lack of educational content," while the video sharing site YouTube is freely accessible. "You can listen to music and learn to play certain instruments there," according to Ms. Boisvert. On the side of the CS des Découvreurs, Claire Savard explains the blocking of YouTube by "traffic management (on the bandwidth)". Faced with problems comparable to those of the CS de la Capitale, the managers of the CS des Premières-Seignoiries are in the process of implementing a new control system. "With the old system, which was not that old, it happened that a site with a .com extension was censored, but not the same site with the .ca extension", acknowledges Langis Michaud, manager of the IT department. A new firewall, produced by the firm Fortinet, was installed last week. A preliminary version, which still has to be approved by the competent authorities, bans sites that contain racism or hate and those devoted to hacking and pornography. It authorizes links that discuss child abuse, abortion, homosexuality and plagiarism.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1228

Halfway between a laptop and a smartphone, this communicating device has enjoyed astonishing success since its appearance a year ago. They are perfect for surfing the Internet by connecting to a Wi-Fi or 3G network, managing emails, contacting friends on Facebook, video conferencing or using office applications. Mini-laptops, also called netbooks, have found their audience in less than a year in a market segment that few initially believed in. According to the GfK marketing research institute, from 10,000 units sold in France in January 2008, this figure jumped to 104,000 last December. 500,000 netbooks were sold last year in our country, including 362,000 direct sales, the rest being made by mobile operators. Asus was the first to draw the gun, at the beginning of 2008, with its famous Eee PC. Users are discovering with interest the virtues of this lightweight and communicative mini-laptop, sold for less than 400 euros (it is also offered by SFR with a 3G key and a dedicated subscription). Of course, the screen is only 7 to 8 inches, the keyboard remains difficult to grasp because of narrow keys, and the battery life is limited, but success is there and many manufacturers are rushing into the breach. We have identified up to 17 brands distributed in France. Faced with this fierce competition, prices continue to fall (as well as manufacturers' margins), sometimes falling below the 300 euro mark. At the same time, the characteristics are evolving in the right direction. Screens now range between 9 and 10 inches to facilitate reading comfort, the keyboard is wider with keys spaced further apart than before, and the batteries often have 6 cells, compared to 3 previously, to improve battery life. Finally, we note the growing disaffection of the Linux operating system. Even if this free software allows you to save 50 euros compared to Microsoft's Windows XP, users prefer the user-friendliness of a familiar environment. A little too quickly buried by Microsoft, XP is thus experiencing a second youth compared to Windows Vista, which is too greedy for these small machines. The future of netbooks nevertheless appears uncertain. Analysts such as ABI Research or GfK point out the narrow window of this market segment, stuck between the rise of smartphones (which look like real computers) and the fall in the price of notebooks (classic laptops), sometimes below the limit of 400 euros. Will they be able to resist? Asus provides an element of the answer by emphasizing the communication specificity of the product (see interview p. 144), while the analysis firm IDC estimates that the global market will continue to grow, going from 10 million units this year to 30 million in 2012, particularly in Europe, where consumers perceive the netbook as a cheap and easy-to-carry spare PC. If you do not want to do advanced photo editing, video editing, or use creative applications and even less video games, you may be tempted by one of the new models that we are offering you. Especially since their aesthetics have nothing to envy of their big brothers. Sony and Asus have recently decided to position themselves in the high-end by releasing refined versions (lacquered shell, crystal inlays, improved performance, etc.). Sony's latest little marvel weighs 638 grams on the scale compared to 1 kilo for its competitors. Slipped into a handbag or a large pocket, you would almost forget about it, if it weren't for its price: more than 1,000 euros. Also note the upcoming release of a mini Macbook if we are to believe the rumors on the net. No confirmation for the moment from Apple but the forecasts of a decline in the market for classic computers for 2009 argue for this scenario. Finally, some will appreciate the decision of the joint committee, on January 28, not to follow the Senate's proposal to impose the fee for "all types of terminals", including computers. Rather unpleasant, indeed, to have to pay 118 euros per year for a product that cost less than 300 euros, especially if you don't watch television!

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1229

IBM, SUN MICROSYSTEMS Will SUN MICROSYSTEMS fall into Big Blue's hands? Yesterday, the Wall Street Journal revealed that IBM and Sun had entered into discussions and that, if the deal was concluded, the acquisition could be decided as early as this week for a minimum of $6.5 billion in cash, a 100% premium to Tuesday's closing price. IBM confirmed that it had emotionally opened the dialogue. As a result, Sun Microsystems shares jumped 61% to $8. This would be the largest acquisition in IBM's history. Last year, the latter acquired Canadian publisher Cognos for $5 billion. IBM CEO Samuel Palmisano promised last week to be "offensive" in the face of the economic crisis, assuring that the group would "continue to invest in research and development, in strategic acquisitions, in growth initiatives." Sun Microsystems reportedly knocked on several doors before opening IBM's. HP, with which Sun nevertheless concluded a strategic partnership in February, reportedly declined the offer. Such a transaction would have the advantage of widening the gap between IBM and HP in the booming server market thanks to the rise of cloud computing, online storage services. Yesterday, Cisco, the American telecom equipment giant, added itself to the list of competitors by announcing that it was entering this market. IBM and Sun Microsystems do have some things in common, it is true. Both are developing on the fringes of Microsoft's Windows universe. They are also supporters of open source software. Sun Microsystems in loss On the other hand, the cultures of the two companies are quite different: on the one hand, the veteran IBM has 386,558 employees. Big Blue, the former heavyweight in PCs and servers, has transformed itself into a group in which services represent the majority of sales. And software and services now bring in the majority of profits. Opposite, Sun Microsystems, which grew up in Silicon Valley in the 1980s, has a total of 33,556 employees. The company, which invented the Java programming language and the Solaris operating system, cultivates innovation. But the two high-tech companies are not in the same health. IBM made a profit of $16.7 billion in 2008, while Sun only made $473 million. During the two quarters of the 2008-2009 financial year, Sun Microsystems saw its sales fall. The Californian group even reported a loss of $1.6 billion in the first quarter.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1230

Free software is becoming increasingly popular in business. It must be said that in theory, it is more than attractive, particularly with the promise of a significant reduction in acquisition and usage costs. Except that in practice, it is not as apparent. Nevertheless: the current crisis could accelerate its adoption. In any case, this adoption seems inevitable. Gartner estimates that in three years, no fewer than nine out of ten companies will integrate at least one free software into their current activities. However, they risk being faced with technical problems that could make them regret such a choice, they warn. "In many cases, the offer, maintenance and usage costs will remain identical [to a proprietary solution]", concludes Gartner. It must be said that there are more and more free software for businesses. And organizations to offer support to SMEs that adopt them. There are more and more of them. Infoglobe has noted that its clientele includes more and more SMEs. Even if, in the end, the savings promised by software advertised as free are often not there. Zineb Midafi, project manager for Infoglobe, explains: "It's difficult to quantify the real savings. At least, it avoids having to pay an annual license, or having to make forced updates without wanting to." Josianne Marsan is a doctoral student in information technology at HEC Montréal. Her thesis focuses precisely on free software. She seems to support the warning issued by Gartner in its study: while the supply of this software is growing, demand is somewhat reluctant. "There are questions that come up often," she says. "Some companies are simply afraid of the unknown, others of the lack of technical support for this software." The weight of numbers In short, it will not necessarily be the El Dorado promised by many. But the never-ending crisis seems to favor free software despite everything. That's what Pascale Tardif, an engineer at the Montreal Computer Research Center (CRIM), a specialist when it comes to free software, thinks. "The crisis will lead to a new way of doing business that could make a big place for free software," she says. Without being a cost-cutting solution that could save a company in difficulty. It's rather the financial fragility of certain giants, until now perceived as untouchable, that leaves the impression that free solutions, developed by a community of independent developers, could prove more sustainable than their proprietary counterparts. "A year ago, we thought that General Motors was indestructible," illustrates the engineer. And today, its customers are wondering who will assume the warranty it offers on all its vehicles if the company were to disappear. "What tells us that in five or ten years, a company whose documents were written in an old version of Word will still be able to access their content?" asks Pascale Tardif. Continuing with the automobile metaphor, she adds: "Free software is like the parts of an automobile." So you can change specific parts as needed, not the entire vehicle. "When software is produced by a strong community of developers, it is a very high-quality product." It must be said that CRIM is preaching a bit for its own parish. Last week, the Montreal Centre presented its newest product, an electronic document management software called Alfresco, which operates completely free of charge. In doing so, the Montreal organization is getting involved in helping to correct the lack of support for Quebec SMEs. "This is something that CRIM can do," admits Pascale Tardif. "It may not be a real cost-cutting solution, but it is a smarter way of making software."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1231

The wealth of our economies is based on natural resources that are being depleted, and the increase in GDP - a political holy grail if ever there was one - is putting too much pressure on the environment. This observation is common to two books that have been in bookstores since January, but the solutions they provide to remedy it differ. For Hervé Kempf, a journalist at Le Monde, we must get out of capitalism to save the furniture, the Earth, and those who sit on it, humans. He compares capitalism to rafflesia, a tropical flower that sucks the energy from the plant it parasitizes. It suddenly grows up to a meter in diameter, and dies. If green growth is grafted onto the roots of capitalism, it cannot help get out of the red. Not from an environmental point of view in any case. Throughout his reports, Kempf invites us on a terrifying world tour of the Green New Deal in progress. Green growth is already producing considerable perverse effects. Namely: nuclear power, which, with its waste and risks, mortgages the future; industrial wind power that disfigures the landscapes of France; biofuels that decimate tropical forests; CO2 sequestration that emits CO2. According to Kempf, three ideas - erroneous ones - structure the dominant thinking: technology will solve the problem; energy consumption will continue to grow and GDP growth will continue; climate change is the only problem - goodbye to biodiversity in peril and the dangerous degradation of the ecosystems on which the economy is based. These problems, it is true, interest neither politicians nor industrialists, because they do not translate into promises of green income. Steering. Getting out of capitalism? Might as well bet on a major anthropological change, sneer the authors of C'est maintenant! Jean-Marc Jancovici, climate expert, and Alain Grandjean, economist. "This is as likely to happen in the short term as the appearance of a second Moon next week." They are firing broadsides at the Greens, environmentalists, radical activists, those who gather "against" (GMOs, nuclear power, whaling, etc.), failing to agree on the "for" to defend. According to the co-authors, these activists have understood nothing about capitalism, which is not defined as "the domination of all by large multinationals, but only as the private ownership of the means of production." Because of their experience with large groups, the two X-level cronies propose more pragmatic solutions, especially those dedicated to the climate emergency. First and foremost, it is urgent to send the deputies back to their studies, they write. Once that is done, they will perhaps be able to debate in depth before voting for superficial Grenelles. The two authors propose the appointment to all government positions of a technical advisor on resources and energy who would poke his nose into all issues, including pensions and diplomacy. Like Kempf, they advocate the decline of material goods ("we're going to have to get used to the idea of being happier with less") and the political courage to make this understood. But, unlike the journalist, as good polytechnicians, they celebrate technology (nuclear, CO2 sequestration). They imagine a world where we will have to move cities to the countryside, because there will be "fewer tertiary jobs and more workers in agriculture, crafts, technical professions". Energy-intensive residential areas will be condemned to die. In certain sovereign sectors such as energy, Jancovici and Grandjean defend regulation so as not to lose control of investments. In short, deploy nuclear power and build four reactors as quickly as possible. But their leitmotif is energy taxation. According to them, we tax work too much and not energy enough. Compost. For Kempf, the answer is more global, more exciting too. Capitalism is collapsing, let's take advantage of it! Its compost will be used to fertilize solidarity initiatives, those that make us happy. And to cite the success of cooperatives, of associative movements, which, on their own, account for 10% of GDP. He recounts the success of associations, which directly connect vegetable producers and consumers (Amap), of carpooling, bartering, free software... in short, non-financial exchanges. In this, Kempf's book invites us to a broader reflection on human well-being. Capitalism in its most advanced forms debrainizes humans, confiscates their speech, frustrates the constantly solicited consumer, in a word drives them crazy and dehumanizes them.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1232

His name is Hugues, he is known as the skipper of Inderweltsein ("being in the world", a reference to Heidegger) and he is the other star of this edition of the Vendée Globe. Thirty-six hours after Michel Desjoyeaux's victory, it was the turn of the first virtual navigator to reach dry land yesterday at 9am. Behind him, more than 320,000 participants in the online game Virtual Regatta. This 31-year-old from Rennes is also a developer of free software.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1233

Under the title "How the Google model can help Detroit", the American weekly devotes its cover to Jeff Jarvis' book. In What Would Google Do?, the essayist imagines how open source and participatory methods could revive manufacturers. If the latter had consulted their customers online, they would not have launched cars that go against the trends.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1234

NPA. Three letters, a new acronym for a new beginning. Under the leadership of its spokesperson, Olivier Besancenot, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) will give birth, on February 6, 7 and 8, to the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA). A party that its leaders want to bring out of marginality, raise to the level of their leader's popularity, and whose image they intend to transform. The activists are ready for change: nearly 9,000 of them have made it known that they support this metamorphosis by taking the card of this new far-left party. Besancenot and his close guard can savor their success: they have almost reached "the party of 10,000", an old myth of the 1970s. For almost two years, little by little, the leaders of the "League" have been preparing the transformation of a revolutionary group into a party of struggles and resistance. It was the day after April 22, 2007 that the starting signal for change was given by the LCR's political bureau. Gathered in their premises hidden in a dead-end street in Montreuil (Seine-Saint-Denis), where small, cluttered and filthy offices and the artisanal printing of Rouge, the LCR's weekly, were piled up, the Trotskyist leaders exulted at the sight of the results obtained in the first round of the presidential election. Olivier Besancenot had just reached 4.1% of the vote, crushing all his competitors from the radical left - Marie-George Buffet (1.93%), José Bové (1.32%), Arlette Laguiller (1.33%), and Gérard Schivardi (0.34%). In a context where the useful vote had weighed heavily, the LCR candidate allowed himself the luxury of achieving a better score than in 2002, by registering 1.5 million votes, or 280,000 more. Olivier Besancenot was then well established in the landscape of the French left. "It's a great moment," sighs François Sabado, one of the historical leaders of the LCR. He is the one who has coached "Olivier" for eight years, and he knows the hours of work behind this great result. For him, the proof is there that his champion has imposed himself to last. It is therefore necessary to build him an organization in his image: young, anchored in these declassed middle classes, revolted by inequalities, unable to support Nicolas Sarkozy, with multiple and varied indignations, from GMOs to advertising, from the children of illegal immigrants to free software. The old "League" may have recruited new voters during the campaign, but it no longer offers the appropriate framework for these new revolts. Everything must be changed: the name, the program, the way it works, the debates, the leaders, their image. To avoid repeating the mistake of 2002. That year, Olivier Besancenot, then a young and unknown candidate of the LCR, to whom Alain Krivine had given way, had run a dynamic campaign and achieved the feat of attracting 4.25% of the votes in the first round of the presidential election. The choice of the "generational break" had worked, and even beyond the hopes of the LCR. The new champion of this movement found himself behind Arlette Laguiller (5.72%) but ahead of Robert Hue, the candidate of the PCF (3.37%). Already, the "League" had seen these new faces of young employees who identified with the revolt led by the postman of Neuilly-sur-Seine flock to its meetings. Already, television and the press had become curious about this newcomer with his striking wit who suddenly made the other candidates of the radical left seem outdated. Already, the ranks of the organization ("the orga") had suddenly swelled. But the LCR remained what it had always been: a group of quasi-professional intellectuals and activists, with interminable meetings and an outdated Trotskyist doxa. The newcomers did not stay, the numbers stagnated, between 2,500 and 3,000 members. But the political situation would gradually change between 2002 and 2007. The left, which thought it could see the light at the end of its tunnel of failures after its good results in the regional elections of 2004, was torn apart when the debate on the European Constitution arose in 2005. The radical wing - PCF, LCR - would ally itself in the "battle of the no" with the left of the Greens, the protest socialists led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon and the left republicans of Jean-Pierre Chevènement. And after a campaign in which they were quite surprised to be able to hold joint meetings and speeches, they would, thanks to the contribution of thousands of alter-globalist and anti-liberal little hands, swing the result of the referendum on the European Constitution towards the no. This was the time when the left of the left thought it was possible to present a common candidate in the presidential election that followed. The LCR will be the first to dampen this collective momentum by declaring that it will present its candidate, Besancenot. Because he is "the best" to capture the "no" electorate. Accusations of "division" or "betrayal" will do nothing. The LCR has its champion and intends to impose him despite the competition. Its activists are the first to have sensed that the reasonable speeches of the PS no longer work among the people of the left. With the success of the alter-globalization movements, and, soon, the crisis of capitalism, utopia is back. And Besancenot will not let anyone steal this opportunity from him. After his consecration in the 2007 presidential election, the young spokesperson of the LCR wants to push his advantage and give his organization a clean sweep. To put an end to his "united front" line which made him constantly seek alliances against the right and form electoral agreements with sometimes Lutte Ouvrière (LO), the Alternatifs or other structures too "vague" in his eyes. Olivier Besancenot never believed in it, and no longer wants to deal with this "old left". He who had started out in a minority tendency reproaching the leadership of the LCR for not being revolutionary enough is convinced that after years of lean cows and marginal scores, his time and that of his comrades has come. On condition that he changes tactics and asserts himself. He will act quickly. In August 2007, the day the LCR university opened, the activists were stunned to discover the headline on the front page of Le Parisien: "Besancenot wants to abolish the LCR." He calmed things down by saying that this was not what he had said, but the message had got through. The next day, at a meeting, he clarified his thinking: "Representing ourselves alone is the key." It was therefore necessary to create a new party, because "you can't make something new out of something old." For him, the LCR must break with its tactical choices always linked to what the PS says or what the PCF does. He never stops repeating his credo to his comrades: "It is time to turn the page on the old workers' movement to write a new blank page", and to regroup "all these heroes of everyday life who no longer want to let themselves be pushed around". According to him, it is urgent: we are on the eve of "a new May 68", where the accumulated anger and the strikes that multiply can "set the plain on fire". The new line, more leftist, makes the older ones wince, but it pleases the young people internally. The management has understood that Besancenot wants to accelerate. After having trained him, his mentors watch, a little fascinated, as their protégé gains thickness and leaves his mark. They line up behind him, knowing that he will never be like them, completely devoted to "the organization". "It is out of the question that the League will do to me what LO did to Arlette," he has long warned. He has never stopped showing his difference with his comrade Krivine. No question of "signing for twenty years" as a candidate. He claims his friendships, even if they raise eyebrows, like when he appears with Joey Starr, whose speech is not always feminist. He also wants to preserve his football matches, his party nights and his little family. We do not touch his "intimate part". Besancenot does not only change the style or the leadership practices of the "League". He also shakes up the references and political imagery. It is now Che Guevara that he regularly invokes as his hero, or even the libertarian tradition. He forgets Trotsky, who is decidedly too old fashioned. And after L'Internationale, it is often his rapper "buddies" that we hear at the end of his meetings. He has established his "prolo" image, a young employee earning 1,100 euros per month. This ability to resemble his voters is his asset: "A precious asset in a society undermined by the crisis of legitimacy of political personnel", analyzes Denis Pingaud in his book L'Effet Besancenot (Seuil, 2008). The young leader is therefore working on his image as a far-left poulbot with direct language, who wants to make politics accessible. Speeches and television broadcasts are preceded by meticulous "training". Sheets are regularly written for him so that he can come up with the right figures, which say better than a speech the difficulties encountered by "ordinary people". His "media plan" is resolutely oriented towards the general public. Regular interviews with Le Parisien, 20 Minutes or RMC Infos, appearances on the satirical show "Groland" on Canal+, and even on Michel Drucker's "Vivement dimanche" on France 2, broadcast on the day Arlette Laguiller gave her last speech at the Lutte Ouvrière festival. Workers, he proclaims, need "a party that will defend them to the end". And he "doesn't give up", being "the only one who is totally independent", viscerally opposed to Nicolas Sarkozy, but also to the PS. The recipe works. The municipal elections of March 2008 saw the LCR lists establish themselves in communist lands and play with the nerves of the socialists, by refusing to call for a vote for the left in the second round. Besancenot has excellent results in opinion polls, even ahead of the PS leaders. The French find him "likeable", "close to the people", "courageous", "honest". In September 2008, a year and a half after the presidential election, if they had to vote again, 13% of those polled would vote for him (Opinion Way poll of September 17 and 18). No more! On the activist side, the success is undeniable. Since the LCR launched committees to launch a new party, the meeting rooms have been full. "We chose to surpass ourselves and we succeeded," proclaims Pierre-François Grond, Olivier Besancenot's right-hand man. Young private sector employees, civil servants, precarious workers, intermittent workers or the unemployed, the public is varied. Alongside a few seasoned activists in the anti-globalization movement or unionism, the vast majority are "first-time activists", as Florence Johsua, a doctoral student at Cevipof, calls them. A more working-class, younger and angrier left: "They are arriving with their raw revolt," she notes. They are impatient members who want to be on all fronts, hate the PS which "betrayed" and expect everything from the NPA and "Olivier." Perhaps too much. "Olivier has stamped his way of seeing things, at a forced pace, without taking the time to discuss the political contours of the NPA, which are limited to announcing a desire for a "break." All this at the cost of a certain depoliticization," underlines Christian Picquet, from the ranks of the minority, at the LCR. The criticism does not shake the faith of Besancenot's friends. They don't care! The 9,000 membership cards announced are there. The milestone of the "great party" has been reached. p

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1235

64 GIGAS UNDER THE HOOD The new EMTEC USB keys are now similar to real external hard drives. With storage capacities increased to 32 GB and even 64 GB, the S400 Em-Desk range offers a real pocket solution for transporting and archiving personal data. As a bonus, these keys include an open source software suite to have practical and office tools at your disposal at all times: VLC (video file playback), Ppen Office (word processing, spreadsheet, etc.), Mozilla Firefox and Mozilla Thunderbird (Internet and email), and fifteen other small utilities. Enough to work and have fun anywhere without leaving any traces on a third-party computer. EMTEC, S400 Em-Desk: 32 GB at 99 euros, 64 GB at 149 euros. Also available in 4GB and 16GB versions. OLD TITLES ARE DOING WELL ON CONSOLES Despite the avalanche of games released before Christmas, older titles continue to hold the upper hand at the start of 2009. According to the ranking of the best-selling video games for the second week of January, published by GFK, Wii Fit and Wii Play still occupy the first two places. Next up are The Rabbids Show, Guitar Hero: Legends of Rock and Call of Duty: World at War, three games released just before the holidays that have therefore failed to dethrone Nintendo's two older hits. On the PC side, the premium on new releases still works: Gran Theft Auto IV and World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King have indeed risen to the top of the best-selling titles.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1236

Washington - The online encyclopedia Wikipedia announced this week that it has successfully raised $6 million in donations to keep it running for the current fiscal year. Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales said 125,000 people responded to a call for donations launched on July 1, raising $4 million. "In addition, we have received significant donations and support for the foundation, totaling $2 million," he added in a letter of thanks published on the website of the nonprofit Wikimedia Foundation, of which he is honorary chairman and which manages the online encyclopedia. "The addition of these funds will cover our expenses for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2009," Wales said. The money raised will be used to fund "day-to-day operations," he said, such as purchasing bandwidth and paying the salaries of the 23 staff members, while also "continuing to develop and improve the free software that is the lifeblood of all Wikimedia projects." Beyond the $6 million earmarked for the encyclopedia, additional donations will be placed in a "contingency fund, which will help us balance costs beyond the current fiscal year," Wales said. "Your continued support will also help us stay on our feet if economic conditions continue to deteriorate," he said. Wales said 150,000 volunteers have contributed nearly 11 million articles in 265 languages to Wikipedia over the past eight years. "More than 275 million people visit our site each month for free, ad-free information," he said.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1237

The human species ended up wondering, in the 20th century, if it was not working towards its own extinction. Nuclear war, climate, pollution, depletion of resources, explosion of injustices... In the end, it doesn't matter what apocalypse is announced to us, the main thing is to avoid it. Our species being responsible for its own destiny, this salvation can only come through awareness and voluntary action. And this is where, perhaps, we are making a flagrant error. Are we not entrusting those who led us here... with the task of getting us out of it? The confusion is enormous, it consists of confusing the problem and its solution. Are we not trying to save... the mode of operation that is leading us to our loss? The truly irresponsible species, the one whose behavior is unsustainable, is perhaps not the human species as a whole, but a small fraction of it, the elite of knowledge and power that crisscrosses the planet in long-haul planes, from conference to conference in air-conditioned palaces, and has been producing reports, grand principles, new institutions, new taxes and other grenelleries for decades. Let us dare to hypothesize: if we are in the most total confusion, it is because we have allowed this elite to intellectually "construct" the new values (sustainable, ethical, responsible, ecological, equitable...) and that we have allowed an unacceptable dissociation to set in between "the world of discourse and representation", on the one hand, and "the world of action and reality", on the other. It is our regime of knowledge and power that must be modified, if we want to put back into operation the missing cogs between declared values and accomplished actions. What can we do? No longer "delegating" problems, dealing with them at the micropolitical level, which has now become the relevant level of politics. The major cultural success of our time, the Internet, is not due to any administration or company. In the value system of new technologies, everything demonstrates the unstoppable power of emerging collectives: the micro-actions of anonymous actors have produced the explosion of microcomputing, "free" software (open source), Wikipedia, the pooling of cultural goods by putting them online or Peer to Peer. The Reporters of Hope report exactly the same observation: the micro-actions of small communities, or even individuals, transform the world of reality and not that of discourse. They do not aim to "solve global problems", as large institutions do. They aim to dig a well, serve a meal, help with school homework, change a local or even individual way of cultivating, eating, moving, recycling... Micro-actions instead of big speeches. One might think that "one does not prevent the other", but that is our mistake, that is where we confuse problems and solutions. Because we must take into account the "counterproductive" effect of grand speeches. Today, the most astute way of not dealing with a problem is no longer to deny it, it is to recognize it and pretend that we are dealing with it, that we are taking care of it. While in reality, we are taking care to permanently bog it down in bureaucracy and propaganda. "Your concern is ours, it is at the heart of the mission of our company, of our government, we devote resources to it, all our energy, a large ministry..." The elite that is trying to save the planet, too often, is trying above all to save the endangered species that it itself is. This is not only misleading, it is counterproductive. How can we oppose it? Not by being "against", but by being "elsewhere". Through micro-actions. Here and now, in one's street, in one's house, in one's office or in one's class, in one's way of living and especially of thinking. Latest published work: Homo sapiens technologicus, le Pommier 2008.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1238

In times of financial and economic crisis such as the economic world is experiencing these months, governments and businesses could find an interest in free and "Open Source" software not only because of the acquisition and technical support costs, but also because of the message that would be sent to large companies that periodically force them to upgrade their operating systems and office suites. This is what Mr. Roger Laberge, president of Infoglobe and ardent defender of free software in the world of computing, maintains. "The Quebec and Canadian governments would miss an excellent opportunity to position themselves against the giants by imposing their choices," he says in an interview. "European governments and several South American countries have decided to take the turn towards free software so as to no longer be subject to the decisions of software giants like Microsoft." He gives the example of an SME that must upgrade 300 computers with a new operating system and a new office suite because the software producer can no longer support users. The company will have to spend tens of thousands of dollars at a time that may not be convenient for it. Some software is free of charge, but will require training that, according to Mr. Laberge, will be less expensive than with a commercial office suite. "And that translates into jobs here in local companies instead of giving their money to an American company or a multinational that will not necessarily reinvest its profits in Quebec or Canada," he continues. "With Linux operating systems, it is less expensive for technical support, and the company can train its own technicians, have the expertise and use the expertise of user groups. The only argument left to large commercial developers is accountability if the system crashes." In the world of free software, everyone affirms that Linux operating systems, regardless of their origin (Red Hat, Ubuntu, Suze and others), are stable, secure and as efficient as commercial systems while being less expensive. Moreover, for Ubuntu versions, international technical support is provided by the Montreal-based company Canonical. Furthermore, computer manufacturers offer the choice of equipping the device with the operating system of their choice: Linux or Windows for example. In the Web universe, servers are mostly equipped with the Linux system. This is the case for more than 60% of servers. In the case of the 500 largest companies, the percentage climbs to 85 and is constantly increasing (www.top500.org). Mr. Laberge gives the example of the Quebec Ministry of Economic Development (MDEIE) which has adopted TYPO 3 technology for its Web servers. He says that the move to free or open-source software does not mean job losses, but rather the creation of local skills. "With free software, we can do more at a lower cost with limited resources," he concludes. ytherrien@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1239

At the end of October, an intrepid ibex landed on thousands of screens. It's version 8.10 of the Linux distribution Ubuntu, Intrepid Ibex in the original version. Huh? But why does Libération start talking about this kind of obscure stuff that only concerns a handful of bearded computer scientists? Probably because this preconceived idea no longer has any reason to exist. Linux, which is an operating system in the same way as Microsoft Windows and Apple OS X, is turning towards the general public and is gradually becoming very accessible. The story of a transition that is not so complicated. D - 17. Sixteen years. I have been using Windows for sixteen years. At least since my first PC, in 1992, which ran on Windows 3.11. Why should it be any different for this new laptop? Because today, we have a choice. We can just ask ourselves which system we are going to use. Just ask ourselves the question. Since this laptop is not intended to run video games, a quick review of the applications is in order. Internet? I use Firefox. Office? It's Open Office. Video? A little program called VLC, etc. They run on Windows, but they are free software. And they naturally run on Linux, the free system par excellence. And because it is free, Linux is free. The answer therefore seems obvious. My laptop will therefore run Ubuntu, the version (we call it a "distribution") of Linux that is most accessible to the neophyte. D-Day. I receive (finally!) the beast. I turn it on. As a welcome, no "Windows", but a nice "Ubuntu". Already, it seems strange. In the introduction, it just asks me to choose a username and password. Three clicks later, I discover the interface. Simple, functional. An "applications" menu to access the programs. A "shortcut" menu that opens the file explorer with direct links to "photos", "video", "music" directories. My Wi-Fi network is detected. I enter the security key, and hey presto, it's connected. Almost too simple. D + 1. That's not all, but to use a computer for anything other than a side lamp, you need software. A bare Windows, apart from playing Minesweeper, is not much use. The very principle of the distribution, which is a sort of compilation of basic software, changes everything. Each Linux distribution (the others are called Debian, Mandriva or Fedora) therefore comes with its own selection. For Ubuntu, we therefore find, from the first start-up, Firefox, OpenOffice, a music software, another for video, a photo manager, etc. And a Minesweeper! D + 3. Linux is serious, it's austere, it's not a joke. At least, that's what I was telling myself. But now, for a few hours, I've been having fun making windows wiggle like Flambys, watching them burn when I close them, all in an overload of crazy visual effects. I'll turn that off: funny but cumbersome. There's even a terrible thing called "the cube". A well-placed mouse click, and zwing, the workspace goes into 3D. And then you can change desktops. It's a bit like the thing that every Linux user who wants to impress the gallery shows. But it works... D + 7. Not everything is rosy in Linux. Sometimes, let's admit it, we don't really know how to do it. For normal people, who weren't born with a keyboard in their hands, the solution is to call for help from the friend-who-knows-what-it-is. It's almost a must to have the friend-who-knows-what-it-is in your relationships. But it's not always easy under Windows, so under Linux... With Ubuntu, there's better: it's the community-who-knows-what-it-is. You can find it for example on Ubuntu-fr.org. There, the answer to the question you're asking is usually already there. You look in the documentation and if the file exists, you know that your problem is almost solved. Otherwise, you go to the forums. And there, it's crazy the number of people who have already had the same problem! And several good Samaritans will have explained how to get out of it. You can also read Simple comme Ubuntu, a book that takes beginners by the hand. Free download on Framabook.org (15 euros in paper version). D + 135. More than four months under Linux and no desire to go back. I use my laptop daily without any problem. The latest version of Ubuntu, Intrepid Ibex, was released at the end of October, and I updated my system automatically in a few clicks. It's still impressive. This weekend, at the Cité des sciences et de l'industrie, in Paris, the Ubuntu Party is being held. Lots of friendly experts will be there to help newbies find their way around. Ideal for a first encounter with this friendly ibex. On www.ecrans.fr/ubuntu, the full version of this logbook.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1240

Make Art Festival Maison de l'architecture 1, rue de la Tranchée, Poitiers (Vienne) from November 25 to 30. Info: http://makeart.goto10.org This week, the third edition of Make Art is coming to Poitiers with an invitation "to explore the depths of real and virtual machines, as well as the hidden activity of operating systems." Organized by the international collective goto10, the festival is dedicated to the use of free and open source tools and software - or Floss - in programming and digital art. It offers a cycle of presentations, concerts, performances and screenings. The Maison de l'Architecture will host a group of works between networks and machines, including LevelHead, by Julian Oliver (from the Selectparks site): an augmented reality game, in cubes, whose demonstration video recently made the rounds of the Web. You can also get lost in the labyrinth of pages m/e/m/e 2.0, by Danja Vassiliev; listen to the noise of the RAM of a family of six obsolete computers in Sei Personaggi in Cerca d'Autore, by Valentina Vuksic; then let yourself be carried away by the metaphysical questions of the software work exist.pl, by Pall Thayer, or attend Al Jazari, a live-coding musical performance by Dave Griffiths, who will be back on Saturday evening for a session with his comrades from the Toplap collective. As for conferences, note that of Benjamin Jean (co-founder of Veni, Vidi, Libri) on the legislation on copyright and the issues of publishing works under a free license. A user-guide intervention intended for artists, in order to understand the different existing licenses.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1241

New York - The American computer group Sun Microsystems announced yesterday the elimination of 15% to 18% of its global workforce, or 5,000 to 6,000 positions, to "adapt to the global economic climate". This restructuring, estimated to cost $500 to $600 million over the next 12 months, should also allow Sun Microsystems to reorganize its software activity to "accelerate the advent of open source innovations".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1242

NEW YORK - The American computer group Sun Microsystems announced yesterday the elimination of 15% to 18% of its global workforce, or 5,000 to 6,000 positions, to "adapt to the global economic climate". At the same time, media reports are suggesting massive layoffs at two major banks: Royal Bank of Scotia and Citigroup. The restructuring of Sun Microsystems, estimated to cost $500 million to $600 million over the next 12 months, should also allow the company to reorganize its software activity to "accelerate the advent of open source innovations". In the long term, the manufacturer of servers and software, designer of the Java and Solaris operating systems, expects that its restructuring will allow it to save $700 million to $800 million per year. The group based in Santa Clara, California, also announced yesterday the immediate departure of the head of its software activity, Rich Green. One thousand two hundred employees have already been notified of their layoffs in the United States and Canada since July, with additional layoffs planned in the Europe/Middle East/Africa, Asia/Pacific and Latin America regions. The company is expected to have 27,000 to 28,000 employees over the long term. The announcement comes two weeks after the company released results that showed a quarterly net loss of $1.66 billion, compared with a net income of $89 million in the same period last year, and a 7.1% decline in revenue (USD 2.9 billion). Sun Microsystems shares have lost nearly 80% of their value in a year. Yesterday, the stock fell 4 cents to $4.12, holding up better than other Nasdaq stocks. Citigroup US bank Citigroup is cutting at least 10,000 more jobs in an attempt to restore profitability, the Wall Street Journal reported yesterday. "Starting this week, Citigroup is distributing layoff notices to at least 10,000 employees in its investment banking business and other divisions around the world," the business daily reported, citing sources familiar with the matter. Chief Executive "Vikram Pandit and his deputies have asked group officials to cut employee compensation budgets by at least 25 percent," the American daily added, adding that the total number of employees laid off could be reduced if high-paying positions are eliminated. The Wall Street Journal reported that Citigroup has already cut about 23,000 jobs over the past four quarters, reducing its total workforce to 352,000 at the end of September. The cuts could be even more severe, with Citigroup aiming to reduce its workforce to about 290,000 by next year, one of the people told the WSJ. The third quarter marked a fourth straight quarter of losses for Citigroup, with a net loss of $2.8 billion. RBS Meanwhile, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) is cutting about 3,000 jobs worldwide in the coming weeks as it seeks to cut costs amid the financial crisis, British media reported yesterday. RBS, which has asked the British government for 20 billion pounds in aid to weather the credit crunch, is cutting jobs in banking and financial markets, according to the BBC, which did not provide its sources. Royal Bank of Scotland spokeswoman Linda Harper said the bank would not confirm the job cuts. "We constantly review our operating model to ensure it is fit for market conditions, and we act accordingly," it said in a statement. RBS employs 170,000 people worldwide.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1243

The Firefox web browser, the Eee PC, but also ADSL boxes, mobiles... "Free software is now everywhere, many people use it without knowing it", summarizes Benoît Sibaud, president of April, the association for the promotion and defense of free software (april.org). In September, it received the special prize from the jury of the lutèces d'or which rewards the best projects and actions in the field of free software in France and Europe. An important recognition for the work accomplished over the past twelve years by the three permanent staff and hundreds of volunteers to raise awareness among individuals, associations, companies and communities around free software. In the spirit of this, April is today launching a major membership campaign. Why go free? The best reason is freedom. It is a philosophical and ethical issue. There may be reasons related to cost, security, ecology, etc. but it is above all a question of freedom. As Benjamin Franklin said: "Those who are ready to sacrifice essential freedom to purchase fleeting security deserve neither." These are also the notions of sharing and transparency [by definition, free software is provided with its source code, the use, distribution and modification of which are authorized, editor's note]. Why this membership campaign? We already did one in 2007, at the time we had 400 members. Today, there are 2,500 of us, including more than 100 companies (Sun, Thales, etc.), 80 associations and two communities (including the Ile-de-France region and the city of Pierrefitte-sur-Seine) and we hope to reach 5,000 by the next general meeting in February. The objective is greater representativeness and legitimacy of our action. This is achieved through the number and diversity of members, both individuals (parity, age mix, etc.) and legal entities with associations and companies with various activities. Membership is also the most stable way to ensure our funding and independence. What are your main actions today? The range of subjects is very broad. We work a lot to defend free software on issues such as software patents, DRM, interoperability, standardization of formats or tied sales. But we also continue promotional work with companies (White Paper on Free Software Economic Models), associations (Free Association Project), and the general public (Free Software Party, etc.). For example, people are not aware that the Internet runs on free software. From its very structure to the ADSL box, it is free software. Free formats are winning. They will become the majority. There is no doubt. Macromedia (Flash, etc.) will one day give up. Even Microsoft is changing its position. The only question is when.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1244

Freelance journalists very often need free software and utilities to do their job better. And those who work for a company can always do it at home and thus enrich their work and research methods. Open Office Microsoft's Office suite, which includes Word, Excel and Power-Point, is the best-selling in the world. It is so popular that it has long been a standard and it is hard to imagine a computer without it. The problem is that the said suite costs more than $150 in its minimum version. At this price, the alternatives are tempting. The best known and recognized of these alternatives is undoubtedly Open Office, a suite in all respects comparable which, as its name indicates, finds its roots in the world of free software, which means that anyone can have access to the source code of each of its components and adapt them. As a result, Open Office is available not only for all platforms (Windows, Mac OS X, Linux), but also in several languages, including French. Like its paid rival, Open Office offers a word processing program (Writer), a spreadsheet program (Calc) and a presentation program (Impress). It even adds a drawing program (Draw) and a database program (Base), two functions that are either not available or only offered on more expensive versions of the Microsoft suite. Microsoft Office regulars will easily find their bearings and, importantly, will be able to import their old documents into Open Office. Conversely, Pulitzer Prize candidates, who write in Open Office, will be able to send it to any publication using the Microsoft suite. Open Office is also part of the long list of software with which the popular proofreader Antidote is compatible. It should be noted that although it is compatible with Mac computers, Mac users should instead turn to NeoOffice, a version of Open Office that is more optimized for this platform. GIMP If the Microsoft Office bill made you wince, that of Photoshop, which exceeds $400 for the full version, can literally make you cry. Fortunately, there is still a free alternative that is just as powerful, at least for the average user. We say "average user", but we must understand that Photoshop is a professional software that was never really designed to be used by Joe the plumber. This is even more true for Gimp, whose interface is a little more complex than that of Photoshop, even if it is very inspired by it. This is because Gimp was first designed for Linux and its adaptation to Windows or Mac OS X requires the prior installation of another software to bridge the gap. In the end, the product is therefore very useful and its possibilities are almost as extensive as Photoshop, which is saying something, but the seams are still a little visible, which can become frustrating. Your own newsfeed For a few years now, wherever you browse the Internet, you come across the letters "RSS" without knowing what it eats in winter. Coincidentally, for a few years now you have also been asking yourself: "But how do other journalists manage to be aware of everything that is happening on hundreds of specialized sites and blogs at the same time? They don't visit them all one by one every hour?" Since all coincidences are suspect (see Finding a news story 101, rule #1), this one is no exception. Thanks to software known as RSS aggregators, it is possible to create your own personalized, electronic and much less noisy version of the good old newsfeed. The vast majority of blogs and news sites publish "RSS feeds" gathering their latest entries, sometimes in full or sometimes in simple summaries. Each time a change is made to the blog or site, the RSS feed is updated. An RSS aggregator is therefore a software that periodically checks, at the desired frequency, the different RSS feeds to which you have chosen to subscribe and that notifies you of updates. You can therefore consult, within the same window, the latest news from dozens or even hundreds of sites that interest you. There are many choices in this category but two software programs produced by the same company, one on Windows and the other on Mac, nevertheless stand out: FeedDemon (Windows) and NetNewsWire (Mac). These two programs also have the advantage of being able to synchronize with the site of their publisher, NewsGator, thus allowing you to consult "your" news via the Web, in case you are outside and deprived of your own computer. Audacity Increasingly, journalists must go beyond their main field of expertise to deliver reports containing both text and photos, but also sound and perhaps even video. Audacity can certainly help any journalist struggling with audio requests. Radio professionals would probably balk that it's not comprehensive enough, but it offers the basic functions they need: record, cut out the extras, tweak the sound quality a bit, and then save in a popular format. It works with most of them, including MP3s, and it's available for free on both Windows and Mac OS X. Its only downside is a slight stability issue. Nothing too worrisome, but save regularly. JEAN-FRANÇOIS CODÈRE Journalist at the Journal de Montréal

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1245

It's a bit like those games where you see the punishment of game over looming and where, in extremis, you gain an extra life. By announcing that its valiant but old PlayStation 2 (barely eight years old, an eternity on the frivolous scale of video games) was now becoming a platform open to all game developers who want it, Sony has given its queen console a serious chance to extend an already sparkling career. "You no longer have to submit your game to Sony for approval of the content," said George Bain, head of Sony's relations with game designers, thus breaking with a dominant economic model that was long considered the most significant obstacle to creative freedom. The news is all the more important since the PS2 is currently the best-selling home console in the world. With its 130 million units installed, it continues to represent a significant source of income for game publishers who continue to trust it. In this regard, it will be very interesting to compare the sales of a title as strategic as PES 09 in its PS2 version and in its next-gen versions, Konami having had the great wisdom not to neglect the "old" format, which is still very often the only one owned by teenagers. The other crucial and joyful implication of this news is that an "open source" PS2 will facilitate access for independent and penniless studios, particularly in so-called emerging economies, where inexpensive development can make all the difference. George Bain himself cited the example of India and Russia, where several projects intended for local markets were about to hatch. The rumor of Brazilian projects or those from former Eastern countries is also in full swing. We still hope that this "local" dimension will not be too restrictive and that the distribution of imports will follow. To date, it is estimated that nearly 1.5 billion PS2 discs have been sold around the world. With this second wind brought to a console a little too quickly judged "at the end of its life", these extravagant figures could quickly be outdated. But the most important thing is not in the volume that this revival will perhaps bring: it is in the kind of panache that consists of leaving the landscape, since it is necessary sooner or later, by the top: by delivering oneself to all and in style.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1246

Last June, the International Organization of La Francophonie invited three hundred experts and teachers to Tunis to reflect on the use of new technologies in the context of education and knowledge sharing between French-speaking countries. A meeting rich in discoveries that allowed us to discover the progress of certain Maghreb countries in online education and, above all, a desire to share the knowledge of the Francophonie. But this reflection, although very important, brings up another equally essential one, that of the importance of new technologies for the development, promotion and even the future of the Francophonie on our planet. In a context where the organization wants to make the Francophonie more popular, give more visibility to its actions and to the French-speaking resources available in the world, the Internet is becoming an essential tool for new French-speaking initiatives. On this subject, the administrator of the OIF, Clément Duhaime, recently said that the Francophonie had to be popular, and that this grassroots Francophonie would go through the Internet to reach young Francophones in particular, who in the North as in the South, are the most connected Francophones. And as he also suggested, the Internet could also compensate for the lack of visibility that the organization obtains in the countries of the North. Because as the Director of the Institute of Digital Francophonie of the International Organization of the Francophonie, Pietro Sicuro, reported, if each Francophonie project is widely covered in the Francophone press of the South, this is not the case in the North. At least, not as much as he had hoped. This is why, in the months and years to come, Francophone initiatives should increase on the Web. Here, we're talking about a portal for the French-speaking Network of National Digital Libraries, over there, we'll talk about an education hub to list French-language training available online, and then, why not a Facebook for the Francophonie. The importance of TV5 However, if we seem to be taking a greater interest in digital technology these days, we must not forget that the genesis of the use of technologies by the International Organization of the Francophonie was the creation of TV5. Since then, the organization has been able to take the Internet turn and is working on many fronts to ensure the interests of Francophones. For example, few people know that the OIF was involved in Nicholas Negroponte's OLPC project. The Francophone organization wanted to ensure from the start that emerging Francophone countries would have the right to these small computers for children and that this tool would be used to communicate in French rather than assimilate them to the English language. This is how we can see the delivery of the very first computers of the OLPC project in Haiti as a victory for the OIF. But Negroponte's initiative is only a recent initiative. As early as 1997, the International Organization of the Francophonie was already beginning to promote free software to help states and citizens looking for new tools for learning, communication and administration. The OIF was the first major international organization to support free software. At the time, the Secretary General of the OIF, Abdou Diouf, said when speaking about the Francophonie in relation to free software and the Internet: "It is legitimate that it wants to go further today in its reflection and action in an area that affects a fundamental human right and that is an accelerator of progress on the path to democracy, development and peace." The digital Francophonie This is what brings us today to talk about the digital Francophonie. In an interview, Pietro Securo, Director of the Institute of Digital Francophonie, explains how it is now possible to experience the Francophonie through various digital devices. He explains this notion of digital Francophonie as being "Another way of living, but above all, a way of living equal to others. When we have access to the devices, we are at the same level as the Americans, the Chinese." He adds: "We can use all the potential of digital tools to both work together and also share our sensibilities. And that is the objective of the Francophonie, it is several States that have decided to work together, but each according to their own singularity. And digital is a wonderful tool because it allows us to do things together through its network dynamics." When asked whether we are creating a Francophonie 2.0 with the use of digital technology, Pietro Securo answers: "For about two years, we have been talking about a new Francophonie and, through digital technology, we are reaching young people and re-engaging people who were not used to being interested in the Francophonie." This is an important step when you consider that 50% of the member states of the Francophonie have a predominantly young population. And he concludes by saying: "We are no longer in a dynamic of North-South cooperation, but rather in a true multipolar Francophone cooperation where, regardless of the country of origin, all skills are equal." \*\*\* Bruno Guglielminetti is a producer and new technology columnist at Radio-Canada. He is also the editor of Carnet techno (www.radio-canada.ca/techno).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1247

PRESS Le Monde has entered into exclusive negotiations with international publisher Phaidon for the sale of Editions de l'Etoile (Cahiers du cinéma). "Phaidon has demonstrated its ability to simultaneously respect an editorial heritage and promote demanding content, to manage a content business and support its development over the long term," according to Le Monde, which hopes to finalize the transaction in November. TV WITHOUT ADS The proposal for a moratorium on the removal of advertising on France Télévisions has fizzled out. The idea was put forward on Sunday evening by Edouard Balladur to finance the RSA. The President of the Republic confirmed "that he intended for the reform to be carried out successfully, across the entire system, by the end of the year," declared yesterday the leader of the UMP deputies, Jean-François Copé. "It is not because there is a crisis that we should interrupt everything that is undertaken in terms of reform," added the Minister of Communication Christine Albanel, on France Info, specifying that the bill will be passed in the Council of Ministers "on October 22". For François Hollande, first secretary of the PS, a moratorium is a "necessity". SERIES The Nanterre court declared inadmissible the request of about sixty people bearing the name Bougon. The association, which requested that the homonymous series of M6 not be broadcast before its title and the names of its characters were changed, had to appeal. ESTATES GENERAL The online newspaper Mediapart published yesterday an "open letter to the States General" of the press, launched by Nicolas Sarkozy on October 2. The president and editorial director of the site, Edwy Plenel and François Bonnet, are calling on the entire profession "to invite them to choose another path, by imposing genuine States General of the press, organized by the profession itself, with deliberative assemblies, elected delegates, grievances collected, according to an authentic democratic procedure, that is to say public." The States General "must not ignore the question of freedom of the press," believes Reporters Without Borders (RSF). Free Software The free office suite OpenOffice.org is releasing its version 3.0 today. Launched in 2002, the OpenOffice.org project has established itself over time as one of the most credible alternatives to the quasi-monopoly of Microsoft Office. Alongside Firefox, OpenOffice.org is currently one of the major projects in the world of free software. The last major version (2.0) was released in October 2005.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1248

Interpolar Art Maison européenne de la photographie, 5-7, rue de Fourcy, 75004. Until October 12. Conference “Art in Antarctica” today from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Info.: www.art-outsiders.com and www.laboratoryplanet.org “Present from the first polar expeditions, artists have been one of the vectors of the imagination of these “extremities” of the Earth and their works have nourished the sublime and romanticism,” writes Annick Bureaud, media theorist and art critic, who proposes “Art in Antarctica,” a series of conferences as part of @rt outsiders at the Maison européenne de la photographie (MEP). An attempt to venture beyond the clichés of extreme adventurers, immaculate expanses with deadly beauty, and emperor penguins. Migrants. In the wake of the International Polar Year (2007-2008), many artists have traveled the poles, such as Andrea Polli, who seeks to convey climate change in his soundscapes of Antarctica, an ice desert threatened by global warming. Lucy and Jorge Orta have set up a utopian village there, the ultimate refuge for migrants. A symbolic choice, since Antarctica is the last continent that belongs to no one, where only science has the right to exist. "Creating in or about Antarctica is as much a political act as an artistic one," notes Annick Bureaud. More than ever, the white continent is in peril. The site of research involving all scientific disciplines (climatology, space, biology, etc.) and crucial strategic issues, it is a life-size laboratory that is coveted in these times of scarce resources. The 1959 Antarctic Treaty freezes territorial claims, prohibits resource exploitation and military deployment, but for how much longer? This is the question posed by Bureau d'études, conceptual artists, and Ewen Chardronnet, author, with their project Planète laboratoire, presented today at the MEP. A periodical journal of philosophy of science and critique of technology, this third issue (1) of La planète laboratoire takes a pessimistic look at what they call "the terminal phase of nihilism." The articles express concern about the trivialization of geoengineering under the pretext of combating global warming. As early as the 1950s, projects were hatched to tow icebergs from Antarctica (which contains 70% of fresh water resources) to supply the deserts. Today, iceberg water is used to make beer and vodka in Newfoundland. Canadian researcher F. William Engdahl deciphers the motivations of the "seed bunker", installed in the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard by the Gates Foundation, Rockefeller and the GMO giants, who store the seeds of known cultivated varieties there in anticipation of a cataclysm. Phase. In addition to the conferences, @rt Outsiders presents the I-Tasc project (2), an independent scientific-artistic base that will host, in the Arctic, collaborative projects between indigenous cultures, artists, hunters, scientists, engineers and tactical media specialists, around migration, climate and telecommunications. First phase: the deployment, in 2008-2010, of a mobile, self-sufficient high-tech lab, with no impact on the environment, and the establishment of an open-source communication infrastructure that should serve as a model for the Inuit. Marko Peljhan will discuss I-Tasc at the closing conference "Art and Environment" on October 12 at the Cube in Issy-les-Moulineaux. (1) downloadable from laboratoryplanet.org (2) www.interpolar.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1249

In collaboration with HEC Montréal, we publish our weekly column on the challenges that companies face in terms of management. What distinguishes free software from proprietary software is the license under which the software is distributed. A free license grants, in particular, the right to modify and distribute the software. Free software therefore offers certain options that the purchaser may or may not exercise, depending on their choice. The challenge is to establish the real value of these options and to determine under what conditions it is advantageous to exercise them. The development option The development option applies when the organization wishes to modify the basic software to add functions and features that meet its specific needs. The software then serves as "starting code." The organization can focus its efforts on developing value-added features that meet its specific needs. Such an approach of marginal modifications represents a smaller investment than that normally required to create an application from scratch. If the organization does not have the resources, it can always outsource this task to an external consultant. In either case, however, the savings from avoiding license fees can easily be swallowed up by the costs incurred by these changes. Worse still, the changes can make it difficult to adopt new versions of the base software or to implement fixes. Despite these disadvantages, it can still be advantageous to exercise the development option, especially if the software is intended for a large number of users, each representing a saved license fee. The service option Adopting open source software gives the organization the flexibility to choose how and from whom it obtains support and maintenance. This is the service option. The ability to determine for itself when and how often fixes or new versions are installed can be advantageous even if the organization does not exercise its development option. The adoption of the product by a significant number of users can stimulate the creation of local suppliers. As a consequence, competition between them can also lead to better services while ensuring that the organization is not at the mercy of a single provider. It is important to note that a company can exercise its service option without opening the source code and without developing. The reverse is not true, however. This is because the modifications it makes to the base code are not supported by the organization responsible for distributing the original product. The company that exercises the development option must therefore necessarily exercise the service option. Not exercising the options It is important to pay attention to the "service gap" that exists with regard to software, whether free or proprietary. The service gap refers to the set of activities necessary to make a software usable in an enterprise. Sometimes this gap is very large, as in the case of an integrated system whose associated support costs can be several times greater than the license fees. In other cases, such as office software, the gap is small. Software with this characteristic represents an opportunity for significant savings for the company. Evaluating the options Choosing free software does not create any obligation to obtain the source code or to exercise the development option. The most favorable situation is one where the software is distributed under a free license, where the number of users is high and for which the service gap is minimal. Even if the service gap is significant, the possibility of distributing the software free of charge in the company generates savings each time the number of users increases or when the time comes to upgrade to a new version of the software. To better limit the gap and the associated expenses, however, it is preferable to stick to standardized versions (configured once, installed repeatedly) that allow for centralized technical support and maintenance services. Free software is not necessarily the ideal solution for every organization or in all circumstances. However, it offers possibilities that cannot be found with proprietary software and that can better meet the needs of the company. As such, free software deserves to be considered very carefully when making the acquisition decision. Michael Wybo is an associate professor at HEC Montréal He is a member of the Interuniversity Research Center for Organizational Analysis (CIRANO) and the Information Systems Research Group (GReSI) www.hec.ca/profs/michael.wybo.html

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1250

In 2008, two Quebec organizations notified the Quebec Superior Court of their intention to sue the government for not having used a call for tenders process for its software procurement. In addition to seeing procurement by award as a derogation from its own rules and a hindrance to free competition, these organizations maintain that the government is foregoing significant savings by moving directly to new versions of proprietary software instead of considering the acquisition of open source software. For its part, the government justifies its action by emphasizing that some of these purchases are simple "updates" and not purchases of new software. To which the complainant organizations respond that open source software could easily replace proprietary software, without loss of functionality, while providing substantial savings. According to these organizations, the government is acting as if it were a subsidiary of the major software publishers. As usual, the truth lies somewhere between these two extreme positions. What it is not It is first useful to clarify what free software is not. Free software is neither a technology nor a software development process. It is not necessarily free, nor necessarily more powerful, more secure, or easier to use than proprietary software, and it certainly does not represent the end of the software industry. What it is, first and foremost, is software. This means that it must be conceptualized, its specifications defined, it must be developed, tested, implemented, maintained, and supported in its use. What gives it its "free" aspect are the terms of the license under which it is distributed. In short, the license of proprietary software normally gives the user tenant rights: he can use the software, but it does not belong to him. On the other hand, the free license confers owner rights. The user has the right to install the software on as many computers as desired, modify it according to his needs and distribute it with or without his modifications. He may even ask to be paid to distribute copies, with or without his modifications. For example, Ubuntu software, a version of Linux, can be downloaded for free from Ubuntu.com. It is also sold by Amazon.com for $12 per copy, plus shipping! Equipment The biggest misconception we encountered in our research is that adopting open source software automatically means that the organization must also be equipped to develop, maintain, and support it. Another common perception is that the company will be at the mercy of a group of anonymous "hackers" for these essential services. The reality is that most open source software is distributed by well-established organizations with permanent staff and competitively priced support services. Of course, open source software gives its user the opportunity to do their own development, maintenance, and support, but it does not require them to do so. The fact that the software is open also means that it is possible to develop local skills to provide these services. No software is truly "free" in terms of its deployment and use in an organization. But in the case of open source software, the choice of vendor and the level of support remain the sole responsibility of the organization adopting the software in question. This aspect should be explicitly taken into account in the choice of software by public institutions that have a role to play in the local economy. It is quite possible that the acquisition costs of open source software (without license fees) and its maintenance contract are more or less equivalent to those of proprietary software whose maintenance is included in the license fees. Features The decision to adopt software, whether open source or proprietary, must be based on the evaluation of its features, performance and compatibility with the IT infrastructure already in place. This decision must also take into account the acquisition and use costs of the different options offered. Open source software also offers the possibility of exercising property rights and determining by whom, how and at what price essential services will be provided. The best way to inform such a decision is still an open and transparent tendering process. Next week, we will discuss the evaluation of the property rights that free software can provide. The author is an associate professor at HEC Montréal: www.hec.ca/profs/michael.wybo.html

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1251

New York - T-Mobile on Tuesday showed off its G1 phone, the first mobile phone to run on the Android operating system developed by Google to compete with Apple's iPhone. The device will go on sale in the United States starting Oct. 22 at a lower price than the iPhone 3G: $179 instead of $199. The G1 is made by Taiwanese company HTC, which sells most of its products under private labels. "Android has the potential to become the equivalent of Linux for computers, and we expect sales to account for about 10 percent of the smartphone market in 2011," said Roberta Cozza of marketing firm Gartner.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1252

New York - The telephone operator T-Mobile presented to the press yesterday its G1 telephone, the first portable handset to work with the Android operating software developed by the internet group Google to compete with Apple and its iPhone. The device will be sold from October 22 in the United States at a price lower than the iPhone 3G: US$179 instead of US$199. Customers will also have to subscribe to a two-year subscription with T-Mobile, a subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom, of between US$25 and US$35 per month. The British will be able to buy it from November, the other Europeans (in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands) at the beginning of next year. The G1 is manufactured by the Taiwanese company HTC, most of whose production is sold under distributor brands. Other models running on Android are planned next year from LG and Samsung. "Android has the potential to become the equivalent of what [free software] Linux is for computers, and we expect sales to account for about 10 percent of the smartphone market in 2011," said Roberta Cozza, an analyst at marketing firm Gartner. The main operating systems that power smartphones - Symbian, Microsoft and RIM to name a few - are proprietary, while Google is making its Android freely available to developers. "Google is entering the mobile market not to be another mobile phone maker, but to open up a large market for its services and applications," said Carolina Milanesi of Gartner. Google co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page said they had been using their G1 for several weeks, which had fueled speculation for months. "It's as good as a computer from a few years ago," Page said, adding that "being able to search [the Internet] with the reliability that you could on a laptop is really, really worth it." Thicker than the iPhone 3G, which has been a huge success since its launch in July, but narrower, with a matte black or white plastic shell (a brown version will also be sold in the United States), the G1 has a touch screen that can be slid open to reveal a real keyboard. It provides many of the applications common to competing models, such as GPS, and will allow you to download music sold by Amazon, or watch videos from YouTube, the website bought by Google in 2006. In total, the "Android Market", which competes with Apple's "AppStore", should allow you to download about 50 applications on the first day of marketing - a far cry from the 3,000 applications, including 600 free, that Apple offers. But Android being an open platform, the idea is to encourage the development of many other possibilities. Google has already received some 200 projects thanks to the "Android Challenge" launched to its loyalists. "For me who is a computer geek, it's great to have a phone that I can have fun with and that I can modify," stressed Sergey Brin. The phone is also a showcase for all Google products, such as the Chrome browser launched at the beginning of the month, such as Google maps or Gmail email, the only one that allows you to be alerted as soon as an email arrives (push technology).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1253

T-Mobile, Google and HTC unveiled the "G1 with Google" yesterday in New York, the first multimedia phone on the market that will use Android, the operating system developed by Google. To distinguish itself from the iPhone and the BlackBerry, Android defines itself as the first open mobile platform, for which application developers are free to create the services they want. This system is not just Google's business. It will be shared by the approximately 300 members of the Open Handset Alliance, a group of device manufacturers, wireless network operators and mobile service developers from around the world. The footprint of the Mountain View, California, computer giant is nevertheless enormous. Its search bar is omnipresent on the device: in its address book, in its e-mail inbox and on the Web. The G1, which is based on another phone called the Dream and is made by Taiwanese company HTC, can be controlled in two ways: you can swipe the screen, much like Apple's iPhone, or you can use the small slide-out QWERTY keyboard that hides behind the device. That combination is particularly effective when it comes to surfing the Web, says HTC president Peter Chow. "It's a new way of seeing where and how people are navigating the Web. It's a more robust and effective solution than anything we've seen before." Other Google services also come standard on the G1. For example, the Google Maps app combines GPS with an electronic compass and a 360-degree view called Street View, which is exclusive to Android. These functions are integrated into a graphical interface that is not unlike the desktop of a personal computer, on which one can place, virtually of course, photos, shortcuts to launch applications, and so on. Mobile free software This is only the tip of the iceberg for Android, however, because it is the mechanics behind these applications that are proving to be the most interesting feature. "High-speed mobile networks have been around for some time now, but we lack the right tools to use them properly," said Chris Shloeffer of T-Mobile yesterday. "North America is a leader in telecommunications, but we are lagging behind in mobility. Why? Because the experience was not particularly pleasant for users." According to T-Mobile, Android improves this experience in two ways: first, the Android system will not age. Second, the Android Marketplace, accessible from the device, contains all the applications developed for this platform. These only work on Android, which leads many to question the interest of another mobile platform, which is added to the BlackBerry, Symbian, Windows Mobile and the iPhone. Unlike the latter, forecasts give it only a small place on the market, of about 4%. Google retorts that Android has the advantage of being completely free, in the same way as the Linux system. "It is a platform that will allow any developer to create mobile applications according to the changing needs of users", believes Andy Rubin, the creator of Android. "A free space for developers that will evolve Android and the whole of computing mobility." Wendy Rozeluk, a spokeswoman for Google Canada, adds that Android breaks down barriers because even though the T-Mobile network in the U.S. is the only retailer of an Android device, "there are already Canadian developers who have created apps for it, and two of them have even won awards in developer competitions," she says, referring to Ecorio and ShareYourBoard. Rozeluk admits that Google has no plans to launch Android in Canada, however. "Not at this time," she concludes.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1254

The feeling of isolation is the bane of many self-employed workers. Cafés? Often noisy and not very ergonomic. Sharing a workplace with peers could be a good compromise. When they are tired of being isolated at home, some self-employed workers set up shop in cafés or libraries. Since February, they have had another option: Station C, the first and only community office in Montreal. Essentially, the community office is a place where you can work, chat with peers and even meet clients in a professional setting, at a lower cost than a single-user office, explains Sylvie Laferté, professor of marketing and management at TELUQ. From 2001 to 2006, self-employed workers increased from 10.1 to 13.3% of the Quebec workforce, according to the Institut de la statistique du Québec. At last count, the majority of them did not have employees. That's a lot of people working alone in their corner, subject to all the temptations to "procrastinate" that can be found at home. Between the cat that wants attention, the movie that follows the noon news and even the laundry basket, there is no shortage of distractions. In fact, not everyone has the discipline necessary to work alone at home, emphasizes Luc Brunet, industrial psychologist and professor at the University of Montreal. But above all, we must understand that man is a social animal, he says. "Being surrounded by people, getting out of the house, enjoying a good work atmosphere, these are all factors that contribute to motivation." At Station C, in the heart of Mile End, users, who are called members, indeed insist on the appeal of contact with people. In the large loft, there are no closed offices, only large communal work tables. Two conference rooms can be used for private or long calls. Christine Préfontaine, a regular member of Station C, is not even self-employed! She is a senior communications advisor for a government agency, which allows her to work remotely. "I have an office at home that is a five-minute walk away, but I prefer to work here," says the 39-year-old, who decided to pay for her membership out of pocket. "It gives me access to a community." Since everyone is pretty busy with their own little business during the day, she has set up an "Open Salad" concept. Every Tuesday, members are invited to bring a few ingredients to create an impromptu salad buffet. There is a fridge and a dishwasher on site. Other members find logistical advantages to the formula. "Typically, I come to work here between two meetings or a few hours before my badminton games at the end of the day. It allows me to avoid rush hour," notes Martine Pagé, a 42-year-old screenwriter and journalist. At first, Ms. Pagé was worried that the other members would chat all the time. "On the contrary, the atmosphere is very conducive to work," she says. "I would be more productive if I came more often." The members' ages range from late twenties to late thirties. About a quarter are English speakers. No exclusions Professions related to the tech field are overrepresented, but "we don't exclude anyone," observes Daniel Mireault, a 34-year-old freelance artistic director and co-owner of Station C with Patrick Tanguay. The practical side: "We provide the table, the chair, the Internet connection, a printer and a projector. Members can bring their own screen if they wish," says Mr. Mireault. Opening hours Currently, Station C is open to everyone from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Members get a key to the premises, with 24-hour access. Drop-ins are welcome—they can even try it out for a free day—but soon, they’ll have to check the web before dropping by. Indeed, starting November 3, the centre’s hours will be variable. “We’re going to ask members to indicate their presence on a public Google calendar so that those who don’t have a key know when they can come,” says Daniel Mireault. Will members be disciplined enough to make their presence known? “I can’t wait to see if it works,” wonders the co-owner. In keeping with the open-source software style, the community office concept is a work in progress. And since the goal is often not to make money, there’s room for exploration.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1255

Bare computers in department stores? The idea is gaining ground. Especially since Luc Chatel, Secretary of State for Consumer Affairs, "wished" in June that "on the price of computers, we specify the price of pre-installed software, so that consumers have a choice and can get a refund" for the operating system that is pre-installed on them. The measure was supposed to be effective at the start of the school year in September, but distributors, like manufacturers, are dragging their feet. The IT market is unique in that the consumer is forced to pay, in addition to the hardware they purchase, the license for their operating system. In other sectors of activity, we would talk about forced sales. But while Microsoft's monopoly has been the subject of several appeals in Europe and the United States, computer manufacturers do not want to make public the wholesale prices they negotiated with the IT giant. For Racketiciel.info, "these software programs that we are forced to buy" represent 10% to 30% of the price of computers sold in stores. That is, 100 to 300 euros. LEGAL ASSISTANCE Created by users of free software, the site demands the right to be able to buy computers without having to pay what it calls the Microsoft "tax". It also offers to provide legal assistance to those who would like to be reimbursed. In one year, three consumers have been reimbursed. Since the launch of Windows Vista, Microsoft's latest operating system, these protesters have been joined by the cohort of those who, disappointed with its performance, have preferred to reinstall the old system, Windows XP. Because unless you buy an Apple computer or go to certain specialist stores, it is impossible today to buy a computer without Vista. Racketiciel.info also explains the steps to follow to buy a PC without pre-installed software, or to "rejuvenate" your old computer, and thus avoid having to buy a new one when the old one shows signs of age. Contrary to what one might think, the problems encountered on computers are more often software-related than hardware-related. But because they don't know how to fix them, many people change their computer rather than repair it. While it is generally enough to clean the software components of your PC, and install free (and open source) software such as the Firefox browser or the OpenOffice office suite. These allow you to benefit from performances worthy of those of new PCs, if not better.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1256

Les Éditions Gladius International, a Quebec company specializing in the design and manufacture of board games, is launching a new game representing the province's major tourist attractions: Cherche et trouve Édition Québec. This observation game includes eight boards representing the Château Frontenac, the Bell Centre, the sugaring off season, the Olympic Stadium and the Montreal Botanical Garden, the Gaspé Peninsula and Percé Rock, the Quebec Winter Carnival at Place D'Youville, the Bromont ski resort and a historical board on the First Nations. The principle of the game is to find the images hidden in the eight game boards as quickly as possible and the goal is to be the fastest to find them. The game is on sale in toy and game stores for $15. Free Software Day > Free Software Day will be held for the first time in Quebec City on Saturday, September 20 at the Saint-Martyrs Canadien Community Centre from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Free Software Day is a worldwide celebration of free and open source software to raise awareness of the benefits of using high-quality free software in education, government, the workplace, and at home. This year in Quebec City will be the first time that volunteers have formally organized to celebrate this international event. For more information: http://que becsfd2008.ngowiki.net Beenox and Cro-Mag Rally > One of the first games Beenox and Dominique Brown worked on is making a comeback. Cro-Mag Rally was included with all new iMacs about ten years ago. Beenox did the graphics for the game for publisher Pangea Software. Apple is reviving the game on its new iPhone phones and it is one of the best sellers on the iTunes Store. Yesterday, it was number one among paid downloadable applications. Clarification > A small error crept into the report on college technology transfer centres. It should have read that the Maritime Innovation centre is located in Rimouski. André d'Orsonnens, Chairman of the Board of Alliance Numérique > André d'Orsonnens, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Druide informatique, has been elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of Alliance Numérique. Mr. d'Orsonnens will be supported by Yan Cyr, President of Enzyme Labs (Vice-President); Michel Lefebvre, Partner Tax Specialist at Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton (Treasurer); Claude Martel, President of Éduconsillium (Secretary). The board of directors is composed of 11 elected directors: Dominique Brown, President of Beenox, Tanya Classens, President of Kutoka, Stephan Lestage, Vice President of Communications at Cyber Génération, John Christopher, Global Director of Multimedia Innovation Services at Ericsson, Jean-François Renaud, Partner at Adviso, and Alain Tascan, Vice President and General Manager of Electronic Arts. Media Strategy and Placement > In his latest book, entitled Stratégie et placement média, Bernard Dagenais explains how to choose the most effective multimedia campaign. Advertisers around the world invest some $400 billion each year to promote their products, services or ideas. The author wants to show the hidden side of advertising. He first delves into the complex relationships between advertisers, agencies and media. Then, he presents how placement works in each of the media with useful measurement tools. Published by Presses de l'Université Laval, the book sells for $45. ytherrien@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1257

The "consumer society" has almost become anathema, at a time when we are taking stock of the environment after half a century of an economy focused on the massive supply of products and services to a passive but receptive consumer. These two works offer two different, but not necessarily opposing, visions of the role of the consumer in the economy of the next half century. Sociologist Marie-Anne Dujarier observes the trend already present in a growing number of sectors - from the principle of self-service in mass distribution to the development of free software by the IT community - to "put consumers to work" to make them contribute to the creation of value. More optimistic, one could say, the authors of this issue of the journal Economie politique see the consumer as the prescriber of a reorientation of the production system towards the creation of socially and environmentally "responsible" goods and services.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1258

First, we did our research on Google. Then we entrusted it with our email (Gmail), our photos (Picasa), our schedule (Google Calendar) and finally our office files (Google Documents). While waiting to entrust it with our mobile phone (with the Android operating system), all that was missing was being able to run everything in a Google-branded software. The rumor was indeed coming back quite regularly. It was confirmed yesterday. Google is indeed working on a web browser: Google Chrome. Announced as more stable and faster than its competitors, Chrome was launched yesterday in beta version, only on Windows. The announcement was made by sending some bloggers a thirty-eight-page comic strip - by Scott McCloud, known to comic book fans for his book Understanding Comics - explaining in detail the operation and specificities of Google Chrome. The news was then confirmed during the day by an article on the Google blog. "We realized we needed to completely rethink the browser. [...] Under the hood, we built the foundations of an engine that could much better handle the complexity of today's web applications," explain Sundar Pichai and Linus Upson, product and development managers. We also learn that "like the classic Google home page, Google Chrome is clean and fast." Compartmentalize. Google Chrome is an open source project based on Webkit - the engine behind the iPhone and Safari, and used by Google Android, the next phone operating system - and integrates Google Gears by default, which allows you to run certain applications while disconnected from the Internet. It also focuses on better memory management thanks to a "multi-process design", which allows each browser window to be isolated from each other. Closing one frees up all the resources used. Compartmentalizing tasks in this way should also reduce browser crashes: if a page freezes, you can simply close the window without having to restart the software. For security, Google announces that it will regularly download the list of malicious sites. Chrome also offers a private mode, similar to the InPrivate offered by Internet Explorer (also called porn mode, who knows why...), which allows you to browse without leaving a trace on your computer. The user interface is reminiscent of the Opera browser. It uses an intelligent address bar, called "omnibox", based on browsing history and the popularity of pages, which offers a list of addresses (without having to type "http://..."), but also searches to launch on Google. Mosaic. There is also a system of tabs which are placed here above the address bar (and not below as on Firefox). Similar to Opera's "Speed Dial", the default home page displays, in the form of a mosaic, screenshots of the most visited pages, as well as a selection of the last pages viewed and those recently saved in favorites. Will Chrome shake up the browser market (currently dominated by Internet Explorer), or even the very way they are designed? We will avoid making any hasty judgments, as we recall the recent disappointment of Google's last major project, Knol, which was announced rather quickly as a Wikipedia killer.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1259

GOOGLE LAST arrow fired yesterday by Google to weaken the giant Microsoft: the launch of Google Chrome, an Internet browser competing with Microsoft's all-powerful Internet Explorer. The Californian firm announced yesterday that Google Chrome, its own browser - a software installed on machines to browse the Internet - would be available free of charge in 43 languages and more than 100 countries starting that same evening. The launch of a new browser is a real gamble for the Mountain View ogre, which has proven itself above all in the field of search engines. Most computers already have a default browser: Microsoft's, installed on three-quarters of machines worldwide as an additional service to the Windows operating system. A leading position acquired by Microsoft after years of fighting its competitors. Netscape Navigator, the champion of the 1990s, had been eliminated when Microsoft proposed, in 1995, to offer Internet Explorer with its Windows operating system. Faster than its competitors Sundar Pichai, one of Google's vice presidents, explained yesterday that with experience, Google executives had come to imagine a browser that could improve Internet usage: "We realized that the Web has evolved from simple written text to rich applications (such as video and community sites, editor's note) and that we had to completely rethink the browser. What we need is not just a browser but also a modern platform for Web pages and applications." During a demonstration carried out yesterday at Google headquarters, Chrome seemed above all much faster than its competitors. On the computer screen, applications are displayed using tabs and not windows. It is also easier to simultaneously open sites containing video and navigate them. The address bar where the sites are displayed works like on the search engine: just one word is enough for various choices to be offered... These practical applications should especially meet the needs of Web 2.0 fans used to surfing several very lively sites at the same time. But the public is still a little limited. Google has chosen to open the source code of its browser to all its competitors. But not without irony, it will first be usable on computers equipped with the Windows operating system. Users equipped with Mac and Linux will have to wait a few months. Worse, before reaching Microsoft, its real target, the new Google browser could first harm Mozilla, the foundation that built Firefox, the browser of the free software world that has managed to carve out a share of almost 20% of the browser market. A shame for Firefox which offers Google as its default search engine.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1260

Between the negotiations of some to acquire others, the release of new cell phones that are always as surprising and the new wave of small, low-cost ultraportable computers, we have the impression that, in our country, the technology scene is rather calm and yet, it is starting up again with a bang. Two shock waves are passing one after the other through the corridor of Quebec industry. First, there is this lawsuit filed against the Quebec administration to shake up government practices regarding the awarding of contracts for the operation of its vast computer network. And then, this news that the Canada New Media Fund will not be renewed by Canadian Heritage next March. First, let's go back to this lawsuit against the Quebec government. Filed on July 15 by a Laval free software lobbying organization, complaint No. 500-17-044243-080 challenges the Direction générale des acquisitions du Centre des services partagés du Québec, Microsoft Canada, the consulting firm Compugen and the Attorney General of Quebec. The organization FACIL, for the collective appropriation of free computing, thus wants to denounce the practices of purchasing software necessary for public administration without a call for tenders on the part of the Government of Quebec. Using numerous documents filed with the Superior Court of Quebec, the Laval organization accuses the government of violating Quebec law by renewing Microsoft software licenses without first making calls for tenders. And in passing, the complainant points out that there are other IT solutions than those proposed by Microsoft and that the government should consider them. The FACIL organization claims that Quebec has already paid more than $80 million to Microsoft to purchase licenses for the Windows Vista operating system. According to FACIL, the government awarded software purchase contracts worth more than $25 million between February and June 2008, without ever going through the tendering process. But this complaint is not the first for the Quebec government. Last March, the company Savoir-Faire Linux, which belongs to the vice-president of the FACIL organization, Cyrille Béraud, specifically accused the Régie des rentes du Québec of engaging in the same type of behavior and, therefore, of renewing Microsoft software licenses without issuing a call for tenders. The Superior Court of Quebec will hear the complaint from the FACIL organization tomorrow. Whether one is for or against the way the Quebec government is operating in this matter, the fact remains that this lawsuit has the merit of raising the issue of the allocation of IT contracts in the various departments and, by extension, of hearing Quebec's thinking on the use of free software within its various components. \*\*\* Speaking of the Charest administration, are you familiar with the Support for the Transition to the Information Society program? It was launched in mid-July by the Minister of Finance, Minister of Government Services, Minister responsible for Government Administration and Chair of the Treasury Board, Monique Jérôme-Forget. A program of six million dollars per year to help citizens adopt new technologies in all regions of Quebec. Administered by the Ministry of Government Services, the program provides financial assistance to projects and organizations that promote access to the Internet and information technologies in their regions. Concretely, the government is seeking to achieve three objectives: support projects or initiatives that promote access to and use of technologies, foster closer ties between the state and citizens, and finally, contribute to the deployment of e-government and the establishment of a connected Quebec. To achieve this, Quebec will invest this money in three types of initiatives: projects related to e-government, in support of the mission of community organizations active in the field, and in research projects on the socio-economic impacts of the Internet and information technologies. Stakeholders who wish to submit a funding application may do so until September 30, 2008. \*\*\* Finally, a word on the information relayed by the Globe and Mail that the Harper government has decided to eliminate the Canada New Media Fund. This is a $14.5 million per year program to support the creation and distribution of digital cultural content products. The Regroupement des producteurs multimédias was quick to react and said it was "outraged to learn that the Canada New Media Fund will not be renewed by Canadian Heritage. This fund, which has existed since 2001, was to date one of the only programs dedicated to the development of Canadian content for the independent new media industry." According to Quebec producers, the impacts should be felt on the supply of interactive French-language content offered to Quebecers and Canadians with the disappearance of a $5 million envelope that was generally granted to the French-language sector. The only hope for people in this industry is a federal election campaign that could bring a new administration to Ottawa that is more sensitive to their needs. bguglielminetti@ledevoir.com Bruno Guglielminetti is a producer and new technology columnist at Radio-Canada. He is also the editor of Carnet techno (www.radio-canada.ca/techno).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1261

So forget CNN and all the 24-hour news channels, not to mention dinosaurs like NBC, CBS, ABC and... newspapers, because Barack Obama's running mate and other hot news can be announced to you first in personally addressed text messages signed "Barack." The Democratic presidential candidate owes, at least in part, his undeniable success to the way he and his team have used the Internet and the latest in communications. Whether or not he is present in the traditional media, you can be sure that at any given moment he is omnipresent on the Web and in the wireless world. Of course, he has his own website, www.barackobama.com, but like any self-respecting networker, he has also set up his "page" on social networking sites like MySpace and FaceBook, while his supporters exchange videos on YouTube that are viewed by millions of people. These tools have helped him build an impressive campaign trove, thanks to many often modest contributions. But the story doesn't end there. In 2004, Howard Dean, the current chairman of the Democratic Party, also used the Internet extensively to mobilize volunteers and raise funds, and his presidential campaign got off to a flying start. But it quickly collapsed. What sets Obama apart in this regard is probably the "interactivity" that characterizes his use of new technologies. His team encourages grassroots supporters, most often young people, to organize events and take initiatives of all kinds. Examples of this participatory approach include the official campaign poster, which was designed by a street artist, and the video Yes We Can by the Black Eyed Peas, who set the words of a speech by the presidential candidate to music and sing them. "Barack Obama's election campaign will inspire American politics. "He used Web 2.0 like no one else," believes John Parisella, president of the advertising agency BCP and communications advisor to the president of Concordia University. Mr. Parisella volunteered for Barack Obama's Democratic nomination campaign last winter. Along the same lines, the New York Times has already referred to it as a "wiki" campaign because, like the popular online encyclopedia, the Obama method encourages everyone to make a small contribution to improving a product that cannot be called final since it is intended to be eternally perfectible. The product, in this case, is the program, the team, but also the candidate himself, if we refer to some of his speeches. The other presidential candidates, Democrats and Republicans alike, have not encouraged much creativity at the grassroots level, and the interactivity of their websites has most often been limited to fundraising appeals. At meetings organized by the Obama team, activists have seemed to appreciate being invited to speak on aspects of the program, feeling that their opinions will be taken into consideration. There is a certain paradox in all this. Barack Obama is known to be an exceptional speaker, capable of galvanizing huge crowds in the United States or in Germany. But at the same time, his participatory conception of democracy forces him to sometimes stand back or at least give the impression of doing so. According to some commentators, he sees himself more as a "facilitator" than as a leader. But political reality does not always and in every way correspond to the virtual reality or to the convivial anarchism that is supposed to animate the world of "wikis" and free software. There are limits to discretion and to "keeping a low profile." As we saw about ten days ago, Barack Obama's opponents took advantage of his absence (motivated by a vacation in Hawaii) to launch fierce attacks that caused him to drop several points in the polls. We can expect him to be very visible from now on, not only at the Denver Convention, but until the November election. More visible and perhaps more pugnacious too. "He is combative enough to respond to attacks [...]. But he does not want to fall into negative politics and personal attacks. Obama can return the ball, but it is not in his temperament," believes John Parisella. The real shadow workers, and who will probably remain so, are Barack Obama's organizers, whose efficiency has been formidable up to now. Discretion would also be the number one rule of this team, the number two rule being: "All credit must go to Barack Obama," according to Rolling Stone magazine (June 10 edition). The group is very disciplined: no indiscretions, no internal quarrels, as we often saw in Hillary Clinton's entourage. It includes a mix of old hands of Washington politics, like former senator Tom Daschle and the latter's former chief of staff, Pete Rouse, and Obama's Chicago-based close friends, like campaign manager David Plouffe, spokesman David Axelrod and adviser Valerie Jarrett. Citizens who receive a "personal" message from "Barack" on their cell phone as a first (but at the same time as the CNN journalist assigned to the file!) can expect to also receive a message reminding them to go vote on November 4. Databases are no longer built by patiently leafing through (landline) telephone directories. Text messaging boosted voter turnout in the 2006 midterm elections by 4 percent, the New York Times recently reported. And it did so at a cost of $1.56 per vote, much cheaper than traditional door-to-door canvassing or phone calls. Text messaging has proven effective in getting young people and some minorities to register to vote. "Obama's strategy of targeting 18- to 25-year-olds is very good for getting people registered, but they've never turned out in large numbers on Election Day," observes Larry Hufford, a political scientist at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. One-third of 18- to 29-year-olds don't have a landline. Text messaging was used extensively during the primaries and caucuses last winter and spring. In New Hampshire in January, Barack Obama had a clear lead in the 18-24 age group, but that did not prevent Hillary Clinton from winning the election.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1262

Radiohead's progressiveness and avant-gardism go far beyond their experiments on the internet - random price of the album In Rainbows, possibility of remixing the last video (House of Cards) using free software, etc. Radiohead's environmentalist bias has never been clearer than in the context of this tour. As we have been able to read for a few months in various environmentalist publications, the agency Best Foot Forward was hired by the British band to evaluate the consequences of its tour on the environment, which led to the implementation of various measures. Thus, the famous group from Oxford has chosen as much as possible to perform in places close to city centers or, if this is not possible, it encourages the public to favor carpooling to get to the concert. For their travels, the band has chosen the train, bus or hybrid truck as much as possible, and tries to avoid the plane... Obviously the goal is the voluntary reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In the same vein, Radiohead asks its fans to take public transportation to get to the concert, even suggesting hyperlinks to Parc Jean-Drapeau and the STM on its official website! Cycling is also encouraged. The band also warns its fans not to go by car (even by carpooling) because parking is limited. What's more, the merchandise that accompanies the tour is made of organic cotton or recycled materials, including a fiber created with plastic bottles. For the European leg of the In Rainbows tour, Radiohead has joined the association Les Amis de la Terre, which urges governments and the European Union to commit to fighting climate change by setting annual rates for reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. Radiohead is therefore preparing to take over Parc Jean-Drapeau for a third time. Without a doubt, the best performance was in 2001, at the time of the Kid A/Amnesiac cycle, those two albums that definitively detached Radiohead from the rock pack, relegating all the Coldplays on earth to the ranks of popular groups without a major contribution. In 2003, the group returned to Parc Jean-Drapeau following the release of Hail To The Thief, a transitional album for a transitional tour. The concert and the scenography were not as remarkable as the previous stopover, one of the greats in the history of the group of groups. And tonight? If the conditions are right, the evening could prove to be just as memorable as that of 2001. Yesterday at noon, 32,500 tickets had already been sold. Mild weather (showers are feared) could attract 10,000 more fans. An ecosystem in itself!

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1263

Ton Roosendaal is a stubborn boy whose stubbornness could well shake up the world of cartoons. In 1988, he created what would become the leading 3D animation studio in the Netherlands. In 1998, he decided to market Blender, the software that his company had developed, separately. In 2008, he just put online the second entirely "free" cartoon in the history of 3D (the first dates back to 2006). And he is about to publish Apricot, a video game that, if it is not the first to be "free", will probably be one of the most accomplished, judging by the first extracts put online at the beginning of July. Released on May 30, Big Buck Bunny tells the story of a giant rabbit with a big heart confronted by three mean little rodents. Ten minutes long, it cost only 150,000 euros, but easily bears comparison with the cartoons of Hollywood studios. Viewed by nearly a million Internet users, it has been downloaded several hundred thousand times, for free. Because Mr. Roosendaal has been a fervent supporter of the spirit of "free" since the transformation of Blender into free software saved him from disappearing when his company went bankrupt in 2002. SHARE, MODIFY... Anyone can thus access its source code, in the same way as chefs who make their cooking recipes public. Better still: Mr. Roosendaal has decided that the very content of his cartoon would be "free". It is possible to download it, share it, but also modify it, or even recover elements of it to incorporate it into another cartoon, all for free, provided that you respect the "Creative Commons" (CC) license attached to it. This legal mechanism allows content to be protected, just as free software licenses allow source codes to be protected. Most bloggers publish their posts in "CC" mode, and tens of thousands of musicians and photographers do the same for their creations. The Creative Commons website thus offers to search, via several search engines, for content expressly stamped CC, a functionality also offered in the search bar of the Firefox browser, the most popular free software. Until Big Buck Bunny, cinema remained on the sidelines of this vast cultural liberation movement, or almost: failing to "liberate" their blockbusters, the major animation and special effects studios all use free software, which equips 95% of their computers...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1264

Summer in Quebec is the season of festivals and terraces. But this year, it's not just music and comedy that are attracting attention, because for a week, the Internet was vibrating to the rhythm of the local web, thanks to the notable launch of two new, ambitious businesses. Just a few days apart, Evan Prodromou and Harry Wakefield made available to Internet users last week the sites Identi.ca and Praized.com, two sites that are as similar as they are different from each other. Virtual word of mouth Praized offers Internet users the possibility of recommending, or not, a business located anywhere in North America. Thanks to an agreement with the Yellow Pages Group and an American counterpart, Praized has a database of 17 million businesses, estimates its CEO, Harry Wakefield. "We're trying to reproduce a village spirit, where everyone knows each other, and where everyone knows the qualities and faults of local merchants," he says. Mr. Wakefield and his two acolytes, Sébastien Provencher and Sylvain Carle, spent two years developing this service, which aims to be much more than a simple website specializing in restaurant, bar and other reviews. "Praized is not a destination, it's a platform," explains its co-founder. Our goal is to provide a completely free tool for bloggers and other sites that would like to develop their own recommendation service." Originally from San Francisco, Evan Prodromou has lived in Montreal for five years. He is a seemingly inexhaustible source of ideas. His projects include a site on travel destinations, one on wine and another aimed at (future) parents in need of advice. Identi.ca is a microblogging platform, similar to Twitter, Jaiku and Plurk. "Users write short messages on the site, which their friends can access via instant messaging, SMS or RSS, explains its creator. This allows you to reach dozens of people by sending just one message." The reaction of the blogosphere took Mr. Prodromou completely by surprise, with Identi.ca making headlines on the most important Silicon Valley blogs, from TechCrunch to Slashdot, which are very influential on the Web. "We went from a private beta to the Internet limelight overnight. In 36 hours, we had 10,000 subscribers. We had to change servers." A paid system To achieve their goals, both Praized and Identi.ca are banking on the strong values of the famous Web 2.0: free service for users and developers, use of social media, etc. With one difference: "What most open source companies fail to do is integrate their profitability model into their service," explains the president of Praized. In other words, just because it's popular doesn't mean it's paid. So Praized thought differently. For example, sites that integrate Praized can make money by displaying advertising. The Montreal startup makes its own profit when Internet users click on a link redirecting them to the recommended merchant's page, located on the Yellow Pages Group portal, which then passes on a royalty to them. For its part, Identi.ca aims to be the first platform of its kind that is entirely free (open source). The software that makes it work can therefore be taken over by other developers who would like to launch a microblogging site in turn. "There are over a hundred of these sites in the world, but they don't talk to each other. We want to change all that," summarizes its founder, who then plans to ride the wave of popularity of microblogs around the world. In short, between two festivals, this summer could just as well be the season of web 2.0 in Montreal. "And Internet users everywhere are starting to realize it," concludes Evan Prodromou.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1265

Alain Corneau, Bertrand Tavernier, Catherine Breillat, Jean-Jacques Beineix... Thirty-one filmmakers support in Le Monde the "Creation and Internet" bill presented by Christine Albanel, Minister of Culture. They defend "without reservation" a text that many supporters of free software, including MEPs such as Daniel Cohn-Bendit (Greens) and Vincent Peillon (PS), describe as "liberticide". Judging that free culture is an "intellectual scam", the filmmakers believe that this text, which is to be debated this autumn in Parliament, "preserves the right of authors to continue making films".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1266

André Gunthert. "Is it fair to extend the model of the recorded music industry or the paid press to all cultural exchanges, to predict "a disaster announced for citizen democracy"? Economists have too often limited their work to the analysis of monetized exchanges, leaving entire sections of our societies in the shadows. However, in the fields of arts, knowledge and cultural practices, it is easy to show that the essential choices are based on free use and collective appropriation. A few examples. The public domain. We can read, and what is even more important, quote, discuss and re-appropriate Aeschylus, Shakespeare or Victor Hugo freely, for a minimal or no access cost. How is this possible? If the cultural heritage of humanity were copyrighted like the films of Metro Goldwin Mayer, its cost would be much higher and its uses strictly limited to the private space. It is to avoid this situation that the notion of public domain was invented, which all works of the mind are included, seventy years after the death of their author. After a reasonable period of time intended to protect the income of the author and his family, the usufruct reverts to all. This is the rule that allows us to benefit from the majority of the world's artistic and cultural production. Scientific production. Einstein never patented relativity. In the scientific field, the bulk of the production of knowledge is freely accessible to all, with patent protection for applied research remaining a limited and temporary exception to this principle. No legislation allows for indefinite protection: after a period generally of the order of twenty years, the invention becomes collective property again. In the field of human sciences, knowledge is freely usable from the moment it has been published. Freud never received royalties on the use of the notion of lapsus, any more than Bourdieu on that of habitus. No society for the protection of scientists has cried out against theft or demanded the drafting of a law prohibiting the misappropriation of knowledge. Why? If not because in this field, the social consensus considers it normal that the author should provide the result of his work for free. The contribution of amateurs. The development of the negative-positive system that founded the rise of photography owes everything to the amateurs who, between 1848 and 1890, brought this technique to the point where it became interesting for industry. Many technologies would not have the same face without the disinterested work of these user-actors. The role of free software has been a decisive element in the long-term development of systems that could not have found satisfactory conditions for their implementation in the principles of private enterprise. Embedding visual content. While the rules of law are drastic for recent productions (any unauthorized use is prohibited), and the practice of electronic bartering has given rise to restrictive legislation on online sharing all over the world, the Web has invented a principle of formidable efficiency to circumvent the limitations of intellectual property. When you quote a video seen on YouTube on your blog, you are not copying the content. The trick that allows you to circumvent the rule is the principle of embedding, i.e. a player that can be exported via a piece of code, the copy of which is not considered to infringe the copyright. When we know that this principle can be applied in the same way to Flickr photographs and to most visual content offered by platforms, we realize that there is more than a simple infringement of the right to quote, but an essential condition that gives the Web its current appearance. (1) “Internet and the disaster of 100% free advertising”, Libération, June 27.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1267

San Francisco - Microsoft founder Bill Gates spent his last day as CEO yesterday at the software giant's offices and will hand over the company's destiny to his friend Steve Ballmer as of Monday. In terms of functions, Mr. Gates' departure is mostly symbolic, as one of the world's richest men no longer held operational responsibilities at Microsoft. After handing over the CEO role to Mr. Ballmer in 2000, Mr. Gates had already given up his titles of chief software architect and head of research and strategy in June 2008, as he had promised to do two years earlier. The Microsoft founder will also retain the only remaining mandate he held, that of chairman of the board of directors, although his presidency will now be non-executive. He also remains the group's largest shareholder, with around 8.7% of the capital. But Mr. Gates' influence remained strong on the group's strategy and his departure, to devote himself to his humanitarian foundation, is a turning point, which comes at a time when the group is seeking to change its model. A model, essentially focused on paid software, which is increasingly being shaken up by the Internet revolution. Thanks to this great upheaval, the one that is now its main competitor, the Google group, has developed. Microsoft's foray into search engines, Google's specialty, through its MSN portal, has had mixed results. Despite colossal investments, Microsoft is still lagging far behind in terms of revenues from online advertising, which represented a quarter of Google's in 2007. The software publisher tried in February to regain control by swallowing up the Internet group Yahoo!, putting $44.6 billion on the table. But Yahoo! turned down Microsoft, despite a price deemed attractive by analysts, preferring to continue on its own. After raising its offer, Microsoft chose to give up. Provocatively, Yahoo! immediately formed a vast partnership with Google. And while this relationship should allow Google to strengthen its hegemony in advertising, the Internet group is now hunting on Microsoft's historic territory, by offering free software, similar to the office applications sold by Mr. Gates' group. Free software, particularly that of the IBM computer group, Lotus Symphony, also challenges Microsoft's dominant position, while the latest version of its Windows operating system, Vista, has been the subject of strong criticism. Released at the end of 2006, Vista has only sold 150 million licenses, with many companies preferring to keep XP, the previous version. Not only have the new features not convinced compared to Windows XP, but Vista has also proven incompatible with many software and peripherals. Another factor unfavourable to Windows is the insolent vigour of Apple's Macintosh computers, the only microcomputer manufacturer not using Microsoft software, which have seen their sales soar over the past year and increased their share of the global market to more than 5%. Challenged by Apple, as well as by Google, on its core business, Microsoft has also failed for the moment in its attempt to break into the portable music player market, dominated by Apple's iPod. Its Zune portable music player, launched in November 2006, represented only 4% of the American market in the first quarter, compared to 71% for the iPod. In the field of consumer electronics, the group can however be satisfied with the success of its XboX games console.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1268

Like every day for the past 1,712 weeks, Microsoft founder and "chief software architect", William Henry Gates, will go this morning to Redmond, not far from Seattle (northwestern United States), to the campus of the world's leading computer company. Like every day for the past thirty-three years, he will go to greet some of the company's 30,000 developers, write two or three memos on the future of the Web or the "digital cloud" and go to the home TV studio to record a few messages, which will be broadcast at events that he will not attend. An almost ordinary day in the life of this 55-year-old businessman, third richest in the world behind Mexican telecommunications magnate Carlos Slim and American investor Warren Buffet. Except that it will be his very last as Microsoft's first employee. Relations. Tonight, the post-Bill era begins. The father of Windows is leaving all executive functions within the company. But he remains the chairman of the board of directors and one of the largest shareholders with 9% of the capital. And he has promised to devote one day a week to the future - more uncertain than ever - of Microsoft. After a little rest in his immense high-tech estate overlooking Lake Medina, then some public relations this summer at the Beijing Olympics, this great philanthropist - in the purest American tradition - will devote almost all of his time to his Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the world's leading private humanitarian organization with 37.5 billion dollars in cash (23.8 billion euros). Time for redemption for the man who, since the age of 19, has accumulated more wealth than almost anyone else on earth? This great nerd (crazy about computers), frankly introverted - "He prefers technology to men", says a former colleague of his - thus puts an end to a two-year transition period during which, he claims, he prepared "in the smallest detail" his disengagement. A withdrawal that coincides above all with the beginning of an era of all dangers for Microsoft. Light years away from that April 4, 1975 when, in the company of Paul Allen, the young programmer dropped out of Harvard - he was destined to become a lawyer like his father - to create his start-up. Its ambition was to write a program for the Altair, the very first personal computer. But it would owe its meteoric rise to MS-DOS (Microsoft Disk Operating System), the operating system that Microsoft managed to get the undisputed leader in the sector, IBM, to adopt. By obtaining a non-exclusivity clause from the all-powerful Big Blue, the ancestor of Windows would very quickly proliferate on competing clones of IBM and become a quasi-monopoly that today equips more than 90% of the billion PCs on Earth. A cash cow for Microsoft: if this activity now represents only 60% of the turnover of this "octopus" - as its detractors call it - with diversified activities, it still ensures almost all of its profit. Competition. If it is daring to speak of decline regarding a company whose turnover (60 billion dollars this year) maintains double-digit growth and remains the first market capitalization in the sector with 270 billion dollars, the best years of the "PC-centric" world are now a thing of the past. Vista, the latest version of Windows, is a "disaster" according to Newsweek, to the point that some buyers are demanding to return to XP, the old system. A failure that is good business for Apple whose market share (around 5%) is soaring and which likes to mock in its ads the blues of those disappointed by Vista. Microsoft's other pillar, the Office suite of desktop software, is increasingly being challenged by free products from the world of open source software, which Gates once described in a moment of madness as "a kind of new modern-day communist." And then there's Google... the new Microsoft of the Internet era, which has just thwarted Microsoft's acquisition of Yahoo and is shaking the fundamentals of the model developed by Gates: the paid license. A "phenomenal" success, he acknowledges, which has reduced the software giant to the rank of dwarf in online search and advertising. "I hope people want competition in this area, because we have a brilliant team that comes to work every morning with the idea of creating something better," he says in Challenges this week. Mea culpa, in the form of praise for competition, from a computer genius as well as a ruthless businessman? Not the type of character. This new challenge will have to be met without "Bill Gates" as his successor Steve Ballmer calls him. Failure, very little for Bill...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1269

SOFTWARE is said to be free when it meets three criteria: free to copy, to use and to modify. First used by companies to try to free themselves from Microsoft's supremacy (in PC operating systems, word processing and databases), the use of these programs is spreading to administrations and to the general public. Variants of Linux operating systems (Ubuntu, Mandriva, Redhat, etc.), competitors of Windows, are used by French public services, like the American administration, in order to reduce their bills. Even Neelie Kroes, European Commissioner for Competition, has taken a position in favor of "open technical" standards in IT, in an indirect attack on Microsoft. "The Commission will support the use of products that use open and well-documented standards," she declared. The cost of free software is linked to its installation and maintenance, carried out by experts. Microsoft has finally taken free software seriously, and has teamed up with Novell to build a commercial offering for businesses. In addition, individuals are now using free software. To launch its first €300 laptop, Taiwanese Asus used a Linux operating system. The same goes for vending machines, which reduces the cost by $50. And these customers can download Open Office for free, on the Internet, instead of buying Microsoft's Office.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1270

DASSAULT SYSTEMES LE FIGARO.- Why are there so few European publishers in the global leading pack? Bernard CHARLÈS. - I think that our software industry is fundamentally not recognized by the French public authorities. We do not operate in the same way as other industries. In software, we represent small numbers. No one has thought that there could be a European software industry. The governments of the Union that look into our businesses find the companies too small, without thinking that before becoming very big, publishers actually started out very small! What measures could change the situation? Europe has never made a serious proposal on the fact that there could one day be a virtual market. It limits itself to saying welcome to free software! Free software is a good thing but it is not an economic model that excludes others. Europe does not address the problem of intellectual property. His only initiative was to create a tax on discs. This is the utmost stupidity. Our patent systems are not adapted to the virtual market, we must constantly refer to Asian or American models in this area. You have launched a platform dedicated to 3D called 3dvia, a version of which, 3dvia Shape, is accessible to the general public. How do you ensure that intellectual property is respected there? It is true that we give amateur communities the possibility of using all kinds of content on this platform. We have set up a protocol that allows you to choose either to share content for free or to retain the rights by specifying them. I think that this crucial subject of intellectual property on the virtual market is not a European problem but a subject that falls more broadly under the World Trade Organization (WTO).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1271

Agoravox, a participatory journalism site, has just celebrated its 3rd anniversary. Literally "the voice of the public square" has inaugurated in France a model imitated on the South Korean Ohmynews launched in 2000 which makes citizens producers of information. Created within Cybion, a company specializing in Internet monitoring, the Agoravox site has now become a foundation. The model seems to be increasingly attractive for the financial independence it provides, but French laws make it difficult to apply to a media outlet. Interview with Carlo Revelli, the creator of Agoravox, who is going to Brussels next week to sign the statutes. Agoravox will in future have its headquarters in the Belgian capital. Why did you choose the foundation model? In the Internet sphere - free, open source or collaborative software - it is a fairly common model, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries. Look at the Mozilla Foundation, Wikimedia which manages Wikipedia, Linux, Ubuntu, Richard Stallman's Free Software Foundation or the Electronic Frontier Foundation. All things considered, we have been thinking for a long time about the evolution of Agoravox in this direction. Participatory, the site brings together several thousand contributors; they do it, so it belongs to them. It had to be consistent with our participatory journalism model. In addition, we want to protect its independence and protect it from collusion. On this subject, I can't help but think of the famous declaration of independence of cyberspace that John Perry Barlow, the co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Foundation, had the courage to read in Davos in front of all the heads of state of the planet, in 1996. This text remains very relevant today... Have you had any buyout proposals? Investors from the media and finance worlds have approached us. Agoravox was even valued, at the time of the presidential election and the peak of enthusiasm for Web 2.0, at between 10 and 15 million euros... I did not create this site with the aim of making a profit. We have reached a time when we need to invent new media models that reconcile ethics and the quest for informational neutrality. Why in Belgium? Initially, we wanted to create our foundation in France, but the legal constraints are too demanding. A public utility foundation requires a minimum contribution of one million euros, to wait at least one year to obtain the status and above all to accept that the Ministry of the Interior sits on the board of directors. There was no question of linking Agoravox to a ministry or a political function. In Belgium, the conditions are more flexible and better able to fully guarantee the independence of the structure, without an initial financial outlay. And the opinion is given after three months. How will the financing be organized? Advertising revenue should cover the site's operating costs. With an audience that varies between 800,000 and 1 million visits per month, advertising brings in between 20,000 and 30,000 euros per month. At the same time, the foundation will allow us to appeal for donations. But we remain cautious. Unlike Anglo-Saxon countries, the French-speaking public does not have a strong culture in this area. These funds will allow us to develop other sites, particularly abroad; an Italian version will soon be online. They will also provide financial support for participatory surveys, a new form of investigative journalism where Internet users provide information and testimonies and monitor the work that is being done before their eyes. An investigation is currently underway into poverty. Who will sit on the board of directors? Apart from Joël de Rosnay (co-founder of Cybion) and myself, we would like an editor from Agoravox to be present. Contributors have been organizing for a few days to form an association and lay the foundations for a society of editors. Agoravox has a thousand active editors and 35,000 in total who have submitted articles. It is essential that one of their representatives sit on the foundation. What do you think of other participatory news sites? They are generally journalism sites with a participatory editorial policy. At Agoravox, the editorial policy is made by the editors themselves, the vast majority of whom are not journalists. We are 100% participatory. As for the economic model, I do not believe in paying for the Internet. And so far, no model has proven to be particularly successful. None of these sites are rolling in gold. Our path is information patronage, like ProPublica in New York, even if we are not comparable. It is therefore quite encouraging to see that in the United States, American patrons are beginning to finance genuine investigative journalism initiatives.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1272

ACER "OUR objective is to sell 6 million mini-PCs in the second half of the year worldwide, or between 400,000 and 500,000 units in France," says Daniel Trachino, director of the consumer division of Acer, the Taiwanese group, number three in the world for PCs and second for laptops. From the outset, Acer therefore aims to overtake its competitor Asustek, better known by its abbreviation Asus. The latter, also Taiwanese, has cleared the market for low-cost PCs with its EeePC, marketed around 300 euros in France for the first 30,000 units sold with an SFR subscription. With a third version of the EeePC, launched this week in Taipei at the Computex computer show, Jerry Shen, the boss of Asustek, is only hoping to exceed his initial target of 5 million units in 2008. To beat his compatriot, Acer has just unveiled a wide range of low-cost PCs. Called the Aspire One, the PCs will be available for between 299 and 379 euros, starting in mid-July. Weighing around one kilogram, each machine is equipped with a color screen (22.6 cm diagonal) larger than the EeePC (18 cm). And its microprocessor is more powerful than the first EeePCs, with the latest Atom from Intel instead of a chip from Taiwanese Via Technology. The first machines offered by distributor brands, such as those from Surcouf and The Phone House, have also been launched with the least expensive microprocessors to keep the price under 300 euros. HP, Dell, Sony are coming "About twenty products are in the pipeline," assured Jean-Pierre Champion, the president of The Phone House in France, in May, when he presented his first low-cost PC model, designed by a Spanish subcontractor, Airis, and assembled in China. All the big names in IT - the American manufacturers Hewlett-Packard and Dell, the Japanese Sony and Toshiba, the Chinese Lenovo, and the Fujitsu-Siemens duo - are on the starting line. They should be coming out in the coming weeks. Each will try to differentiate itself thanks to its models according to the microprocessor, the size of the screen, the autonomy without recharging and the communication modules. And a major constraint: a ceiling price of around 350 euros. The mere integration of Microsoft's Windows XP Home operating system, instead of a free Linux software, increases the price of the PC by 50 euros.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1273

Just mention the idea of a law targeting the illegal downloading of cinematographic or musical works on the Internet for France, the European champion of online piracy, to split in two. Between activists for everything free and fierce defenders of creators' rights. The "creation and Internet" bill, which is to be presented to the Council of Ministers on Wednesday 11 or Wednesday 18 June, is no exception to the rule. Directly derived from the law on copyright and related rights in the information society (Dadvsi) and the proposals of the Olivennes mission, this text aims to establish, under the aegis of the future High Authority for the dissemination of works and the protection of rights on the Internet (Hadopi), the sending of personalized warning messages to fraudulent Internet users. Before a registered letter or a suspension of Internet subscription. On this last point, the Council of State could issue a negative opinion, considering that the courts and not Hadopi have the authority to order suspension measures. The fact remains that the government sees the entire system as a way to get out of the current system of criminal repression that will continue to target professional pirates - fines of up to 300,000 euros and three years of imprisonment - to fight more effectively, through a system of "graduated response", against more "ordinary" piracy. Such a proposal is far from unanimous. The specialist magazine SVM attacks the bill, publishing in its June issue a petition signed by 19,000 Internet users, including MEPs such as Guy Bono (PS), Daniel Cohn-Bendit (Greens), Vincent Peillon (PS) and numerous associations defending free software. They fear widespread filtering of networks. The entourage of Christine Albanel, Minister of Culture, specifies that "the way of detecting fraudsters by sending a "hook" on P2P networks will be the same as today". SVM also criticizes "the criminalization of Internet users", while, Rue de Valois, there is talk of "reducing the penal system for a more preventive and more effective system". Finally, SVM considers this law "liberticide", "unworthy of a modern economy". The whole debate is based on this clever balance between protection of privacy and the right of property of artists. The big names of the French Internet, united in the Association of Community Internet Services (Yahoo!, Google, Dailymotion...), criticize any cutting of access. Already, the European parliamentarians have questioned the chosen French approach. On 10 April, they narrowly validated an amendment calling for "avoiding the adoption... [of sanctions] such as the interruption of access to the Internet", in a report presented by the French socialist Guy Bono and supported by Michel Rocard. This report, although not binding on the French government, delighted the European Consumer Association (BEUC) which sees in the cutting of access to the Internet "a disproportionate, ineffective measure and, more seriously, [which] violates certain fundamental rights such as the rights to the presumption of innocence and the protection of personal data". However, the MEPs did not continue on this path: on Tuesday 3 June, they rejected this same Bono amendment in the report on telecommunications. Christine Albanel's best allies will be the record producers. On 26 May, Pascal Nègre, as president of the Civil Society of Phonographic Producers (SCPP), launched an appeal to Nicolas Sarkozy to adopt the bill as quickly as possible. "Every month that goes by, 10 to 15% of the music industry's turnover disappears," he said, referring to the social plans of EMI and Sony-BMG. COPYRIGHT To support his argument, he cites the results of an Ipsos survey conducted for the SCPP: 74% of French people would be in favor of the government's anti-piracy bill. Better still, 90% of those surveyed would stop downloading if they received two warnings. 90% of those surveyed linked the drop in record sales (-23.2% in the first quarter of 2008) to illegal music downloading. Pascal Nègre summed it up as "people are ready to stop if the whistle blows for recess." According to him, there is nothing "repressive" about this text, since this system of sending warning messages has proven itself in Belgium, Germany and Great Britain. Sacem will also defend this bill, considered "the best possible compromise", according to the chairman of the board, Bernard Miyet. He would have preferred that access providers "who have made their fortunes through piracy" finally pay royalties seriously. "This law will have to be massively applied, and therefore given the technical and legal means to be so", he says, in order to launch paid music online on a large scale. Sacem's collections fell from 140 to 90 million euros in records between 2002 and 2007, while those generated on the Internet rose from 1 to 6.6 million euros. A micro-market.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1274

Last Saturday evening, at the Québec City Convention Centre, the Fédération de l'informatique du Québec announced the names of the winners of the 2008 Octas. Revenu Québec and the SAQ were awarded twice. With Gestion du projet Refonte TPS à Revenu Québec and Indices de richesse, and for the latter project the Octas de l'excellence as a bonus, Revenu Québec became a double winner during the last evening of the Octas. The Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ) was not to be outdone, having been a double recipient for Service Conseil, au bout des doigts. At the Convention Centre, Gilles Brassard was named Personality of the Year in the IT world. Special mentions, designated by the juries, were also awarded to Philomène Longpré and the students of the Cégep de Saint-Jérôme. The Greater Montreal Real Estate Board and the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food each received a mention of excellence. - Consumer electronics - B2C The Director of Civil Status, Services Québec, Ministry of Justice, for the project The DÉClic online service - B2B inter-company electronics Greater Montreal Real Estate Board, for the project MLS® Centrisª System - Online learning and knowledge management Société des alcools du Québec, for the project Service Conseil, au bout des doigts - IT project management Revenu Québec, for the project Management of the TPS Redesign project at Revenu Québec - Technological innovation - 25 employees or less AudiSoft Technologies, for the project Frontline Gateway, an operational video communication for multiple users - Technological innovation - 26 to 250 employees Organix IT, for the project Smart Video Monitoring System (SVMS) - Technological innovation - 1000 employees and more Revenu Québec, for the project Wealth indices - Games and animation Kutoka Interactive, for the project Mia Lecture: Alerte aux Bestigroux! - French in information technology The Integrated Centre for Industrial Mechanics of Chaudière and the Beauce-Etchemin School Board, for the Online Industrial Design Program project - Technology serving the community - 100 employees or less Zone Accès Public Sherbrooke, for the ZAP Sherbrooke project, a free wireless Internet network - Technology serving the community - 101 employees or more SOGIQUE, the Bell IT Management Company and Santé et Services sociaux Québec, for the Refonte Info-Santé and Info-Social project, a program of privileged access to information for all Quebecers, at all hours and every day - IT in the cultural, educational and media sectors Société des arts technologiques (SAT), for the Telepresence Station 2.0 project - Student succession - college level From the Cégep de Sainte-Foy, Sébastien Bourgoing, Francis Perron, Simon Pouliot, Philippe Troie, for the 3D Racing Nunavut video game project - Student succession - university level From the University of Sherbrooke, Nathaniel Audet, Vincent Chartrand, Francis Gauthier-Fredette, Maxime Grégoire, Francis Lapierre, David Mailhot, Frédérick Martel-Lupien, Simon Poissant, David Therriault, for the Vsmash project - Commercial success LMSOFT, for the WEB CREATOR project - Online public services The Director of Civil Status, Services Québec, Ministry of Justice, for the DÉClic online service project - Business solution - Internal development - 100 employees or less Greater Montreal Real Estate Board, for the MLS® Centrisª System project - Business solution - Internal development - 101 employees or more Société des alcools du Québec, for the Service Conseil, au bout des doigts project - Business solution - Free software University of Sherbrooke, for the monPortail project, the virtual campus of the University of Sherbrooke - Business solution - Software packages Company in limited partnership Prolam, Le Groupe Créatech, a Bell Canada company, for the Dynamicsª NAV project, a strategic tool for Prolam - Transformation of organizational processes - 1,500 employees and less Société de gestion informatique SOGIQUE, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS), for the Information System on Mechanisms for Access to Specialized Services (SIMASS) project - Transformation of organizational processes - 1,501 employees and more Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec, for the FLORA-TAXES project, fundamentally simpler!

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1275

SHERBROOKE - Less than a year old, the ZAP Sherbrooke project is attracting attention in the world of information technology, by receiving a major award. The network of free wireless public Internet access zones (ZAP), chosen as the grand winner in the "Technologies serving the community" category, is one of three grand winners from the Sherbrooke region who were honoured this weekend at the 2008 OCTAS Gala of the Fédération de l'informatique du Québec (FiQ). This award recognizes the innovative nature of ZAP Sherbrooke, which mobilized the community to successfully deploy more than 165 free wireless public Internet access zones for the Sherbrooke community and its visitors. The results compiled show that the project makes Sherbrooke "the most connected city in Canada with 167 access points (ahead of Montreal which is second with 152)", the "fourth most connected city in North America (behind only Austin (328), Atlanta (305) and Chicago (183))" and "the city with the best Internet accessibility in North America when considering the ratio of the number of access points vs. the size of the population" (113%). It should be remembered that the ZAP Sherbrooke connection points (www.zapsherbrooke.org) have been installed in public places such as cafeterias, libraries and cafés. They can also be found in art centres, shopping centres and dentists. Nine months after the launch, more than 5,000 people had accessed the Internet using the ZAPs. The login portal is scheduled to be modified next June to promote cultural, community and sports associations. In addition, an OCTAS was also awarded to the Vsmash project prepared by students from the Université de Sherbrooke, namely Nathaniel Audet, Vincent Chartrand, Francis Gauthier-Fredette, Maxime Grégoire, Francis Lapierre, David Mailhot, Frédérick Martel-Lupien, Simon Poissant and David Therriault. Vsmash stood out in the "Student Emerging - University Level" category. This project aims to explore and promote various ways of experiencing museums. It is an immersive virtual reality system offering a human-machine interface where the user has the feeling of truly moving through a space based on the effort made. Finally, the OCTAS in the "Business Solution - Free Software" category was won by the project "monPortail, the virtual campus of the University of Sherbrooke". monPortail is an intranet environment that allows students to access a wealth of information about themselves using a simple personal identification code: electronic and instant messaging, directory, scholarship directory, libraries, courses, internships, schedules, academic results, available jobs, course materials, tuition statements, posting of notices, etc.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1276

"Our mission is to help companies capture the best ideas in the world and use them to define strategic priority solutions." Anil Rathi, the boss of IdeaCrossing, is not a little proud to count among his clients large companies like Hilton, American Express, Harley Davidson or Daimler Benz. Good ideas are his specialty. His small company of ten employees, based in Cleveland, finds them on the Internet. They come from a network of more than 2000 students and 88 graduates in economics. Exploiting the gray matter of blogs, forums, and other expressions of the Web as a source of innovation, this is the credo of IdeaCrossing, but also of many other companies like NineSigma or Marketocracy. In English, we call it crowdsourcing. The principle: a crowd of Internet users responds to a competition or a proposal issued by the crowdsourcer on a defined theme. The latter collects and stores good ideas or information by offering a reward to the lucky ones. Then it resells them at a higher price to individuals, companies or investors who have requested them. This has the advantage of simplicity. The resource used for crowdsourcing can take more or less elaborate forms: Internet users solicited at random, a panel formed over time by specialized crowdsourcers, sites and forums dedicated to the birth of Internet users' ideas or even communities of Internet users deciding to exploit the vein. Such as that of Cambrian House. With 64,000 people, it is about to launch Vencorps, a website on which investors and venture capitalists will evaluate business creation ideas. Cambrian will reward the Internet user who has proposed the best project by offering them shares in Vencorps. Profit. The model of inspiration for this new service is the Wikipedia encyclopedia on the Internet. Written by thousands of Internet users, it is regularly updated and offers a wealth of information. Simply, this participatory model is applied to the field of business and innovative ideas. And there you have it. For companies that are looking to cut costs, it's all profit. Addressing talented Internet users, rather than high-priced professionals, allows them to bring back skills at a lower cost and sometimes even for free! Of course, not every idea put forward by a virtual crowd is necessarily a good one. But if it is new and formulated by many people, it is because it has a good chance of already being socially received, and therefore commercially low risk. One of the pioneers of the genre, the InnoCentive platform, thus allowed Ed Melcarek, a 57-year-old Internet user and researcher, to win a bonus of $25,000 by helping the Colgate-Palmolive research and development unit find a new toothpaste formula. In the same spirit, YourEncore uses a network of 4,000 retired researchers ready to find forgotten knowledge or solve the problems posed by its clients Procter and Gamble or Boeing. As with IdeaCrossing, the contributors who have been selected give up their intellectual property rights in exchange for royalties, money or a job. "The contributor must even sign an undertaking that covers any conflict of interest, confidentiality and transfer of rights," explains Brad Lawson, boss of YourEncore. Bright future. France is not to be outdone. The Grenoble start-up Crowdspirit opened its "ideas box" on its site in September 2007. It allows independent inventors or experienced tinkerers who have free time to exhibit their electronic product discoveries. Internet users comment on them, rate them and complete them. Then, "it is up to the manufacturers who have spotted certain inventions to contact the inventors and manage this between themselves," explains Lionel David, the founder of Crowdspirit. Internet users receive, based on their performance, "points" giving the right to one or more products. After evaluating the development costs, if a sufficient number of promises to purchase allow the product to be profitable, it is offered for sale. "The strength of such networks comes from the diversity of intellectual profiles they recruit," says Karim Lakhani, a professor at Harvard, who has studied the phenomenon. "The most effective networks are those that weave the widest range of information, knowledge and experiences." According to the latter, the mechanism makes it possible to integrate "the expertise that is on the periphery. We are witnessing the birth of a new type of competition, the "qualified" knowledge of the crowd against that of the expert and the professional." This phenomenon, which is in the process of organizing itself into a real market, could gradually compete with the traditional economy. When we know that more than a billion individuals use the online network today, it is impossible to ignore the potential that this "lonely crowd" represents for the future of commerce and trade. By 2015, practically all fixed communication and broadcasting networks will be federated on the Web. For marketing departments, this looks like a bright future. "The free exchange of ideas will be the great idea of the century," emphasizes Denis Ettighoffer, author of Netbrain (Editions Dunod). The craze for participatory sites for sharing ideas and projects is set to take off, with the massive increase in the number of Internet users in emerging countries suggesting a considerable market. With the Internet, more and more amateurs are able to create and sell things that were once the preserve of professionals. Self-taught people, qualified students struggling to find a job or seniors who need additional resources, crowdsourcing allows you to have a sideline activity, which also escapes the taxman thanks to the micropayment system on the Internet... Or simply to have a voluntary activity. "The unprecedented nature of crowdsourcing is not only its economic scale but also its societal impact", maintains Jeff Howe, journalist at Wired magazine, who will publish a book on crowdsourcing in July with Editions Crown Books. Slavery. Like YouTube whose resources (videos) are produced by a virtual crowd of unpaid amateurs, many start-ups in the new economy rely on exploiting the volunteer work of millions of Internet users. "This phenomenon, which could, in the near future, be described as "temporary work 2.0", is tending to become widespread. It is gradually competing with the so-called traditional economy", observes Jeff Howe. The latter shows that what was an epiphenomenon, confined to the world of free software (open source), is in the process of winning the attention of the business world. As a result, some predict the disappearance of experts and artisans in the more or less short term. A foretaste of the image side: you can buy an amateur photo from the crowdsourcer iStockphoto for a tenth of the price of a photo provided by an agency or a professional photographer. "Photo-Internet users" do not even earn enough to finance their cameras or software update licenses, while iStockphoto's revenues are increasing by 14% per month. Will the phenomenon cause the general impoverishment of individual ideas, personal creativity having the greatest difficulty competing with the mass of trends, results of collective tastes that are in the air? Critics of crowdsourcing are already talking about madsourcing or stupidsourcing. They denounce a new form of slavery, a new marketplace for the poor, the worst, since the slaves volunteer to carry out small tasks for a few cents.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1277

During a public debate organized last March by the Vivagora association on the theme "How to put innovation in democracy", the philosopher Bernard Stiegler, president of Ars Industrialis, underlined the difficulty in thinking about "the earthquake triggered by these mutations" brought about by "transformational technologies" such as the Internet, nanotechnologies or biotechnologies. "Our enemy is the stupidity of industry, not industry itself," he emphasized. "Our society is in trouble because it can no longer tolerate the separation between production and consumption, between experts and laymen." The "culture of contribution" found in collaborative technologies (Wikipedia, free software, social networks, etc.) has developed because society wants it. It rehabilitates the figure of the amateur, and therefore that of the citizen, "this amateur of politics." These technologies of trans-individuation can just as well "liberate the uncontrollable" as provide solutions or build desire. It all comes down to a question of regulation from which new behaviors will emerge. "The worst," warns Bernard Stiegler, "would be for us to watch these phenomena pass by like cows watch trains go by."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1278

Its name is Miro, a name that doesn't suit it well since it's a television and video software. An application that gives you something to see, in other words. It can be downloaded at the following address: www.getmiro.com/. This tool, developed by the Participatory Culture Foundation - a non-profit organization founded in 2005, based in Massachusetts - is free and open source. While Joost (Le Monde, Monday, April 30, 2007), created by Niklas Zennström and Janus Friis - also inventors of two revolutionary Internet concepts, namely Kazaa (peer-to-peer exchange software) and Skype (free telephony, sold to eBay for more than 2 billion euros in 2005) - seems to be struggling to find its footing, Miro is growing and enjoying great success with Internet users. Its main function: download and sort new information from sites and video blogs to which the Internet user is subscribed, without the slightest intervention from the latter. Each time the computer is turned on (and connected to the Internet), Miro discreetly connects with the indicated sites and downloads, before classifying them, the latest videos. You can therefore watch them later, without having to connect to the said sites, and without missing any. ALL FORMATS An example: let's say you are a fan of both the "Guignols de l'info" on Canal+ and the LCI news bulletins. Not missing any can be tedious. But thanks to Miro, once the address is indicated, the software will automatically download in the background the programs that you have not yet seen. Better still, Miro will regularly indicate new programs available in your language, or not. But that is not Miro's only function. First of all, the software is a video player, capable of reading almost all formats currently encountered (from QuickTime to WMV, including MPEG, AVI, XVID, etc.). In addition, the application allows access to high definition (HD) content. Above all, the software offers the possibility of downloading videos from Dailymotion or Youtube, the major sharing sites, where it is usually only possible to watch films in "streaming" (i.e. without downloading them). Another unique feature is that the user can save a search keyword, and then automatically receive new corresponding videos as soon as they are posted online. This is to say that Miro is definitely not very well named.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1279

The end of the ultimatum is approaching. On April 5, Microsoft gave Yahoo! three weeks to accept its takeover offer. With the April 26 deadline looming, the war of soundbites is raging. The tone changed on Wednesday, April 23, when Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's CEO, on a trip to Milan (Italy), declared that he was offering "a lot of money." "If the shareholders agree, that's good," he said before adding, "We are ready to move forward without a merger with Yahoo!." Is this a real desire to give up or is it simply a threat intended to discourage the Internet portal's shareholders who are demanding a revaluation of the offer? For his part, Chris Liddell, Microsoft's CFO, hammered home on Thursday, April 24, during the presentation of the group's quarterly results, that he saw "no reason to raise its offer." He also added that a decision would be made next week to break the impasse. "If no progress is made toward an agreement, we will announce further details next week on our alternatives, which include either going directly to shareholders or pulling out," he said. If Yahoo! executives continue to reject Microsoft's offer, the giant will either have to abandon the deal or launch a hostile takeover bid by preparing an offensive to gain seats on the Internet portal's board of directors. The battle between Yahoo! and Microsoft has been going on for nearly two months. The world's leading software company, keen to counter Google's dominance of the Web, decided to launch a takeover bid for Yahoo! in early February. It said it was prepared to pay $44.6 billion (28.2 billion euros), half in cash and half in shares. An amount that would make Yahoo! the largest acquisition ever made by Microsoft. CULTURAL DIFFERENCE But this juicy offer did not convince Yahoo!'s management, led by its co-founder Jerry Yang. They rejected it on the dual grounds that it did not value the most visited portal on the Internet at its fair price and that their company was strong enough to continue on its own. The cultural difference between the two companies was also mentioned to explain the Yahoo! management's reluctance to fit into the Microsoft mold. Yahoo! therefore multiplied its contacts to find solutions. Many counter-offensive alliances were imagined. Like the one that would see a rapprochement with the media group Time Warner, eager to sell or support its Internet branch AOL, while, for its part, Microsoft would ally itself with the media giant Murdoch to win the game. To repel the unsolicited takeover bid, Jerry Yang did not hesitate to approach its great rival Google. They decided to conduct a test together by bringing together their search engine and advertising activities. In concrete terms, Yahoo! is using Google's advertising machine to sell ads to Internet users who search on its portal. A system closely monitored by the American Department of Justice, which has acknowledged having opened an investigation into the possible consequences of this agreement in terms of competition. The stakes of this battle of the titans are on a par with the intensity of the fight. For Microsoft, it is about increasing its positions on the strategic Internet market. In its sights, the advertising investments of online advertisers, which continue to benefit from strong momentum. Mr. Ballmer also justified, on February 1, his company's attempted takeover bid for Yahoo! by an online advertising market of "80 billion dollars in 2010". Microsoft has a second objective. It must face the rise of the Internet, which threatens the historic positions of the world leader in software. The growth of the free software model, which allows users to use, modify or distribute for free, is challenging Microsoft's core business. Microsoft's quarterly results illustrate this trend. In the first three months of the year, sales of the Windows operating system fell 23% to $4.02 billion, and sales of Office desktop software also fell 1.6% to $4.74 billion. Overall, despite the strength of its entertainment products business, such as the Xbox game console and video game software, Microsoft's revenues are stagnant. Even if it fails to get its hands on Yahoo!, Microsoft's priority, which has significant financial resources, will remain to accelerate its shift to the Internet.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1280

How do you manage the information technology (IT) department of a company whose employees are considered some of the most tech-savvy in the world? For Google's IT director, security means having the freedom to choose your technology tools. Douglas Merrill, Google's IT director, knows a thing or two about this. His job is to provide Google employees with the technology tools they need and make sure they meet security standards -- without imposing too many restrictions on how they work. So the 37-year-old manager has taken an unorthodox approach. Unlike many other IT departments that try to control the technology tools their employees use, Merrill's team allows Google employees to download software as they please, use whatever type of computer and operating system they want, and use in-house software designed by the company's engineers. Internal Version Recently, he has also been busy convincing customers to use Google's own enterprise software -- such as Google Apps, an internal version of its Web services program that includes an e-mail manager, word processor and calendar. Mr. Merrill, a surfer-haired, T-shirt-wearing manager, studied social and political organization at the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma and earned a master's degree and a doctorate in psychology from Princeton University. He gets most of his IT knowledge from previous positions: as a computer scientist at RAND Corp., a senior director at Price Waterhouse and a senior vice president at Charles Schwab & Co. He joined Google in late 2003. We spoke with Mr. Merrill about Google's approach to IT. Here are some excerpts: Wall Street Journal: How is Google's IT department structured? Mr. Merrill: Our IT department is a decentralized organization because almost every employee at Google is a technologist of sorts. In most companies, technology is in one organization, locked down and very standardized. You can't do whatever you want. The model at Google is choice. We let employees choose between different types of computers and operating systems; they can rely on my department for technical support. It's a little less cost-effective -- but on the other hand, it does increase the productivity of Google employees a little bit. WSJ: How do you provide effective technical support? Mr. Merrill: We're more of a self-service type. For example, say you need a new application to do a job. You can take your laptop to a tech kiosk [i.e., one of the tech support centers inside Google offices], but you can also go to an internal website where you download the software and install it yourself. We allow all users to download the software themselves. Security WSJ: Doesn't that pose security risks? Merrill: The traditional security model is to double-lock downstream devices [like computers and smartphones] and that makes everyone feel more secure, but they're not any more secure. In our case, it's the infrastructure that we've secured. Not only do we have antivirus and antispyware on every device, but we also have our mail server. We have programs built into our infrastructure to monitor for unusual behavior. So I don't really have to worry about what's happening downstream. The traditional security model didn't really work. We had to come up with a new one. WSJ: You rely heavily on open source software and enterprise software. Can you give us some examples and what benefits you get from that? Mr. Merrill: We buy software when we have to -- for example, for our general ledger, we went with Oracle accounting software; Oracle did a good job. When it makes sense to buy it, we buy it; when it makes sense to build it ourselves, we do. For example, because our customer relationship management program is so closely tied to our advertising system, we had to build it ourselves. We also believe in competition -- for example, between operating systems, because each operating system has its advantages. We use Linux for research. We have the annual Summer of Code, which recognizes college students working on open source projects that they think are useful. Consumer Internet WSJ: What's driving the "consumerization" of technology in the enterprise, that is, the borrowing of technology ideas from the consumer Internet? Merrill: Fifteen years ago, enterprise technology was much better than consumer technology. That's not the case anymore. Enterprise technology used to be about uptime, security, and speed. Enterprise software doesn't have the same advantage in that regard as [some consumer software]. The big question is, "When consumer software is useful, how can it help me reduce my costs?" Google Apps is hosted on my infrastructure, and the Premiere Edition costs about $50 per user. The original email storage capacity averages 50 megabytes, but can be expanded to over 10 gigabytes. The response time is better, you can pick up your email anywhere in the world, and it's more cost-effective. WSJ: When you make this pitch to other CIOs, what do you get the most skepticism about? Mr. Merrill: When I talk to CIOs at the top 100 companies in America, they ask me, "What's your security model? Is it really reliable? Is there a catch?" I tell them that because I had to build this massive infrastructure to run Google, it's no problem to add corporate data to it. I already had to set security standards because search data is really private. Few Google employees have access to our customers' data, and they've been vetted. We have close relationships with security people -- so when people find a problem, they tell us. We have over 150 security engineers who work exclusively on security. Security is not a caste system for us: every engineer is trained. We use automated tools that check every engineer’s code. We are able to invest in information security like no other company. We did it for our research. In some ways, Google Apps is just a spin-off.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1281

This season, the Quebec label Analekta is celebrating its twentieth anniversary. To the tune of "J'y suis, j'y reste," Mario Labbé, its president and founder, is beginning a new phase in his profession. "I am here to stay; I ask you to write it and it will displease a lot of people..." We can guess that Mario Labbé, a former impresario who became the boss of the first major classical record label in the country, has not made only friends in twenty years. He has his frankness and the reputation of having a volcanic temperament. As is well known everywhere in the profession, what's the point of hiding it? But all hopes are allowed: "I must mellow as I get older!" laughs the boss of Analekta. What makes him say that? An event that is listed in the chapter of regrets: "I regret having fallen out with André Laplante in 1996, over a clause in a contract. I had been carrying this regret around for a long time. This year, I said to myself: "That's really too stupid," and I remedied the situation, because André Laplante is still one of the greatest Canadian and even world pianists!" A good discussion did the rest: André Laplante would record Chopin for Analekta in 2009. In 1988, few observers imagined the label's longevity. Ten years ago, the business nearly collapsed, but Mario Labbé held firm. It was the dark period of his life. "They wanted to get me out of my company." "They" is the Culture and Communications Investment Fund. We can sense that this alliance has created wounds that are still raw. "This partnership created enormous problems for us and I had an incredible climb back, because we had to buy back shares and make up for the $600,000 in losses caused." Today, things are going much better, so much so that Mario Labbé suggests that, recently, he could have cashed in the dividends of his hard work: "We could have sold, passed the baby on to a multinational, because Analekta is a profitable company." But he continued: "I gave myself the mission, the personal challenge, of bringing Analekta into the new world; into the digital world. I want to see what it will look like in ten years!" Future We sense that the director of Analekta is very enthusiastic, not only about André Laplante's return to the fold, but also about the solidity of the pillars of his catalog - Angèle Dubeau and Alain Lefèvre - and the artistic promise of his new artists, the singers Shannon Mercer and Marianne Fiset, for example. The key is the development of sales, "14% increase in physical products, 72% in downloads for the year 2007", a kind of feat in a market in decline. This solidity is partly explained by what Mario Labbé calls the "microcosm of Quebec", with a market that remains fairly stable: "Sales of big hits have certainly decreased - Angèle Dubeau, who sold 50,000 copies, will sell 35,000 -, but we have taken market share and have new customers, so that we can stabilize." There is also a clear and precise objective: "My primary market is the Canadian market. I decided to sell records there and we are selling them. In the Canadian Soundscan ranking, we have seven or eight titles in the Top 100 every week. We are outperforming all the multinationals. That's what I want." The boss of Analekta does not see the download market as an Eldorado. He seems to have calmed down compared to the last two years (his prediction is to see this form of consumption represent between 30 and 40% of his turnover in three years) and leaves the compact disc a good ten - or even fifteen - years of existence, "as long as the consumer can access the product". This access does not worry him too much. ArchivMusic.com has become the leading seller of classical music in the United States, but the emergence of sales websites does not yet compensate for the loss of space of classical in stores: "A new consumption habit has not yet been created and that is what we must work on collectively." At the top of concerns on an international scale, we find the French market, a real disaster. More generally, in terms of the problems facing classical music, Mario Labbé rages against the Ministry of Education's disengagement from music: "What has been happening in our schools for the last ten years is appalling. Beyond culture, music education is an indispensable foundation." Obviously, he cannot hide his bitterness about the evolution of radio programming: "Radio-Canada and the CBC, when it comes to classical music, are not fulfilling their mandate." With Kent Nagano This week, a consecration after many years of patience, Analekta proudly launched, alongside Kent Nagano, the OSM's first album with Charles Dutoit's successor. Entitled Beethoven, l'idéal de la Révolution française, this double album, which exists in English and French, includes two CDs. The first presents (this is the reason for the two versions) Le Général, a project to combine Beethoven's stage music with a text by Paul Griffith about General Dallaire, whose aesthetic and musical impasses and improbabilities were described in Le Devoir under the title "Un assassinat en règle" (A Ruled Assassination) when the "work" was presented in concert in January 2007. The narration in the French version is by Albert Millaire. In the English album, the narrator is Maximilian Schell, an astonishing performance that seems to emerge from beyond the grave. Soprano Andrianne Pieczonska recorded her part in French and English. As is often the case in these cases (this can be heard in recordings of operas and operettas that include dialogue), the mixing of voice and music is absolutely not credible, with on one side the acoustics of a concert hall and on the other, the sound of a radio studio. The second CD contains the Opferlied op. 121b in German and three excerpts from Egmont - the overture and the two soprano arias with the original text - this incidental music which is the essential ferment of the General. One can imagine that a seasoned computer buyer (Audacity is a good OpenSource editing software - free) can thus reconstruct on his computer a "real" version of Egmont, untainted by an update which denies the essence and the ideals which inspired its composition by Beethoven. The "hit" of CD 2 is Beethoven's 5th Symphony as heard last February at the Place des Arts and whose great rectitude had been very appreciated. It will be noted that the technique renders without artifice the dynamic felt in the room, notably the astonishing presence of the beginning of the second movement, usually played more piano. Under international agreements between Analekta and Sony-BMG, this album will be distributed internationally on the RCA Red Seal label. It will thus go on sale in Japan on April 10: just in time for the arrival of Nagano and his orchestra! Contributor to Le Devoir

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1282

Gilberto Gil Cité de la Musique, 221, avenue Jean-Jaurès 75019. Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 4:30 p.m. 38 euros Info: 01 44 84 44 84. CD: Gil Luminoso (Biscoito Fino). If he weren't in great shape, and as fiercely optimistic as usual, one might think that Gilberto Gil, 65, had started a long farewell tour. For several months, in America and then in Europe, the Brazilian Minister of Culture has been performing alone on stage, guitar in hand (with the intermittent support of his son Bem, guitar and percussion) to offer a selection of his repertoire spanning... forty years. And the repertoire is wide, since it goes from bossa to reggae, via rock and African music, with a center of gravity towards samba and baião, a traditional music from the Northeast. Gil has come a long way: tropicalism, prison, exile in London, all kinds of crossbreeding, small stretches of the road with Pink Floyd and Jimmy Cliff, big stretches with Caetano Veloso and Jorge Ben, religious ecstasies, smoking, ecological emotions, political commitments, and we'll keep it short. Rainbow. The voice sometimes has some difficulties in the high notes (polyps on the vocal cords), but for the rest, Gilberto Gil is as good as new, and determined to see life through rose-tinted glasses. "No, like a rainbow," he corrects in his precious and precise French, anxious to convey a great message of love and fraternity, because that's the man... Gil is happy as an artist, it shows on stage. After London, Brussels, Rotterdam, here he is this weekend in Paris, before leaving for Switzerland, Spain, Tunisia, etc. Twelve concerts in twenty-three days. The Beatles' When I'm 64 is reproduced in a nonchalant bossa version, No Woman No Cry is barely retouched, but we vibrate especially with his old compositions, like Expresso 2222, or more recent ones like Geisha, a samba break. His only song in French is Renaissance africaine, official anthem of the World Festival of Black Arts in Senegal, which, as its name sufficiently indicates, intends to give a boost to the devastated continent. Wooden language. Officially, the minister is on vacation - and not paid - when the artist is on tour. But the member of the Lula government continues to happily use thick wooden language, giving extremely evasive answers to any political question. It is only on the subject of the Internet and copyright that the minister gets a little involved: "I believe that the law must adapt to technology, and not the other way around. There are many ideas in the air; we will discuss them in the coming months and there will be a bill in Brazil towards the end of the year." In 2004, Gil released one of his albums under a Creative Commons license (an adaptation of copyright in the spirit of free software). Quite logical, coming from one of the greatest samplers of world music.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1283

Free software, artist cooperatives, decentralization, the new leader of the Green Party of Quebec, Guy Rainville, did everything he could to talk about subjects far removed from environmental issues yesterday, three days after his election as party leader. "In the past, we were seen strictly as an environmental party," said Mr. Rainville. "We have to show that we are a credible party on all subjects." He drew several proposals from his party's program, modified by 150 delegates this weekend in Trois-Rivières. The only subject on which Mr. Rainville and his party will not have an opinion: the national question. "We will not get involved in that," he said. "It is a citizen issue. We are proposing a law on popular initiative. It is up to citizens to bring issues (such as Quebec independence) to the National Assembly and it must then hold a referendum." The Green Party also proposes to change political ecology, with a regional decentralization of powers to elected bodies. "No one is better placed than the regions to manage their resources," says Mr. Rainville. The Green Party also promises to... not have a party line. "The members of the National Assembly are there to represent citizens, not to defend their party," says its leader. In any case, Mr. Rainville assures that "the Green Party wants to unite on the theme of the environment" and that it will continue "to be a leader" on this issue. You can read a more detailed version of this article at www.cyberpresse.ca/actualites

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1284

A Russian village like thousands of others: wooden huts hidden under the snow, grandmothers in headscarves leading cows to graze... In Sepych, in the Urals, a thousand kilometers east of Moscow, there is still no gas, but the school is connected to the Internet. And can thus participate in the global crusade against Microsoft. In May, the director of the village school, Alexander Ponosov, was fined 5,000 rubles (140 euros) for pirated use of the Windows operating system on the school's twelve computers. Thanks to the Internet, the trial of this poor bearded ascetic has gone around Russia, if not the world. Since then, Alexander Ponossov has given up his position as director and his meager salary of 14,000 rubles per month (390 euros) to promote Linux free software... "Proprietary software represents a danger not only economically but also for the security of our countries," he attacks. Microsoft programs are not sold at their real price: we pay for air, it is a full-blown plundering of our country. Thanks to the automatic renewal of programs, there is also a risk that someone could penetrate our computers from abroad." Within three years, Linux will equip all computers in Russian schools, compared to barely 5% today, believes Sofia Vinnitchenko, director of Linux Center, the largest Russian distributor of this free software. "It is not so much the Ponossov affair that helped us as Russia's desire to join the World Trade Organization, which requires the legalization of Russian computer operating systems," this expert qualifies. To date, Microsoft's biggest competitor in Russia remains piracy. In 2007, pirated software accounted for 75% of the Russian market, according to the Software Vendors Association (BSA). For this reason, even Microsoft is pleased with the Ponosov case: "We have thus realized that piracy is a serious problem in schools," Microsoft in Russia emphasizes.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1285

"Come on!" you say to yourself. A video game inspired by Guy Debord now! What did they go looking for to show off at Libé, huh? Still, yes, a Debord game. And a warlike one at that. Because Kriegspiel is a pure computer wargame, with two camps fighting to the death. Appearing ten days ago on the Net, the game is not yet completely finished, but a fully playable pre-version is already available (1). Kriegspiel comes from afar: in 1965, the author of The Society of the Spectacle imagined his own wargame, a board game called The Game of War, and filed a patent for it. And it's serious, reading the description: "All the strategic and tactical reports are summarized in this Game of War according to the laws established by Clausewitz's theory, based on the classical war of the 18th century, extended by the wars of the Revolution and the Empire." With one goal: "We can say of the Game of War that it reproduces exactly all the factors that act in war, and more generally the dialectic of all conflicts." In 1977, a very limited edition of the game came out with a fabric board and pawns engraved by a craftsman. It quickly sold out. The game would not be reissued, but Debord published in 1987, with his wife Alice Becker-Ho, a book containing the rules of the game (2). In 2007, the book was also translated into English for the first time. This is how the New York software art collective RSG (Radical Software Group) discovered it. "The idea to adapt the game came from a persistent interest in Guy Debord's work, his political thoughts, his acerbic character, his tireless criticism," explains Alexander Galloway, RSG spokesperson. The game is a work of study and historical research. Our computer version is an attempt to translate Debord's themes into contemporary language, and thus to renew interest and better understand his legacy. When Debord created the game, personal computers did not exist. The computer game is both a tribute to Debord and a transformation at the level of the code." In practice, this results in a virtual rectangular game board of 500 squares, on which we will place, among other things, impassable mountains, fortresses and combat units (infantry, cavalry, artillery, etc.). It is up to each player to manage the movements, attacks and defenses of his units in the most efficient way possible. Especially since communications will have to be taken into account, in other words the ability of units, depending on their placement, to receive orders. "Hidden bonuses". The rules of the Game of War, while not very complex, are long and precise, and open up countless tactical possibilities. Kriegspiel works identically to Debord's game. The developers even refused to imagine the possibility of playing alone against the computer: "Guy Debord created his game as a tool to learn strategy against a real opponent. The computer version is therefore played online against another player." But this apparent fidelity has not prevented RSG from taking some liberties with the original game: "We are in the process of including hidden bonuses in the game that players will be able to discover," confides Alexander Galloway. "We would like to add one in particular that completely changes the game, for entirely historical reasons. Debord wrote in his letters that the game was a simulation of war as it existed in the 18th century. Today, war is different. We are asking ourselves how to reimagine the game around the principle of asymmetric warfare that dominates today everywhere in the world: urban combat, unconventional weapons, guerrilla tactics, organization in cells... "Codesourceouvert. To illustrate the terrain and the units, RSG called on the Israeli artist Mushon Zer-Aviv (3), who gave the game a unique and surprising appearance, a mix of video game and board game. A clear and sober graphic style, which works wonderfully during combat. The collective of American developers does not know when the final version of its Kriegspiel, half work of art, half wargame, will be available, but imagines that its source code will be open to all, so that everyone can amend it and that it will remain free. (1) http://rsg.org/kriegspiel/ (2) The Game of War, Guy Debord and Alice Becker-Ho, Gallimard, reissued in 2006. (3) http://www.shual.com/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1286

QUEBEC - The Quebec government could save tens of millions right away by adopting a policy already in place in several European countries: opting for open source software, such as Linux, rather than multiplying costly Microsoft operating system licenses. Cyrille Béraud, the boss of Savoir-Faire Linux, a computer company on Saint-Urbain Street in Montreal, has just filed a lawsuit against the Régie des rentes du Québec with the Superior Court. Last December, the Régie des rentes announced that it intended to renew the operating system licenses for its computer workstations without a call for tenders. Microsoft no longer provides support for its Windows 2000 system, forcing organizations to migrate to a more recent solution. This "update" - for $700,000, they wanted to switch to Microsoft's Vista system - effectively eliminated any other proposal. The Régie des rentes had heard Mr. Béraud's complaints, but had subsequently decided to maintain its decision to use Microsoft, because the civil servants were more familiar with this system. "We talked with them for a whole day, we observed that it was possible for them to switch to free software," observes Mr. Béraud. But we argued compatibility problems in order to stay with Microsoft, he explains. In its application to the Superior Court, the company notes that Vista is an operating system "radically different" from its predecessor. Rather than an "update", it should be a replacement of the operating systems, an approach that should be subject to a call for proposals. Herman Huot, the spokesperson for the RRQ, confirmed that the lawsuit was served yesterday. The organization's litigation department is currently reviewing it, he specifies. Such an action is a first in North America, but has already appeared in other European countries, in particular. Getting Microsoft out of government offices would create thousands of jobs because local computer firms, having access to the computer code of this "open" software, could offer services that would be impossible on Microsoft's closed "proprietary" systems. According to Mr. Béraud, the Quebec government has become "a subsidiary of Microsoft" while many governments around the world already use "free software" like Linux. This "open" software allows programmers to have access to the codes. Above all, it is much less expensive. The Quebec government spends 80 million each year on its Microsoft licenses. Already in the federal government, these systems that run Google in particular have made a breakthrough. In the Netherlands, all government computers must now run on free software. "In France, the entire gendarmerie is on free software, 100,000 positions have switched. In two years, 400,000 French civil servants have switched to this type of software," observes Mr. Béraud. And in Brazil, companies cannot respond to calls for tender if their solutions are not compatible with this type of software, adds Mr. Béraud.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1287

QUEBEC - Cyrille Béraud, the boss of Savoir-Faire Linux in Montreal, has just filed a lawsuit against the Régie des rentes du Québec with the Superior Court. In December, the Régie announced that it planned to renew the operating system licenses for its computer workstations without a call for tenders. Microsoft no longer provides support for its Windows 2000 system, which forces organizations to migrate to a more recent solution. The Régie wanted to upgrade to Microsoft's Vista system for $700,000, an update that effectively eliminated any other offer. The Régie had heard Mr. Béraud's complaints, but maintained its decision to stay with Microsoft, because civil servants were more familiar with that system. "We talked for a day, and we saw that it was possible for them to switch to free software," Mr. Béraud observes. But compatibility issues were cited as a reason to stay with Microsoft, he explains.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1288

self-produced The Internet is not only a means of distribution for independent films, but also a means of financing them. Route 66 (photo), a road trip made in 2004 by Vebfilm, from Leipzig, Germany, was self-financed thanks to donations from Internet users. An open source film, downloaded a million times, distributed under a Creative Commons license - which authorizes copying, modification and even commercial exploitation. In France, Ralamax offers free films, such as 3263, for legal and free download. In England, the A Swarm of Angels project pushes ambition and participation a bit further. Participating Internet users invest in the film (to the tune of 37 euros) and are also invited to participate throughout the creative process. The objective: to succeed in making a collaborative film with a big budget (1.8 million euros). www.vebfilm.netwww.ralamax.netwww.aswarmofangels.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1289

On the Web, podcasts and videos are scattered all over the place, making it sometimes difficult to find and view them. To remedy this situation, Miro, a free and open-source software, appeared at the end of 2007. Miro allows you to group together videos from all over the Net. The software has already been downloaded more than two million times, and is enjoying some success in Europe. Interview with Holmes Wilson, one of the members of the management of the Participatory Culture Foundation, which is funding the development of the software. How was Miro born? We have been interested in intellectual property and access to content for years. In early 2005, when we began developing Miro, video was still a work in progress on the Net. The best way to transform this sector was to build a tool that would allow everyone to become a video broadcaster, a TV channel. Many of us come from political activism, and the free distribution of videos is a major issue for them. With technology, we had the opportunity to create an infrastructure that would change things. The idea was to create an easy-to-use software, which would be similar to TV. But instead of TV, which is a very closed world, with a handful of huge companies, here you have a free choice, with the possibility of watching any video, from anyone, from the Internet. And you can also put your videos online. Our project is this: to democratize video. Hence the first name of Miro, Democracy? Yes. When, at the beginning of the project, we had to give it a name, we did not want to simply create a video player, but to change the world of broadcasting. Hence the name Democracy. But many people believed, because of the name, that it was an activism tool. This is a goal that we support, but it is not our main objective. We want to reach as many people as possible, with videos of all genres: there are videos created by companies, Internet users, NGOs... There is music, films, a bit of everything. We didn't want the name to restrict us to a single category. So Miro. Joost, the new project from the creators of KaZaa and Skype, is another big video project, which has had a lot more press than you... There are many projects around video, and Joost is one of them. But Joost represents a vision of video that is completely opposite to ours. Joost is entirely based on digital locks (or DRM, for Digital Rights Management), we refuse them. Their software is proprietary, while we are for free software. Your goal today? Since we started, there have been a lot of changes in the world of video, with YouTube and all the others. But the way these sites work confirms our vision. The world of video on the Internet is very centralized, which creates problems of quality, of diffusion... That is why it is essential to create a completely open platform, which does not depend on any company, whose main mission is to defend freedom of expression and of the press. We must be able to group videos regardless of their origin, and not be satisfied with a single source, even YouTube. Miro seems very close to Mozilla Firefox in spirit, is that intentional? Like the Mozilla Foundation, which finances the development of Firefox, the Participatory Culture Foundation is non-profit. The Mozilla Foundation gave us $100,000 last May, and we contribute to the development of Firefox. In addition, John Lilly, who recently became CEO of Mozilla, is part of our board of directors. It is therefore natural that there are similarities.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1290

INFOGRAMS. The former European champion of video game publishing has just recruited Briton Phil Harrison as deputy CEO. The latter had recently resigned from the position of president of Sony's game development studios. INTEL. The price of memory chips will fall by 53% in the first quarter, Intel has indicated to financial analysts. Initially, the American firm was counting on a 27% price drop, which led it to reduce its earnings forecasts. PARIS EUROPLACE. The association bringing together major French banks and companies intends to participate in international discussions on the consequences of the subprime crisis and the recommendations to be implemented. MICROSOFT. Three associations defending free software launched a petition yesterday to end Microsoft's software monopoly in the European Parliament. Soon, the European Commission must propose buying more free software.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1291

The Maison de Bourgogne in Orléans, a former chocolate factory transformed into a cultural wasteland, is home to around forty associations including Labomedia, which has just lost its ECM (multimedia culture space) subsidy, along with 115 other places in France. For over ten years, this program has been introducing the public to technologies and supporting digital creation. More broadly, the entire multimedia culture sector is being undermined, even if this aid (from 5,000 to 30,000 euros) was derisory. Benjamin Cadon, a member of Labomedia who has six employees, is also president of the very young National Federation of "multimedia culture" actors formed following the withdrawal of the Ministry of Culture. What are Labomedia's activities? Two main areas: education (introduction to IT, image education, use of software tools) and artistic production. We welcome artists in residence and organize a free cross-disciplinary festival every year, the Fête des 01, with concerts, installations and conferences. We also run a recycling workshop where we collect old machines on which we reinstall free software, people leave with a free multimedia computer. What is the consequence of the removal of ECM aid? It is our only recurring subsidy. This 20,500 euros is not much, but it calls into question the fragile balance of the structure which was based on this aid combined with some subsidies from the city and the regional council, a little of our own income thanks to training and a little employment assistance. The subsidy was our breath of fresh air for support for creation. It allowed us to finance the festival, to invite artists who approach technologies critically and to offer residencies. We welcomed Bureau d'Etudes and participated in the web development of their new project Mapping the laboratory planet, presented in Berlin in January at the Transmediale festival. The withdrawal of the Drac risks leading to the withdrawal of other partners. What is the alternative? We are being pushed towards a self-financing logic, American style. We will be forced to only provide services, abandoning work with artists. This calls into question the very reason for our association, unless we transform ourselves into an SARL. We are also trying to look at the private sector. But we support critical projects and patronage is preferably focused on consensual proposals, rather than on emerging practices. We are trying to push towards competitive sectors fields that were not yet competitive: after energy, the Post Office, it is the turn of Culture. We are trying to send small structures like ours back to local authorities. How can we maintain the same independence if we are funded by the City? The communities will ask us to do public events and will hide our role as a laboratory, of questioning these technologies. What do you hope to achieve by creating this Federation of "multimedia culture" actors? To give us better visibility, to have our actions recognized on a daily basis. We are preparing a Multimedia General Assembly before the summer, to show that what we are doing is of public utility and deserves subsidies. Our second project is to promote the logic of co-production, the exchange of resources and skills between structures.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1292

Brussels - The European Union has fined Microsoft a record 899 million euros ($1.3 billion) for imposing "unreasonable" prices on competitors and developers who adapt software to make it compatible with the Windows operating system until last October. The fine is the largest ever imposed on a single company and the first time Brussels has penalized a company for failing to comply with a ruling that it violated competition rules. The Redmond-based American computer giant responded immediately by stressing that the fine related to past problems that had been resolved and that the company was now working according to new principles to make its products more open. However, European Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes of the Netherlands stressed that the American firm was under investigation for two other cases. Neelie Kroes said Microsoft's actions had stifled innovation, causing inconvenience to millions of computer users around the world. She called the fine "a reasonable response to a series of quite unreasonable acts." "We could have gone up to €1.5 billion (C$2.2 billion)," the European Commissioner warned. On October 24, Microsoft announced that it had withdrawn its last two appeals of the European Union's decisions against it for violating competition rules. The American computer giant thus withdrew its appeal of a €280.5 million (C$411.75 million) fine imposed on it by the European Commission in July 2006 for failing to comply with an earlier decision on sharing information with competitors. The data allows other software makers to adapt their products to the Microsoft Windows operating system, which powers 95% of personal computers. The group had also withdrawn an appeal against a Commission decision ordering it to license some of its manufacturing secrets on an "open source" basis.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1293

MICROSOFT The European Commission yesterday settled part of its legal dispute with Microsoft by sentencing the American software giant to a final fine of 899 million euros. This is the highest sum ever claimed from a company by the Community competition services. This fine covers the period from 21 July 2006 to 21 October 2007, during which the group was still reluctant to comply with a 2004 decision ordering it to communicate to its competitors, under "reasonable" financial conditions, the technical information allowing them to interact with Microsoft products. At the same time, the firm was ordered to stop the tied sale of its Windows operating system with the Media Player multimedia player. This injunction was already accompanied by a fine of 497 million euros. Ironically, this sanction comes a few days after Steve Ballmer's solemn declaration that Microsoft is now committed to making its products more open to the world of free software! New procedures The simple adjective - "reasonable" - explained the continuation of the saga. Initially, Microsoft had demanded that its competitors pay a royalty of almost 3% for the income from licenses giving access to secret information on interoperability. Too costly, Brussels had considered. So much so that two years later, Brussels considered that Microsoft was continuing to abuse its "dominant position". On 21 July 2006, it imposed a second fine of 280 million euros. But it was not until September 2007 and a decision by the Court of Justice of Luxembourg condemning the IT group that the latter agreed to revise downwards its financial compensation: access to its information on interoperability, in particular, was offered, for a lump sum of 10,000 euros which satisfied Brussels. "Three years later, Microsoft is respecting its obligations", notes the Commission. Yesterday, it was content to retrospectively sanction the inaction of the American giant observed between July 2006 and September 2007. "It does so with all the more ease since it has been supported in the meantime by the Court of Justice", observed Olivier Cavézian, lawyer at the Jones Day firm, in response to the questions raised by the announcement of this record fine. "We could have gone up to 1.5 billion", estimated for her part the Commissioner for Competition, Neelie Kroes. The Commission, which has since opened two new procedures against Microsoft, remains ready to hit the wallet.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1294

A little disorder = a lot of profit(s) Éric Abrahamson and David H. Freedman 314 pages Les Éditions Flammarion A giant like Microsoft has always worked in disorder; even Hewlett-Packard and IBM have opened up to the nonconformist culture of free software. When the FBI fails due to too much organization, Schwarzenegger, chronically disordered, triumphs on all fronts. How many scientific advances, great achievements are the fruit of a prodigious disorder. Yes, disorder is profitable. \*\*\* Why blog in a business context Collective 285 pages Isabelle Quentin Editor On July 14, 2007, we celebrated the tenth anniversary of blogs. This collective celebrates this anniversary, Ten Quebec business bloggers recognized for their always relevant remarks take stock of the state of business blogging. \*\*\* Knowing how to innovate as a team Sébastien Beaulieu and Luc-Antoine Malo 156 pages Isabelle Quentin Publisher At the dawn of this 21st century, if there is one thing that is certain, only one, it is perpetual change. This book is for those who perceive change as a stimulating routine. \*\*\* 50 home business ideas for those aged 50 and over Gabriel Politis and Catherine Meilleur 336 pages Rudel Medias Going into business instead of thinking about retirement? This is becoming the new way of life of this century. With this book, those who want to embark on the adventure of home-based entrepreneurship will know how to choose the legal form of business that suits them, write a business plan and a marketing plan, set up their workplace professionally, take advantage of the Internet, manage and administer their business on a day-to-day basis, etc. \*\*\* The Seven Missing Pieces of Management Jean-Pierre Brun 200 pages Les Éditions Transcontinental Business leaders tend to consider the well-being of their staff as a secondary, even accessory aspect of their management. The performance of the organization is their number one priority. What they do not perceive is that the well-being of people is closely linked to the productivity of the organization. \*\*\* Business Savoir-dire Nicole Simard 147 pages Isabelle Quentin Publisher This book is intended for anyone in the business sector whose activities lead them to communicate both internally and with the company's many external audiences.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1295

SOURCE CODE. This is the "cooking recipe" of software. In concrete terms, the source code is a set of instructions written in a computer programming language that allows you to obtain a program for a computer. On the other hand, the technical documentation related to the software does not allow you to know how it was written. It simply explains what the lines of code do, but often in a fairly general way. OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE. This is software whose so-called free license gives everyone the right to use it, study it, modify it, duplicate it, give it away or even sell it. For this, its source code must be accessible to users, even if they do not use it. The American Richard Stallman formalized the notion of free software in the first half of the 1980s. He then popularized it with the GNU project and the FreeSoftwareFoundation (FSF). Most free software is free. LINUX. It is the kernel of a free operating system. It governs essential functions of a computer operating system such as access to the computer's memory or connections to the network. It was initially developed by the Finnish Linus Torvalds, in the early 1990s. It has since been enriched by the thousands of developers who collaborate across the Internet. Some commercial companies - such as Redhat, Mandriva or Canonical - sell operating systems based on Linux but with additional features. INTEROPERABILITY. It is the ability of a product or system whose communication elements, called interfaces, are fully known, to work with other existing or future products or systems. Interoperability is one of the pillars of the Web: with it, anyone can, for example, create an Internet browser that can communicate with Web servers.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1296

In general, Microsoft and openness are, unlike the Beatles' Michelle, "words that don't go very well together." Except that, since yesterday, most of Microsoft's trade secrets have been freely available online. Arlesienne. When you are the world's number 1 software company, when you have imposed standards that have become the norm for nine out of ten computers in the world, you have no reason to make life easier for the competition. In short, we couldn't care less about promoting this Arlesienne of the interoperability of computer systems, the aim of which is precisely to allow smaller creators to develop programs capable of working well in the world of Windows. This vision, which Microsoft staunchly defended until its condemnation in September by the European Court of Justice, is officially obsolete. While everyone was expecting a new offer from Microsoft to swallow up Yahoo, its CEO, Steve Ballmer, surprised everyone on Thursday by announcing that he was going to give free and more or less free access to the technical documentation needed to implement third-party software with Vista, Office, etc. A sum of more than 30,000 pages "representing years and millions of dollars of work," he explained. Documents that Microsoft had always refused to reveal, even if some partners, for commercial reasons (Novell in 2006) or security reasons (around sixty States) had been able to benefit from a partial lifting of this "software secrecy." From now on, these "APIs," which include many patented elements, can be used in two ways: free of charge, Microsoft promises, for free developers not seeking to sell their software. By paying royalties set at a "reasonable and non-discriminatory" price for others, including "open source" players who market paid services around freely accessible technologies. "It all depends on the purpose of the software," explains Bernard Ourghanlian, director of technologies at Microsoft France, "if it is for commercial purposes, it is normal that this information is chargeable." An opinion that is of course not shared by Frédéric Couchet of April (an association promoting free software): "This opening, forced by Brussels, remains discriminatory for SMEs and SMIs compared to the big players. It does not put an end to a contractual logic that is very different from a royalty-free use of Microsoft standards." "Octopus." Microsoft says it: this is in no way a questioning of its model based on the payment of licenses. But, faced with the spectacular growth of free software in the professional world, the evolution of IT towards the fully connected and new investigations by the European Commission, the Seattle "octopus" has understood that it must adapt to preserve the essential. Its position as the most profitable company in the world is worth many concessions to the competition and to judges.

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## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1298

MICROSOFT COMPUTING. In the coming weeks, developers in the free software world will have free access to key information on a large number of Microsoft products. Last night, the CEO of the global software giant, Steve Ballmer, cited the global responsibility of the company he leads to explain a change of direction in its development strategy. By announcing that he wants to facilitate the "interoperability" of products with those of its competitors, Steve Ballmer will certainly annoy the community of free software publishers, but also arouse the skepticism of the European competition authorities. They have been asking Microsoft to comply for years without success. As a first step, 30,000 pages of documentation on Windows will be put online for developers.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1299

SOFTWARE. Microsoft announced yesterday that it would open up to the OpenSource community and publish in the coming months tens of thousands of pages of documentation for developers who want to create new services connected to Microsoft products. ARCELORMITTAL. The steelmaker announced a price increase in the second quarter, in response to the increase in iron ore prices. The automobile industry is targeted by this measure.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1300

Finance Liechtenstein is resisting the tax evasion scandal from Germany. The head of government, Otmar Hasler, said yesterday that he would not communicate tax data on his taxpayers to Berlin and that he would maintain the anonymity of his foundations. Two requests made Wednesday by Angela Merkel, the chancellor. IT Microsoft is converting to "open source". The American software giant announced yesterday that its consumer products (Windows, Office) will now allow "open connections" and promote "data portability". economic situation After the IMF on Wednesday, the European Commission yesterday revised its 2008 growth forecasts for France sharply downwards to 1.7%, compared to 2% previously. This is well below the 2% forecast by Bercy. "France could be affected more than expected by the global economic slowdown", explains Brussels.

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## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1302

With his dreadlocks and his atypical appearance for the position he holds, he is often presented as the coolest of the Ministers of Culture. Appointed by President Lula da Silva in 2003, the famous tropicalist singer-songwriter (an artistic movement initiated 40 years ago by major artists such as Caetano Veloso) and Brazilian politician Gilberto Gil demonstrates a clearly cybercultural vision. His openness to free software, the access of poor communities to digital technologies that he advocates and his vision of a copyright adapted to the digital environment distinguish him from other Ministers of Culture on this small planet. This is what we can conclude at the end of two days of meetings and conferences by Gilberto Gil with Montreal intellectuals, students, Brasilophiles and media representatives - at the joint invitation of MediaMcGill and the Institute for the Study of Canada at McGill University. During his meeting with La Presse, we obviously could not avoid this question: what is the Brazilian point of view on copyright in a digital environment? Gilberto Gil assures that Brazil stands out from rich countries on this point: "Since there is no Brazilian multinational in entertainment or in the software industry, we do not suffer the same pressure as the Americans or the Europeans. We can think more about the development of the digital environment in terms of civil society. Our perspective is therefore different." The Brazilian Ministry of Culture and its government are also considering implementing a new copyright law adapted to the digital environment. "To achieve this, we first intend to set up a forum where all the components of our society can discuss this bill by expressing their needs. We, in the government, will then be able to see what the best balance will be between civil society, consumers, rights holders and the market. We are giving ourselves a year to discuss it and reach a consensus, after which a proposal will be made to Congress." Open to free software as a "tool for social and cultural development", advocating the widespread use of digital technologies to promote the emancipation of local expressions, the Brazilian Minister of Culture and his team are doing everything they can to give access to bandwidth to all communities in their immense country. Since market forces primarily serve the interests of content companies (entertainment and proprietary software majors), Gilberto Gil believes that his ministry must do complementary work. "Our government must encourage the private sector to adopt a more conciliatory position towards culture and creation. It is therefore necessary for traditional actors to stop trying to protect their territory from all the interference linked to new practices. In this regard, Brazil has made some progress; our population understands more these issues of the Internet and cyberspace. In this sense, 21st century technologies represent a great challenge in regulation", the minister told his audience at the Society for Technological Arts (Saturday). He thus seems to clearly prefer the establishment of new business models to the fight against Internet pirates. In a more global perspective, Gilberto Gil believes in the construction of a new Pan-American identity based on diversity and the sharing of the cultural heritage of the three Americas. And this new identity involves the appropriation of digital technologies. "That is why we created a digital culture service at the Ministry of Culture. In this context, we created programs for access to technologies such as the pontos de cultura, which are access centers adapted to local communities. More precisely, we give these communities the means to access the Internet with audiovisual recording and broadcasting tools. These communities can thus record themselves, film themselves, and report on new creative energies. New autonomous networks then emerge." By the end of 2007, more than 2,000 pontos de cultura had been set up in Brazil, not to mention a few abroad. Within the next three years, Gilberto Gil hopes to reach the milestone of 15,000 digital power points. "The young people in the communities," he proudly emphasizes, "recognize themselves and take ownership of these new tools of cultural performance. Social change really began when they understood that cyberspace belonged to them."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1303

Sony Ericsson unveiled a new range of mobile phones at the Barcelona Motor Show, the star device of which is the Xperia X1, a multimedia smartphone with a 3.2 megapixel camera sensor, sliding QWERTY keyboard, Wi-Fi compatibility and Windows Mobile software. The X1 offers the classic multimedia functions of devices running Windows Mobile. It is thus possible to watch videos, listen to music, view photos, etc. Calendar, calculator and e-mail functions are also integrated. The Xperia X1 also has an integrated GPS circuit and a large touch screen. It is expected to be released in late 2008. ANOTHER FIREFOX 3 BETA ONLINE Mozilla recently released the third beta version of its Firefox 3 browser. This new version offers security improvements to the open-source browser, a new download module, better integration with the graphical interface of Mac and Linux systems, and a tool that allows you to add bookmarks with a single mouse click. The company warns, however, that the beta versions of its browser are intended for advanced Internet users, Web developers and the testing community. According to the Mozilla website: "The final version of Firefox 3 will be released when we judge that the product is ready for our users." It is expected to be released later this year. GOOGLE RELEASES AN IMPROVED VERSION OF GMAIL Google has recently released an improved version of its Gmail e-mail service. The developers of the American giant have made major changes to the entire Gmail code base, in order to create a more flexible environment that allows for greater flexibility in the interface and the quick and easy introduction of new features. This version, which some bloggers have nicknamed "Gmail 2", is already available in 37 different languages, including French. The migration between the two versions is gradual and can take a few hours. Among the improvements, we can note the introduction of colored labels, a better contact manager and new, more efficient keyboard shortcuts.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1304

For or against voting machines? In France, where 80 cities, large and medium-sized, will use this voting system for municipal and cantonal elections, the question is not very mobilizing. After having tasted it, cities like Saint-Malo (endless queues) or Reims (impractical machines) have nevertheless abandoned this option. In Brest, a pioneer city in this area since the 2004 regional elections, the debate is still ongoing. Of course, it remains hushed and seems completely ridiculous to the mayor (PS) François Cuillandre, who seems astonished that one could ask the question and congratulates himself on the time saved by these machines during the counting. For the Greens, the democratic if not technical questions raised by electronic voting nevertheless still deserve examination. The Ministry of the Interior has also set up a working group which should evaluate their use after the elections. "First of all, there is a problem of opacity. We don't know what's going on inside these machines, how they count, underlines Michel Briand, a Green elected official and computer scientist. The source code of the computer remains a secret of the manufacturer. Free software encryption algorithms, today the most efficient, would allow better control. For certain types of machines, there is also the question of data cassettes that are brought back to a central location, which poses the problem of their transport." The Brest Greens also consider that voting and the time of counting are solemn moments that would merit making the effort to mobilize citizens, even if this is becoming increasingly difficult, rather than relying on machines. Another complaint is the difficulties that some voters, such as the elderly, may experience when faced with the electronic screen. In Brest, where initiation operations have increased, this problem seems to have been overcome. The question of the economy, particularly of paper, generated by the machines also appears fallacious to Michel Briand, who calculated that the ballot papers weighed no more than 5 g for 10 candidates compared to 200 g of weekly advertising in his mailbox. This argument will in any case become totally obsolete if, as the Green elected official thinks, the current machines were eventually replaced by printer machines that would allow a recount. He notes in any case that in some countries, such as Ireland, electronic voting has been completely abandoned or suspended, as in the Netherlands. "There are three manufacturers, and the machines that caused problems, particularly with touch screens where you have to scroll through the candidates, are different from those used in Brest, where all the lists appear on the screen," they reply at the city's elections department. If Brest wanted to limit the number of polling stations, it has in any case failed. After going from roughly 100 to 80 desks, it was necessary to buy other machines (5,000 euros each) to return to 98 desks in 2007.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1305

Bertone coachbuilder goes bankrupt INDUSTRY. After a few difficult weeks, the Italian car group Bertone was declared insolvent yesterday by a court in Turin. Its fate is now in the hands of three extraordinary commissioners tasked with assessing the possible revival of the group. Bertone, which employs 1,300 people, has produced virtually no cars since 2005, while its production capacity is 50,000 to 70,000 units per year. Orange wants to develop free software TELECOMS. Orange will join the LiMo association to develop the free Linux operating system for mobile phones, it announced yesterday at the World Mobile Congress in Barcelona. It announced the launch, in 2008, of its "first phone based on Linux". Degrémont treats wastewater from Halifax INDUSTRY. Degrémont, a subsidiary of Suez Environnement, inaugurated yesterday, with the municipal authorities of Halifax in Nova Scotia (Canada), the first of three new wastewater treatment plants of the vast environmental project Halifax Harbour Solutions. Located in Halifax, Dartmouth and Herring Cove, these plants will allow to treat a total capacity of 640,000 m per day. Tension between ExxonMobil and Venezuela OIL. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez threatens to "not send another drop of oil to the empire of the United States" in response to a possible global freeze of the assets of the national company PDVSA (to the tune of 12 billion dollars) on the basis of a recourse by the American group ExxonMobil. The latter demands increased compensation for its withdrawal from Venezuela. AIG plans new depreciations INSURANCE. The world's leading insurer, the American AIG, will carry out new depreciations of assets linked to subprime. Audit firm PricewaterhouseCoopers said the insurer had "a weakness in its financial reporting process" regarding the valuation of its credit derivatives portfolio. In its third-quarter earnings release, AIG reported a $149 million writedown. Fitch Ratings is considering cutting AIG's rating by one notch from AA.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1306

André GorzEcologica Galilée, 164 pp., 25 euros. When he retraces his journey, from his autobiographical novel, The Traitor, to his work on political ecology, André Gorz of course cites Sartre, whose work was "formative" for him, Marx, Ivan Illich, Jean-Marie Vincent or the theorists of the "critique of work" such as Frithjof Bergmann, Moishe Postone, or Robert Kurz. But, between two developments on the "exit from capitalism", he unfailingly mentions the name of Dorine, his partner, "without whom nothing would be". The publication in 2006 of Lettre à D., histoire d'un amour (Galilée) moved thousands of readers, in that it expressed with force and modesty this very simple idea that in the stormy crossing of life we only "hold on" if we hold on to someone and if someone holds on to you. Lettre à D. ended with these words: "We would each like not to survive the death of the other. We have often said to ourselves that if, by some impossible chance, we had a second life, we would want to live it together." André Gorz was 84 years old, Dorine one year younger. They committed suicide together in their house in Vosnon, in the Aube, on Monday, September 24, 2007. Aliénation.Ecologica, which is published today, is not André Gorz's intellectual testament. The volume brings together texts already published in journals or earlier works but not very available. The oldest ("The Social Ideology of the Car") dates from 1975, the most recent ("The Exit from Capitalism Has Already Begun") from 2007, so much so that they can be conceived as beacons or "samples" representative of all the theoretical work, the axis of which has been the defense of the freedom and autonomy of the individual. Also in some articles we find the theses against economism, utilitarianism, productivism, consumerism, the capitalist logic of the accumulation of goods, the hyperbolic development of false needs, the "maximization of yields", the "techniques that violate biological balances". But the most interesting - Gorz devoted his last efforts to them - are the analyses of the "exit from capitalism", which "has never been more current". Analyses that may seem paradoxical, but which the European left would do well to draw inspiration from if it wanted to propose an "other vision of the world" instead of a weak political alternative. Gorz does not simply question speculation, tax havens or the lack of control of the financial industry. He shows precisely the reasons why capitalism is proving "incapable of reproducing itself", and explains why degrowth is a "survival imperative", assuming a radical break with the logic of "produce more, consume more", which leads to the alienation of man as well as the destruction of nature. Is a "life model aimed at doing more and better with less" utopian? Not so much, if we consider the "knowledge economy" that global computerization is currently creating. This is not the private property of anyone, cannot "become a real commodity", and is capable of producing wealth "intended to be a common good". "The grip of capital on consumption is loosening, and consumption can tend to free itself from the market supply. This is a rupture that undermines capitalism at its base. The struggle between "proprietary software" and "free software" [...] was the starting point for the central conflict of the era. It extends and continues in the struggle against the commodification of primary wealth - land, seeds, the genome, cultural goods, common knowledge and skills, constituting the culture of everyday life and which are the prerequisites for the existence of a society. The direction this struggle takes will determine whether the exit from capitalism will be civilized or barbaric." We cannot summarize here the words of Gorz (spring 2007), on what, created by capitalism, "works towards its own extinction". In particular these "tools of a kind of high-tech craftsmanship" - used to make prototypes or models such as digital fabricators, factories in a box or fabbers(1) -, which "make it possible to manufacture almost any three-dimensional objects with a productivity much higher than that of industry and a low consumption of natural resources", favor the creation of interconnected "communal workshops" where everything a population needs would be produced, prefigure an "information society" in which "all human energy can be spent on creative activities" and where "the market and commercial relations" would be replaced by "consultation on what should be produced". We will also let Gorz discover his analysis of this "financial industry" which "produces nothing but "creates" money with money, money without substance, by buying and selling financial assets and inflating speculative bubbles" whose development is ensured "thanks to speculative purchases of assets such as shares, shares in real estate and land companies". Some pages seem to be an exact account of what happened with the subprime crisis or the so-called "fraud" at Société Générale. "Sufficient". Until the end - since the time of Les Temps modernes or the founding of Le Nouvel Observateur - André Gorz will have been faithful to Dorine, whose tender closeness revealed to him "that it was not impossible to love, to be loved, to feel, to live, to gain self-confidence", and to a policy of freedom, to an "ethical requirement for the emancipation of the subject", threatened with becoming a thing among things or called to "work more to earn more". He was heard too little. What he defended came, it was said, from the land of Utopia. It is true that "the idea of sufficiency - the idea of a limit beyond which we would produce or buy too much, that is to say more than we need - does not belong to economics or to the economic imagination." (1) On the subject, André Gorz recommends consulting the site www.fabbers.com.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1307

If completed, it will be the largest acquisition ever made by Microsoft. The world's leading software publisher made public on Friday, February 1, an unsolicited offer to buy Yahoo!, the most visited portal on the Web. Microsoft is ready to pay a fortune: $44.6 billion (half in Microsoft shares, the other half in cash). Yahoo!'s management said on Friday that it would "evaluate the proposal carefully and expeditiously." The offer from Microsoft, which has a colossal cash position ($21 billion as of December 31, 2007), seems very attractive to the portal's shareholders, since it offers a 62% premium over the value of Yahoo! shares on Thursday. Especially since the Internet company has been disappointing them for several years now, with stagnant growth and a stock price that has been falling steadily. The recall to the bar in mid-2007 of Jerry Yang, co-founder of Yahoo!, is slow to bear fruit: profits fell by 12.1% in 2007 compared to 2006. "Together, we will create more value for our shareholders and offer more innovations to our customers," declared Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, on Friday. He only mentioned Google's name once during his speech. However, it was on everyone's mind. Because it is above all to counter the young Californian company, which, in a few years, has given itself a dominant position on the Web, that Microsoft is prepared to spend so much. "Google today controls the universe of online search and advertising," according to Jennifer Simpson, of the Yankee Group firm. The group, created in 1998 by two Stanford students, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, captures between 30% and 40% of total advertising investments on the Internet. Thanks in particular to a very popular offer with advertisers: "sponsored links". Messrs. Brin and Page had the idea, in the early 2000s, to rely on the performance of their search engine to offer advertisers the option of purchasing keywords. If these are the subject of an online query, their commercial links are displayed to the right of the responses to the queries. Microsoft has the "MSN" portal, including an electronic messaging service ("MSN Messenger"), which is very popular. This offer is financed, as in the case of Google, by the sale of advertising space (sponsored links or more traditional banners). But its search engine comes a long way behind Google's. And the revenues generated are still insignificant on a group scale (4.7% of Microsoft's $51.12 billion in turnover in 2007). However, the "epub" market could go from "40 billion dollars in 2007 to 80 billion in 2010," Mr. Ballmer hammered home Friday. There is no question of Microsoft depriving itself of such a windfall. In this perspective, the acquisition of Yahoo! makes sense. In terms of online advertising revenue, the portal has fallen far behind Google. But it has recently invested heavily to get back in the race. It has released a new version of its sponsored links sales platform ("Panama"). It has acquired the company BlueLithium, considered a gem. "This agency is the specialist in behavioral targeting. Instead of, like Google, sending targeted ads based on the queries made by Internet users, it bases itself on the different sites visited by the latter," explains Laurent Geffroy, from the specialist firm Greenwich Consulting. "FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION THREATENED" "Microsoft and Yahoo! Both have very large user bases thanks to their e-mail services. Both companies could take advantage of this to launch into the development of "social" search engines, exploiting the networks of Internet users, suggests Ms. Simpson. Mr. Ballmer promised on Friday that the merger would generate $1 billion in savings per year. He insisted that the two companies would be able to invest more in storage capacity if merged. Maintaining the relevance of a search engine as the Internet continues to grow requires huge and expensive "farms" of computer servers. Some were already looking forward to seeing, on Friday, Microsoft's radical shift on the Internet. Co-founded in 1975 by Bill Gates (who will leave the company for good this summer) and Paul Allen, Microsoft symbolises the era of the PC. The American publisher built its success by selling software in the form of licenses. A very lucrative business model: Windows, its operating system, still has a market share of over 90% on PCs and generates a good portion of its profit. But this model is now threatened by the rise of "free" software (which can be used, modified or distributed freely). And by Google or publishers like Salesforce.com, which rent the software, or transfer its use and are paid for with advertising. The software is stored somewhere on the Internet and no longer on the hard drive of PCs as is the case with Microsoft products. Others also wondered, on Friday, about the difficulties that Microsoft could encounter in absorbing a company with such a different culture. "This merger will create a duopoly that could threaten freedom of expression on the Internet," denounced Jeff Chester, of the Center for Digital Democracy, in Washington. Is Google in danger in the medium term? Most specialists believe that the Mountain View company maintains a comfortable lead in online search and advertising. It still devotes most of its resources to it (Google had cash of $14 billion as of December 31, 2007), even though it has diversified considerably. However, its managers are apparently aware of the danger. Is that why they are hiring so much (the company has grown from 6,000 to 17,000 employees in three years)? "When Google recruits an engineer, they say to themselves: 'yet another one that Microsoft won't have,'" a former manager of the group recently confided in California.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1308

They dress up as clowns to laugh at the powerful people of the G8. They weave their web of counter-information on the thread of hacktivism. They climb on the roof of the Medef to speak out against the unraveling of culture. They multiply anti-consumer happenings to mock the society of the spectacle of "earn more to buy more". They mock Françafrique to better sketch the contours of an egalitarian North-South relationship. They? New protesters, neo-disobedient, pioneers of an alter-world. Rebels. Rebels. Lucid. Passers of ideas from one collective to another, from shifting networks to ephemeral strategies, from impressionist logic to avant-garde struggles. They have the breath of the heirs of 68 without claiming it. Examples... Work "More anchored in reality" Cathy, Precarious Generation "We have collective affinities with 68. But there is more flexibility in our collectives, more fluidity, more derision too. We are less utopian, less idealistic, less duped, more anchored in reality. We know that resistance does not go through political parties or unions. But we are just as radical and subversive as the 68 generation. Talking about interns in society means questioning the use of serfdom in our system, which devours a docile workforce, without rights, without a voice, without a face. It means refusing to be a ghost. We do not invent anything, we borrow from other forms of resistance, such as street theater, the ecological anarchism of the English of Reclaim the Streets. Above all, we cross our ideas with others. We take on the CRS during flash mobs, these lightning gatherings in symbolic places, without throwing stones, with a smile. We launched Black Thursday on the festive occupations of empty housing. We initiated Germinal, an eco-collective that consists of planting seeds in the walls of cities. We are aware of the powerlessness, but we do it anyway. I am 34 years old and I tell myself that it is that or put on an explosive belt and blow yourself up in relation to the violence that today's society reflects." INTERNET "Power to all" Frédéric Couchet, Association for the promotion and research in free computing "May 68 intended to put imagination in power. Like the free movement in computing and, more generally, the control of knowledge. Against a rent-based economy and monopoly that freezes innovation, the free software for which we campaign at April (Association for the promotion and research in free computing) intends to free knowledge and abolish the technological and legal barriers in which some try to confine it. The barrier between producer and consumer disappears, since each has the software but also its manufacturing recipe, with the possibility of adding their personal touch. In open source, power belongs to all, and not just to a few. Free software democratizes knowledge by avoiding its exclusive appropriation by multinationals. The free world also induces a very profound cultural change in the way of working. To a hierarchical and closed model operating in a vacuum, free software substitutes a community model, based on cooperation and sharing. It is no coincidence that the boom in free software went hand in hand with the democratization of the Internet. The fantastic growth of this global network has allowed an extremely simplified diffusion of knowledge. We see it with a site like the free encyclopedia Wikipedia, which has allowed people from all over the world to work together. It is the 1968 utopia of the free that has become partly a reality." Immigration "Breaking with the parties" Frédéric Touchard, RESF "I don't have the soul of an activist. Very young, I felt that I would never be a member. Around the age of 20, I took part in demonstrations against the Creys-Malville nuclear power plant, for Larzac. That's about it. As a documentary filmmaker, at the age of 46, I made a film about my daughter and her relationship with a Guinean family. Another about Sangatte after it closed. My films are not really activist. I try to make people think rather than give my point of view. When the government started putting children in detention centers, I told myself that we were touching on something fundamental. After that, there are no more limits. Quickly, I was asked to sponsor a family. She was an Ivorian, alone with two children. Miraculously enough, she got her papers. Since September, I have been sponsoring another one. Guineans. Of course, it is a minimal commitment. Friends talk about "commitment of a non-political mother". RESF will not generate a revolution. We do not propose a global social project, we fight for specific objectives. This is typical of these new commitments, very segmented. As in May 1968, we are breaking with the party system." development "We build from the bottom up" Gus Massiah, Center for Research and Information for Development "As an international solidarity association, the Center for Research and Information for Development is a small speck in an alter-globalization movement, which extends and renews May 1968. Because we integrate and try to develop three dimensions. Social and workers' struggles against discrimination and inequality; the decolonization movement for the emancipation of peoples; the quest for democracy, freedoms and equality. And even the environment, which 68 had anticipated. What's new is that we are trying to weave a network with movements from the South. By refusing charity, subordination and domination. We are bringing about a radical upheaval because we work differently. In space: local, national, international. We cannot talk about migration, debt, poverty, agriculture, transport or cities, corruption, without thinking through its three dimensions. In time: there is urgency, as in 68, perhaps more, but it is not humanitarianism that will tackle the structural causes of underdevelopment. We are as impatient, as demanding as in 68. But we want to propose credible alternatives, and we think that it is possible. And that it is not by regulating the global capital market alone that we will have access to rights for all. With the other international solidarity NGOs, we are building a deep movement from below, not from the surface. We are agglomerating, we are agglomerating, we are stirring up ideas and concrete actions." ECONOMY "Giving us limits" Paul Ariès, growth objector "Nicolas Sarkozy proclaims his hatred of 68, held responsible for the collapse of values and institutions. But would there still be a particular meaning for the revolt-mongers that we are to claim to be its heirs? May 68 no longer speaks to my students: at least no more than 1936, 1848 or 1793, no more than the MLF. We are more the grandchildren of 68 than its heirs since we must stand on tiptoe to try to rise to the level of the 68 critique of productivism. As if the society born since 68 had become deaf to the criticism of this entire generation. As if we could be content to be nothing more than slaves of work and consumption. Other slogans from 68 would have more difficulty convincing or even making us dream today. The certainty of being able to change our lives (under the paving stones, the beach) has been replaced by the anxiety of the 1,000 euro generation of no longer even being able to make a hole for themselves (on the paving stones, the homeless)... The ideal of unfettered enjoyment has been replaced by the harsh reality that reminds us of what happens if we take ourselves for gods, if we lose the ability to set ourselves limits (risky behavior, drug addiction, global warming, depletion of resources, etc.). But isn't it because we are rebellious children of this 68 that we are precisely its heirs? Environment "We are unraveling the system" Thierry Baffou, volunteer reaper "Being in the lineage of 68 means breaking away from the dominant model, from conventions. It means resisting and fighting for future generations, to leave our children a planet other than the one we are being sold today. For ten years, we have gone through all the stages of civil disobedience on GMOs, a disinterested, collective, open-faced struggle, in which we assume responsibility for our non-violent actions. Legal appeals, petitions, demonstrations, mowing, hunger strikes: our revolt is a textbook case. We can be called obscurantists fighting against scientific "progress", but not all science is necessarily a sign of progress. Yes to confined trials, no to open-field cultivation. Long live the precautionary principle which, if we had followed it, would not have caused scandals like contaminated blood or asbestos. We have an informed opinion, without being convinced that we hold the truth: we are not enlightened, we are determined. Through the fight against genetically modified agriculture, we are driving a wedge into the globalization that privatizes global public goods, into the patenting of life that confiscates biodiversity. We are unraveling the system. Being a reaper means saying that we do not want the control of multinationals, it means denouncing the privatization of the planet and the culture of profit for the benefit of lobbies." HOUSING "A breeding ground for revolt" Augustin Legrand, Don Quixote "The heirs of 68? In the case of Don Quixotes, our action is different. We start from something very specific, housing, with a legalistic approach: we denounce the violation of a fundamental right, enshrined in the Constitution, but violated for forty years. I don't know the events of May 68 very well, but what surprises me is the vagueness about the legacy of this struggle, the dichotomy between memories, the "general public" image and the reality of social and political achievements. Women's activism, for example, is passed over in silence. There is a lack of awareness, a prism between reality and what we wanted to remember, which today allows politicians to take shortcuts, to put forward the image of hippies in the street rather than talking about social progress. Today, the victory of struggles is linked to the fragmentation of what we express. You have to be very legitimate, campaign against specific things, to then pull the string and talk about other problems: the suburbs, the disabled, the environment... There is fertile ground for a revolt: people are really bad, there is incredible cynicism, we shit on human rights, but I sense a demobilization. At the Canal Saint-Martin, there were 300 of us fighting while 4 to 5 million people are affected by poor housing." Family "Subversive desires" Martine Gross, Association of Gay and Lesbian Parents "The homosexual movement is an extension of May 68, with its global questioning of the institutions of society, and therefore of the family: "The homosexual will have no homeland until the family unit and patriarchal society are abolished," they said at the time. "Families, I hate you, closed homes, closed doors, jealous possessions of happiness," wrote André Gide. We are far from the homoparental demands of the APGL (Association of Gay and Lesbian Parents). The subversive "revolutionary" theses have gradually given way to a "reformist" tendency to fight against discrimination. And in the space of twenty years, mentalities have evolved. They affect homosexuals themselves, who no longer feel shame or the need to hide and give up starting a family. The traditional family model is no longer the only model: divorce by mutual consent, blended families, adoption and progress in medically assisted procreation techniques (MAP) have multiplied the types of families. And today, it is the child who makes the family rather than marriage. The child is more than ever the future of the individual. There was no reason for homosexuals to escape the desire to have a child. MAP techniques, adoption or filiation linking a child to parents of the same sex, we can speak of subversive desires. Revolutionary?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1309

Nearly 1,500 publishers, booksellers, librarians and book specialists have already signed the appeal for the book by Lekti-ecriture.com, in response to the petition launched by Jeff Bezos, CEO of Amazon, to his French customers, in order to defend free delivery of books in France. If "the Internet is a great opportunity for books, the establishment of a vast monopoly on the online sale of books on the Internet, with Amazon.fr, profoundly threatens cultural diversity", believe those responsible for the appeal. Among the signatories are notably the publisher François Maspero, but also Richard Stallman, considered the father of free software in the United States. The appeal is currently being translated into English to be signed across the Atlantic. Editis Perrin editions and Presses de la Renaissance, both subsidiaries of Editis, have decided to join forces. As of February 1, Xavier de Bartillat, CEO of Perrin, will chair the two publishing houses. Alain Noël, CEO of Presses de la Renaissance, will become the literary director. "Each publishing house will retain its identity, but I want to develop personal projects and found a monastery," explains Alain Noël. The new entity will have a turnover of 12 million euros and will employ around twenty people. Angoulême Attendance at the thirty-fifth Angoulême International Comics Festival reached a record high with nearly 220,000 entries, according to the general delegate Franck Bondoux. A figure that can also be explained by the good weather and the return of exhibitors to the city center. Bookstore A support system for "independent bookstores of excellence" is being set up in the Poitou-Charentes region. The first charters of the system designed by the regional council, chaired by Ségolène Royal, were signed on Monday, January 28, by twelve bookstores. The system provides for aid ranging from 15,000 to 40,000. The region also provides aid for publishers for the editorial project of 10,000 and for the promotion of 5,000 per year. Television The strategic committee of the National Publishing Union (SNE) studied, on Wednesday, January 30, the two reports commissioned on the place of books on television. The one by Pascal Josèphe, from the IMCA company, indicates that the number of programs devoted to books on French television increased from 1999 to 2007, but that the audience ratings over the same period fell sharply. As for the report by Ronald Blunden (Hachette) on the success of certain programs abroad, it shows that the programs of Oprah Winfrey in the United States and "Richard & July" in Great Britain are followed by a popular audience and underlines that the success of these programs is reinforced by the reading clubs that are created around them. Trial The first hearing in the lawsuit brought against the American search engine Google for counterfeiting, by the La Martinière group, joined by the SNE and the SGDL, is set for June 5, before the 3rd chamber of the Paris High Court. Prizes Prix des Deux-Magots: Dominique Barbéris, Quelque chose à cacher (Gallimard); Guardian prize, worth 10,000 pounds: Dinaw Mengestu, Les belles choses que le ciel (Albin Michel); British booksellers' prize: Irène Némirovsky, Suite française (Denoël); Biography prize from "Le Point": Patrick Lienhardt and Olivier Philipponnat, La Vie d'Irène Némirovsky (Grasset-Denoël); Alberto-Benveniste prize for literature: Jean-Pierre Gattégno, Avec vue sur le royaume (Actes Sud); for research, Béatrice Perez, Inquisition, pouvoir, société (Champion); Governor General's Literary Award: Sylvain Trudel, The Sea of Tranquility (Les Allusifs); RFI Witness of the World Award: Jean-Yves Loude, Coup de théâtre in São Tomé (Actes Sud); Incorrect Book Award: Jean Clair, Malaise in Museums (Flammarion); Version Femina Award: Metin Arditi, The Daughter of the Louganis (Actes Sud); Saint-Valentin Award: Dominique Mainard, I Wish So Much That You Remember (Ed. Joëlle Losfeld); Didier Eribon is the winner of the James-Robert-Brudner Memorial Prize from Yale University.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1310

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## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1311

"With Soul Bubbles, we wanted to make a video game to have fun," says Olivier Lejade, founder of Mekensleep (no kidding), a small Parisian studio located in the heart of the Marais. The idea was to create without setting limits, with our own conditions and working with whoever we wanted." In a rapidly industrializing environment, this sounds like a dream for most video game developers. But after a difficult first attempt at video games (Ryzom, a persistent universe like World of Warcraft, whose development was marked by a long series of pitfalls), Olivier Lejade wanted to return to something simpler. This will be Soul Bubbles, an innovative game that will be released in the spring on the very popular Nintendo DS. In Soul Bubbles, you don't control a classic hero, but a bubble. Which contains "spirits", which you have to make sure are taken intact to the end of each level. And the path is sometimes difficult: you have to blow on the bubble - well, by operating the DS stylus... - to make it move, make it bounce, split it to slip into the narrowest spaces, make it grow or shrink to reach certain passages... New game mechanics, which Mekensleep has made very easy to understand once you have the console in hand. And it doesn't stop there, since the eight universes of the game will all contain small gameplay changes. Surprise. In a market increasingly dominated by sequels, remakes and other intelligence tests, the original and different little game developed in secret by Mekensleep for three and a half years is an excellent surprise. To get there, however, it took time. It all started in September 2004, when developer Omar Cornut, formerly of Atari, showed Olivier Lejade a very simple game prototype: you can create bubbles and blow on them. "I had wanted to work with Omar for years," says Lejade. "So when he showed me the prototype, I thought it was the right time. We started just the two of us for the first few months, improving the prototype and trying out ideas to make a game around it." The small team took a gamble at the time on developing their game for the Nintendo DS, which did not yet dominate the portable console market, but which offered two small screens, including a touch screen. This was a new development for Olivier Lejade, who was more used to the world of PCs and multiplayer games on the Internet. To find inspiration, he called on Frédérick Raynal, one of the most famous French game designers, creator of several cult games in the 90s (Alone in the Dark, Little Big Adventure). The trio worked for almost a year to advance the concept, improve the good ideas and throw out the bad ones. A "very fruitful" collaboration for Olivier Lejade: "Frédérick has all this culture of solo games that I don't have, and with his experience, he allowed us to avoid a lot of pitfalls." Good ideas. The small prototype then slowly begins to resemble a video game. But we're not there yet. In the spring of 2006, while Frédérick Raynal left to develop a new project for the French publisher Ubisoft, Mekensleep begins to hire to strengthen his team: in total, there will be a dozen working on the title. It is only in the spring of 2007, once the technology is finished and the game mechanics finally stabilized, that the game is really put into production: levels, graphics, music, good ideas... Everything has to be put together to finally transform Soul Bubbles into a video game. Mekensleep will then spend the fall correcting the small problems and having small groups of people try the game, from the most experienced players to the most casual, in order to make it accessible to everyone. In the meantime, Olivier Lejade has taken advantage of all the trade shows to show his game. After long negotiations, he signed Soul Bubbles during the summer. It will be with the British Eidos, already publisher last year of the very good Nervous Brickdown (Libération, March 23, 2007), produced by three people in Paris in a few months. Eidos, which will take care of marketing and shelf placement, should release the game in the spring almost everywhere in the world. Last mission. But the game is not quite finished yet: before entrusting its baby to Eidos, Mekensleep has a few days to polish its title, to sand down the last little bits that stick out. For the future, Mekensleep has no immediate project. But the company, built around pillars of French free software, has one last mission to fulfill: to publish on the Net (under a free license, therefore reusable by all) the creation tools of Soul Bubbles. A practice of sharing that Olivier Lejade holds dear. “And then,” he sighs, “we can finally take a vacation.”

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1312

"It's like a peace agreement," smiles Bertrand Delanoë in front of Bill Gates, a few seconds before the signing of a digital partnership between the City of Paris and Microsoft yesterday morning. It's certainly a joke, because between the mayor of the capital and the co-founder of the IT giant, the weather is good. The former is "proud" to welcome the latter who "has advanced knowledge, economic dynamism and values"... and who multiplies the knowing smiles. Objectives of the agreement signed at the City Hall: fight against social exclusion and the digital divide first; then promote innovation. "Not understood." Concretely, it is about helping to return to work a hundred people, unemployed IT specialists and young people who will be introduced to the joys of IT by Microsoft. And to train digital facilitators "where the most excluded are welcomed", according to Delanoë, that is to say the Accommodation and Social Reintegration Centers (CHRS). Another project, Porte de Montreuil, which mixes real sport and console sport (Xbox, it goes without saying), was also developed by the teams of Microsoft and the City of Paris. But Delanoë admits: "Bill Gates and I didn't fully understand what it was!" On the innovation side, 40 Parisian start-ups in the fields of digital design and environmental protection will be supported each year, compared to 20 at present. And Microsoft will provide advice, training and international contacts. Always as comfortable in his role as a salesman, Bill Gates was keen to point out that the 2008 edition of the Imagine Cup would be held in July in Paris. Imagine Cup? A competition organized by his company that brings together high school and college students from around the world, who compete in nine "digital" categories: software, video games, photos, etc. In short, solidarity, innovation and fun. No cloud has come to darken this perfect understanding, despite the questions of a journalist on Microsoft's quasi-monopoly situation and the launch of a new investigation by the European Commission, and the blow to free software by this partnership. "I maintain total independence in my orientations," declared Bertrand Delanoë. I am also in favor of allowing the development of free software." Future retiree. However, according to Maurice Ronai, delegate for new technologies at the Socialist Party, this partnership is a step backwards. "It does not bring much to the City of Paris, nothing to Bertrand Delanoë who is already known internationally, but a lot to Microsoft which is suffering from a crisis of legitimacy, especially in the public sector. Delanoë could have done without it!" With a rounded speech, Bill Gates specifies, as often, that many free software programs run on Windows. Future retiree - he will no longer have a full-time job from July 1st and will concentrate almost exclusively on his foundation -, he proves once again that he knows perfectly how to handle business and philanthropy.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1313

Bug Labs is a brand new company that has the distinction of having marketed the first open-source electronic device in North America. Called Bug, this device is in fact a series of small modules that are assembled together, starting from a central module comprising a processor, a battery, an internal memory and connection ports. The intended use determines the modules that are going to be used: GPS navigator, camera, internet tablet, anything is possible. And all this is based on an open architecture powered by a modified version of Linux. For Sunday tinkerers.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1314

New York - The big moves are accelerating in enterprise software, with two big-ticket takeovers: the American group Oracle has finally managed to get its hands on BEA Systems and its rival Sun has taken over MySQL, the Swedish star of open source database software. After a firm refusal in October, BEA Systems (software for managing and designing Internet services) has finally accepted an offer from Oracle of $19 per share in cash. It will cost Oracle $7.2 billion, once it pockets BEA's cash. Oracle, the world's No. 2 in professional software, has resigned itself to raising its initial price for BEA, from $6.7 billion, to continue its race to become a giant against its rival, the world leader SAP. "The combination of BEA's software will give us a leading position in all levels of professional software, in more sectors and regions of the world," said Oracle CEO and founder Larry Ellison. Over the past four years, Oracle has spent $32 billion to buy out competitors, with the acquisition of PeopleSoft for $10.3 billion in 2004, Siebel for $5.9 billion in 2006, and Hyperion for $3.3 billion in March 2007. The acquisition of BEA allows it to respond to SAP's recent acquisition of French company Business Objects for €4.8 billion (US$6.8 billion). A new front But like an unexpected attack, a new front is opening up for Oracle in the lucrative database software market, a $15 billion market where Oracle reigns supreme with nearly 50% of the market, according to market research firm Gartner. The Sun Microsystems group announced yesterday the acquisition of MySQL, one of the most famous free (and open source) database software companies, for $1 billion. A price never seen before in the emerging free software sector, whose business model is still being debated. This is a logical choice for Sun, which for several years now, unlike manufacturers of paid software, has favored free software. It charges its customers for the sale of servers equipped with this software, their maintenance and additional programs. Sun has released free software such as OpenOffice, the free equivalent of Microsoft's Office software, OpenJava or Solaris. MySQL, created in 1995, and its programming language PHP, is one of the most popular database software in the world, adopted by many websites as well as very large groups such as Facebook, Nokia or Google, and downloaded 100 million times. The group is also one of the most resounding successes in the world of free software. If only because it is free, MySQL is a dangerous rival for paid software like Oracle, which tried in vain to buy MySQL in 2006. Sun pays for a customer base and a service, but not for financial results: according to analysts, with its 400 employees MySQL achieved a turnover of only 60 to 70 million US dollars last year. Sun CEO Jonathan Schwartz considered it to be "the most important acquisition ever made by his group" which will allow it to be "the platform at the heart of the Internet". As with BEA, this acquisition is a surprise, because until now MySQL CEO Marten Mickos had said he wanted to introduce his group to the stock market rather than sell it. The current poor health of high-tech stocks may have discouraged him.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1315

Yesterday was a busy day in the software world. The American group Sun will acquire the Swedish publisher of free software MySQL for a billion dollars. Sun specified that the sum is divided into two parts: 800 million in cash and 200 million in debt assumption. MySQL, which is based in Uppsala in Sweden and Cupertino in California, employs 400 people in 25 countries. Its data management software has been downloaded in 100 million copies. In the second quarter which ended in December, Sun should have made a net profit of between 230 and 265 million dollars, an increase of 100%.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1316

Brussels - The European Commission announced yesterday the opening of new investigations against Microsoft for suspected abuse of a dominant position, an accusation that has already earned the American software giant a record fine. This time, the investigations concern, among other things, the Office suite, containing the word processing software Word and the spreadsheet Excel for example, and the Internet Explorer browser. The opening of the investigations "does not imply that the Commission has proof of an infringement", specifies the Commission's press release. It followed up on complaints filed by the Norwegian software manufacturer Opera as well as by the ECIS association, which campaigns for the publication of technical information allowing the greatest number of software programs to work with each other ("interoperability"). Microsoft is accused of automatically incorporating its Internet Explorer browser into its Windows operating system, which equips more than 90% of PCs worldwide. Brussels also indicates that it has been alerted to the incorporation into Windows of "other software products" (Windows Live, Desktop search). The American group is also reportedly refusing to disclose to its competitors technical information that would ensure the interoperability of a "wide range of products", including the Office suite and server products. The Commission said it wanted to investigate in particular the interoperability of the new file format implemented in the latest version of Office launched last year. In March 2004, the Commission had already fined the American group €497 million for abuse of a dominant position, a penalty confirmed in September 2007 by the European Court of Justice. After three and a half years of battle, Microsoft finally gave in and gave up appealing the decision of the Luxembourg judges at the end of October 2007. Brussels had notably obtained from Microsoft that it market a version of Windows stripped of the Media Player multimedia player, and that it provide better technical documentation on Windows to its competitors, including designers of free software.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1317

"With My major company, you too can become a music producer." No, this is not the hook of a new board game for Star Ac' fans. But that of a new label that is trying to extend to a music industry in full decrepitude the community and participatory wave already tested online with encyclopedias (Wikipedia), journalism (Agoravox, Rue89, etc.), or free software (Linux). Founded by two young entrepreneurs nourished by Net 2.0 and coming for one from e-advertising and for the other from music (where he first worked for majors), the site, which has just opened, is betting on a model that is new in France. On Mymajorcompany.com, it is up to Internet users to bet money on the selected artists. The latter's counters remain open until they reach 70,000 euros, the sum required by the label to move on to the production phase of the album, which will then benefit from a distribution contract with a major. Inspired by the German site Sell a band, which claims to have managed to raise the equivalent of 50,000 dollars (33,600 euros) for 12 artists through this participatory production system, My major company intends to produce and reveal up to fifteen "new talents" per year. However, there is no question of letting Internet users decide everything. "Self-selection and self-production have their limits, even on the Internet," explains Michael Goldmann, co-founder of the site. "Music is still a profession and so we are the ones who choose the artists on whom Internet users can then bet." The same requirement is used to justify the 70,000 euro mark. "Below that, I don't know how to do it," he continues. It is important that we can give ourselves every chance of really breaking through artists." An important detail is that the money bet on each artist is invested in "safe financial investments" while waiting to reach the fateful threshold. The creators of the site bet on an average stake of 20 to 30 euros per "producer", to whom they agree to pay 30% of the net sales revenue, the remaining 70% being split between the artist (20%, better than a beginner's contract with a major) and the label (50%). "If an Internet user had been able to bet on Artic Monkeys before they released their first album, they would have become very rich, judges Michael Goldmann. Now, we are not promising the moon to anyone. Above all, we offer our visitor-producers good entertainment and if they win money one day, it is a bonus." The company is also banking on a variety of community tools (blogs, playlists, VIP clubs) to attract a wide audience. For its beginnings, the site - which swears "not to be a submarine of any major" and to rely on a 100% independent round table - remains modest and is counting on one to two albums by the end of 2008 and no return on investment for Internet users before 2010. Patience.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1318

You have long been a critical observer of Internet culture, what significant changes have you seen? What fascinates me is the steady growth of Internet users outside the West. Nearly 20% of the world's population now has access to the Net, or 1.25 billion people, and more than twice that number use mobile phones. The new users are in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. Large-scale educational projects like "One Laptop per Child" are being initiated. Internet users are not only consumers of information but potentially producers of software. What interesting software is going to come out of Nigeria? Look at how exciting the Iranian blogosphere is, despite the repression. There is a democratization of access, from schools in remote villages to "Digital Jihad". What is unfortunate is the way social movements are lagging behind. The so-called global civil society has fallen asleep and left all the madness of Web 2.0 to Silicon Valley. The Internet has become "social" (but not yet "socialist"). The Net is used primarily to connect "living" people and not so much to circulate "dead" information. Social networks, such as Myspace, Youtube, Bebo or Facebook, are gigantic hives, centered on language. Average users are not obsessed with what is happening in the Anglo-Saxon sphere of the Net. The Internet is a global medium, technically speaking, but there is a growing balkanization, centered around different languages. Let us just mention Japanese or Korean cyberspace. The strongest growth is in the Chinese Net, literally walled off. But what do we know about what is happening there? Within these "islands", a multitude of niche cultures are emerging, what Chris Anderson, editor-in-chief of Wired magazine, calls the long tail. Is the Web 2.0 craze any different from the dotcom era of the late 90s? The biggest difference is the relative lack of venture capital and corporate funding. Web 2.0 has been all the rage for the past year, but it is nothing compared to the craze of the late 90s. Back then, it was all about empty portals and dead e-commerce. Now, the craze is all about user profiles that are sold to advertisers. We should be concerned about these rampant violations of privacy, especially young people who seem oblivious to how Google and Co make money. They think: we have all these great services for free, so why worry? Nobody explains to them what Web 2.0 business is. This “education” will not come from hackers, activists and artists because most of them have a libertarian attitude and fail to question this “ideology of free”. You don't seem to agree with it? Indeed, and I'm not making myself very popular by openly questioning the benevolent mentality of people like Richard Stallman (free software activist, editor's note) and the followers of Creative Commons (alternative to copyright, editor's note). We can't demand that cultural producers give away their product, be it code, research or music, for nothing, without offering them an alternative economic model. Resistance to proprietary software is justified. But what works for software doesn't necessarily work for music. Which certainly doesn't mean we should return to the old regime of intellectual property. You don't seem to share the euphoria of the promoters of Web 2.0, you talk about a "darkening of the Web". I'm not a prophet of the Apocalypse. However, corporate and state control over the Internet has increased like never before. In late November, the data of 25 million people in the UK was lost in the mail, thanks to the private postal service TNT. The data included names, addresses, dates of birth, insurance numbers and bank account details of child benefit recipients. It was stored on two CDs, protected by two passwords but not encrypted. The package never arrived. This incident tells us something about the collective dream state we are in (others call it organised stupidity). The amount of private data that a company like Google collects on us is unprecedented. It will get so bad that the only option left will be to “nationalise” or “socialise” Google. Its profitability will depend on collecting ever more precise user profiles. The internet is a public digital domain in which our data is stored. It should not be owned by states or companies. It is not as utopian as it sounds. This could have already been implemented by international organizations such as UNESCO. Unfortunately, these organizations have lost touch with society and have become outdated bureaucracies, as we saw at the World Summit on the Information Society in 2003 and 2005. What we need is a strong and open European alternative to Google, a decentralized knowledge structure, like Wikipedia, that works for the public good. Another aspect of this "obscuring of the Net" is the hunting of users of peer-to-peer networks. The new Sarkozy law will use surveillance capacities in such a paternalistic way: the user is a naughty child who is punished by excluding him from the Net. About the nettime list, Alex Foti (Italian economist, member of the Chainworkers network against precariousness, editor's note) wrote that it was the digital equivalent of cutting off the hands of supposed thieves. Doesn't Sarkozy understand that education simply can't happen without the Net? Your latest book is called "Zero Comment". Why this title that refers to the world of blogs? Zero Comment is what you find under most blog posts. For me, it's not a sign of despair. I'm not saying that blogging is a product of our "electronic solitude". It's often a very social activity, where we respond to each other and exchange links. We must treat the Internet as a gigantic notepad, a distributed notation system that can be accessed from anywhere. We should appreciate these possibilities instead of always complaining about our own futility. Besides, I like negative titles. I think it should be possible to establish a tradition of the Walter Benjamin or Susan Sontag essay that is not only critical but also technologically informed. Most literature on information technology is corporate self-celebration, without any critical investigation. You diagnose a nihilistic impulse in blogging when others praise its emancipatory potential. We should be more relaxed in our relationship with blogs. Blogging is nothing more than ordinary people entering into a dialogue with the media. It is a revolutionary step. But from a content perspective, it has proven to be a tragic joke. Let's not separate blogging from other trends in society! If you are not ready for the trivialities of everyday life, then avoid blogs! Miraculously, blog software invites users to confess. Thanks to Michel Foucault, we know that people today believe that their liberation requires them to “tell the truth,” to confess to someone, a priest, a psychoanalyst, or a blog, and telling that truth will set them free. There is a strong desire for transparency. We are bad at keeping our secrets, and digital technology makes this tendency toward self-revelation easier than ever. Saying out loud what you think or feel, in the legacy of Sade, is not just an option, in the liberal sense of choice, but an obligation, an immediate impulse to respond in order to be there, among the others. The nihilistic aspect comes into play when we try to make sense of these billions of messages. From a centralized perspective, they simply no longer have any meaning. They destroy the need for a global vision and drag media culture toward zero (nihil). Let us not confuse this nihilism of the advanced media age with the collapse of religious influence on daily life in the 19th century. After God, it was the media that gave meaning. They are, in turn, about to die. Blogs are only accelerating this historical process. In this transparent society, will we perhaps one day dream of having a quarter of an hour of anonymity? Anonymity is a bourgeois dream, coming from an age when people claimed that they "had the right to be left alone". Literally, this means not having a name, but these days, it means rather not having a face, not leaving digital traces. With today's surveillance systems, anonymity is nothing more than a nostalgic notion. Hackers are right when they say that privacy no longer exists. It is a depressing thought that revolts me. Anonymity is no longer an absolute value, and has never been a human right. You write that blogging leads to decadence? Blogs break down centralized structures, in the same way that alternative media did in the past. In decades past, the independent underground press was on the side of the progressives, but that is no longer the case. In the United States, most blogs are pro-conservative. In Holland, it is the shockblogs that dominate, populist sites that insult the liberal left consensus. The mass media are constantly scrutinized from all sides, from all sides, by the right, Muslim activists, Christian fundamentalists and all the conspiracy theorists concerned about 9-11. Bloggers claim to be citizen journalists, but you dispute that they really challenge the traditional media. Do blogs produce critical information or just a nebula of micro-opinions? As the Internet and society merge, we cannot expect a simple software program to change power relations. Blogs provide us with an easy-to-use information architecture. Whether blogging, as a collective effort, is subversive, or whether it merely reproduces existing power relations, cannot be decided outside the context of the times. Technologies do not realize social movements, which I always consider to be the engines of change, they can only shape them. Amateur culture is being challenged. Do you agree with author Andrew Keen that "the Internet is killing culture"? I have always analyzed, with great pleasure, the cultural pessimism that the Internet arouses among intellectuals. The problem behind this fear of "information overload" is technological: we can no longer distinguish written culture from oral culture. Our oral culture is now recordable. Instead of writing less, we write more and more text messages, emails, and blog posts. But what we are really doing is storing fragments of our spoken conversations. The result is an avalanche of half-finished, grammatically incorrect sentences that are digitally archived and searchable. The problem with Keen is that it treats these informal data streams as journalism or even literature. Many bloggers have the same problem. They don't distinguish between online dialogue, digital entertainment, and news production. To them, everything becomes news, simply because it is tagged. Take the most popular blogging topic, cats. People love to blog about their cats, but they don't pretend it's news. Should we stop blogging? Never! Technorati lists over 100 million blogs, or just under 10% of the Internet population. Why stop when it has just begun? Blogging is a mass leisure activity that only emerged in 2003-2004. Blogs will be replaced by new platforms, closer to the users' lifestyle. If there were less alienation in sight, we could hope to see a decrease in the need for electronic communication. But the human condition is not very bright. With increasing mobility and working hours, the need for "computer-mediated" communication will only increase. Only the rich can stop communicating. They have their slaves who do it for them. The rest, those who cannot afford not to answer their cell phones, will have to stay connected and blog in anger, fear and outrage. Being online is their status of "modern nervousness", as Freud put it.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1319

Our final judgment (for now) on a few trends, phenomena and other not-so-important things. Things we love and want more of in 2008 Moving to Panama That was the plan of John Darwin, the English canoeist who "miraculously" resurfaced five years after his disappearance. And it's apparently also the plan of a growing number of North American and European retirees, who are choosing the small Central American country for its low cost of living, its health care system and the fact that it doesn't tax income earned outside the country. Perfect for Brian Mulroney. The return of handmade and artisanal goods, and its diffusion on the Internet Apostatizing André Montmorency's apostasy caused a stir in 2007. But why stop at the Catholic religion alone? Other things to consider for 2008: using a BlackBerry, plastic water bottles, paraben-laced products, and watching Loft Story. Making babies Everyone seems to be doing it these days, and apparently not just because there's nothing good on TV. The fight for a fair and equitable copyright law for everyone Because the public has rights too. More reasons not to have a car More bike paths, Communauto vehicles, carpooling services like Amigoexpress, etc. Good podcasts Taking a sabbatical In 2007, Timothy Ferriss (The 4-Hour Workweek) explained how to work only half a day a week. For 2008, we say: let's follow the reasoning to its conclusion and take a sabbatical. Free Internet Free software, wikis, newspapers like the New York Times that decide to offer their content for free online, etc. Interest in where the food we buy comes from, and how it was produced. Cities without advertising São Paulo, Brazil, imposed a total ban on all forms of outdoor advertising in 2007. Montreal? We can always dream. TV on the web Collective projects Because unity is strength, of course. The social web as a democratic tool Blogs, Facebook and the like are revealing their formidable social and political potential. And it's also very practical for inviting people to your party, of course. Box-office hits produced with a handful of dollars and a lot of resourcefulness. Undyed hair Permanent retirements Rather than the lousy comebacks of Bran Van 3000, Spice Girls, Led Zeppelin, etc. Rebelling Against the government, the media, multinationals, your phone company. Things we really hit our quota for in 2007 The "lifestyle" centers DIX30, Centropolis, Faubourg Boisbriand and all the others: the same businesses everywhere, the same windy steppes, the same desire to never come back. TV shows hosted by comedians In the past, being a TV host was a job in itself, with its specialists, its techniques, its expertise. Nowadays, it's a contract that you give to an actor/singer/comedian whose career is going well. Main offenders, in 2007: Serge Postigo, Luck Mervil, Christian Bégin, Boucar Diouf. Serge Postigo Deserves a category all to himself, really: the cultural show on Télé-Québec, the renovation show on Historia, the musical comedy, the finale of L'heure de gloire, the romantic breakup. We suggest a sabbatical year. With Jean Lemire, if possible. Minority governments Ugly kangaroos Sweaters, not Australian mammals (which are never ugly). Loud charity So, well-known personality, you gave a charity the fee for your ad for the equally well-known rotisserie? You could have just sent a check and spared us the ad. People who send us links to disgusting videos like 2 Girls 1 Cup You'll tell us that we just didn't have to click. We'll tell you that it's like telling the hare that it just didn't have to bury its head in the snare. The crowds on the orange metro line, since the opening of the Laval stations. Discussions on reasonable accommodations Exile has never seemed so tempting. Discussions on the eventual, possible, conceivable disappearance of French in Quebec around 2127 See Discussions on reasonable accommodations. Journalist bloggers whose posts consist mainly of questions like: "And you, what do you think?" Easy way to fill your daily quota of posts without having to rack your brains. The advertising bombardment during prime time The same ad during every break, it's starting to resemble the torture of gout. The abuse of status updates on Facebook We didn't really want to know that "X no longer has clean panties". The theft of metal Stories of sports doping Yawn. Radio-Canada television Boxing galas? The Têtes à claques? The Grandes gueules? A daily for Sébastien Benoit? We're going to go back to the internet, if you don't mind.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1320

New York - The community search engine Wikia Search was officially launched yesterday and was already the subject of strong criticism, with its detractors seeing this new platform mainly as an additional social networking site. This highly anticipated search engine, which aims to compete with the leader Google, is a project designed by James Whales, co-founder of the online community encyclopedia Wikipedia and head of Wikia, a (for-profit) portal dedicated to the creation of thematic communities of knowledge. The Wikia search engine currently exists in its test version and is accessible at the address http://alpha.search.wikia.com/. The software architecture of the site is open to the Internet community, thanks to its "open source" technologies. In addition to the search engine, the Wikia project also offers the possibility of creating your own personal page and including the classic content of social networking sites (photos, interests, etc.). "We've been working for the past year to create the foundation for today's open-source platform," Wales said in a statement. "We believe Wikia will improve with use and contributions." But skepticism was rife among niche websites, with some criticizing the lack of meaningful ranking of keyword search results. "Many of us have been waiting a year for Jimmy Whales' new, user-powered system to tease Google. But the test site is probably one of the biggest disappointments I've ever written about," TechCrunch's Michael Arrington reported. The project is just "another social networking site" that offers "basic search options" to set it apart, he continued.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1321

The first time his name circulated in Paris was at the République des blogs. The meeting has become a quasi-institution, for all the political bloggers and citizen journalists on the French Net. In a Parisian café, or more recently in the provinces and in Belgium, those who usually only debate in the virtual world, without seeing or really knowing each other, have gotten into the habit of meeting up for a drink once a month in real life. "Ken McKenzie is coming to France soon," one of them whispered. McKen... who? Kenneth McKenzie Wark, the author, in 2004, of Hacker Manifesto (A hacker manifesto for the French translation). The guru of hackers, software players and free culture. Some see him as "the Karl Marx of the 21st century." This announcement could not leave bloggers indifferent. Direction Marseille, at the end of October 2007, where Kenneth McKenzie Wark is expected. He is taking part in a conference: “Hackulturation, free culture, hacker culture”, organised by Les Rencontres place publique, an association that brings together French and foreign intellectuals around political, sociological and aesthetic questions on art. In one of the alcoves of the Centre de la Vieille Charité – a place originally intended to shelter vagabonds and orphans – Kenneth McKenzie Wark is indeed present. Dressed in black, with long hair, a large silver fly on his index finger and a distant gaze. He was born in Australia forty-six years ago, in Newcastle, a coastal and working-class city of some 200,000 souls, in New South Wales, 160 km north of Sydney. “A city that you leave without shame and without regret,” he says. He studied media at the University of Sydney and Murdoch University. An activist in the Australian Communist Party, he remembers demonstrating against the end of free higher education. The event is not insignificant for this man who has become one of the thinkers of free culture. His bedside book is a collective work, the encyclopedia Wikipedia, the symbol of information finally liberated. "I left Australia at 30, but I should have done so at 20 when my dream of a multicultural, progressive Australia faded, having definitively turned its back on its racist history. When it was clear that the left had lost." He followed his American wife to New York, where he settled in 2000. Since 2004, he has been a professor of culture and media at Eugene-Lang College The New School for Liberal Arts in New York. It was in the United States, while reading The Society of the Spectacle (Gallimard, 1992) by Guy Debord, that the inspiration for the manifesto came to him. He considers the theoretician, one of the founders of the Situationist International, to be a "Karl Marx hacker". He remembers, as a young student, having attended a conference by the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard. He was struck by the great freedom of mind of the latter, and the "great freedom of his references". McKenzie's manifesto was one of the philosopher's last favorites, shortly before his death in March 2007. His manuscript was rejected by many publishers, before being published by Harvard University Press. Hacker Manifesto has been translated into eight languages, and was released in France in 2006 by Criticalsecret. The manifesto, printed in 400 copies, contains 389 aphorisms. "It is an epic and conceptual poem", according to Aliette Guibert, its editor. "A beautiful, dense, energetic, exciting book", for the philosopher Patrice Maniglier. Return to Marseille. The small vaulted room of the Vieille Charité is sparse. There are computer science teachers, counterculture and free software players, "hacktivists" of all kinds. A heterogeneous and turbulent public, characteristic of the computer underground, at the crossroads of the shady worlds of the network and a radical artistic avant-garde. In other words, the worlds where the first hackers recognized themselves, in the sense that McKenzie Wark gives to the term. Not pirates, but "dismemberers, bloodhounds of universes, laborers of abstraction, both the wreckers and the innovators". Those who, he explains, in his very particular language produce, invent new concepts, new perceptions, new sensations "hacked" from raw data. A kind of Robin Hood of the digital age. "Whatever code we hack," the author continues, "whether it is a programming language, a poetic language, mathematics or music, curves or colours, we are the extractors of new worlds." The hacker is the one who "frees information from the vectors in which it is locked up and held hostage," explains art critic Stephen Wright, a close friend of McKenzie. While the Australian often quotes philosophers, he also mentions Courtney Love's rebellion against American record companies, or the initiative of the group Radiohead, which offered each buyer the right to set the price of their latest album. "Information can be free everywhere, but it is chained everywhere," summarizes Kenneth McKenzie, in reference to the credo of cyberculture of the 1980s. In McKenzie's universe, Debord and Robin Hood rub shoulders, Rousseau and Courtney Love, the computer scientists of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the English peasants of the 8th century opposed to enclosure, Baudrillard and Kathy Aker, an American experimental novelist. The theory of the author, who defines himself "as a crypto-Marxist", draws the boundaries of a new class struggle, digital society version. On one side, therefore, the hackers, proletarians of information. On the other, the ruling class composed of the owners of the vectors who "lead an intense fight to dispossess the hackers of their intellectual property". "An interesting theory as a post-Marxist vision of the exploitation of man by man", summarizes Paul Mathias, professor at the International College of Philosophy. He edited the issue of the magazine Rue Descartes (PUF) which devoted a file to the Hacker Manifesto. In the United States, Kenneth McKenzie Wark has already published another work: Gamer Theory. A copyright-free book, put online, developed interactively with Internet users. A true fruit of hackers.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1322

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. -- An MIT professor's One Laptop project is struggling as Intel and Microsoft offer their own products. In 2005, Nicholas Negroponte had a brilliant idea that, if implemented, would narrow the technology gap between rich and developing nations. The idea was captivating and simple: Design a $100 laptop and get it to as many of the world's 150 million schoolchildren in poor countries as possible within four years. World leaders and corporate benefactors have enthusiastically supported the nonprofit One Laptop Per Child project. Negroponte, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) professor who was on leave of absence, traveled the world to gather commitments from developing countries to buy the laptops in large quantities. But some three years later, only about 2,000 schoolchildren in pilot programs have gotten laptops through the One Laptop project. An order from Uruguay for 100,000 computers appears to be the only solid deal struck so far. Mr. Negroponte's plan has been thwarted in part by the power of his idea. For-profit companies threatened by the $100 price tag have rushed to build their own low-cost computers, throwing Mr. Negroponte into unexpected competition with big-name brands like Intel and Microsoft's Windows operating system. But a variation on Mr. Negroponte's vision is beginning to come to fruition. Poor countries are getting their hands on low-cost laptops for their students -- but most of them have nothing to do with his project. Poor countries now have a choice of affordable computers, potentially undermining the One Laptop Per Child, or OLPC, initiative. Goal Achieved "I'm good at selling ideas, but I'm not good at selling computers," Negroponte told colleagues. "I think if the world's poorest children have the chance to have 30 million laptops from competitors by the end of next year, it's a huge success," he said in an interview. "My goal is not to sell laptops; OLPC is an educational initiative." Since its inception, One Laptop Per Child has posed a challenge to the dominance of software giant Microsoft and chipmaker Intel in the personal computing industry. Negroponte's team, which included MIT members, designed a device without Windows or Intel chips. The computer runs the Linux operating system and other nonproprietary, free software that users can modify. Last year, Intel, which does not typically sell computers, introduced a small laptop for developing countries called Classmate, priced at $230 to $300. It has mounted a major advertising campaign, despite the fact that the initiative is unlikely to generate much profit. That is because Intel is hoping to prevent its rival, Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), which supplies Mr. Negroponte with chips, from becoming the standard in emerging countries. The OLPC laptop comes with good educational software. The small, energy-efficient green-and-white device is waterproof and dustproof. Its single, high-resolution screen remains bright even in direct sunlight. The computer also has a built-in video camera and wireless Internet connectivity. Still, the $100 target price is hard to hit, although Negroponte's team has managed to create a device that costs less than other laptops. It now sells for $188, plus shipping. Questioning Some potential buyers are starting to question the One Laptop Per Child. Officials in Libya, which had planned to buy up to 1.2 million units, have become concerned that the computers lack the Windows operating system, and that technical support, teacher training and future upgrades could be problematic. "The Intel device seems superior to the OLPC," says Mohamed Bani, who chairs Libya's technical advisory committee. "I don't want my country to become a huge scrapyard for these devices." Libya has decided to buy at least 150,000 Intel Classmates. Nicholas Negroponte unveiled plans for his $100 laptop in January 2005 at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Google, AMD and News Corp. were among the companies that each invested $2 million in the project. \* \* \* An alternative Because of mounting sales problems, the decision was recently made to offer the device to American consumers. On November 12, "pairs" of laptops began to be offered to American and Canadian buyers for $399. Under the program -- Give One. Get One -- one computer is given to a schoolchild in a poor country, such as Haiti, while the other goes to the buyer. \* \* \* In Direct Competition A nonprofit and a tech giant race to market a low-cost laptop JANUARY 2005: Nicholas Negroponte presents the idea of a $100 computer for schoolchildren in poor countries at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland NOVEMBER 2005: (Above) United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan presents a prototype of the laptop at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, Tunisia MAY 2006: Intel CEO Paul Otellini gives the first public demonstration of the company's Classmate computer prototype at a technology conference APRIL 2007: Negroponte predicts that three to five million laptops will be sold in 2007 at an analyst conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts and 50 to 150 million devices by 2008 July 2007: Intel joins the board of directors of One Laptop Per Child NOVEMBER 6, 2007: Mass production of One Laptop Per Child computers begins

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1323

Olivier Blondeau (with the collaboration of Laurence Allard) Becoming Media, Internet Activism, Between Defection and Experimentation Editions Amsterdam, 389 pp., 19 euros. All Internet users? All journalists? All commentators? The rise of the Internet and the new practices it generates have until now been examined from an essentially sociological angle. Beyond the hymn to novelty, a certain disdain has been shown towards this pseudo-media whose most visible result remains for the moment a flood of invectives and/or banalities. Olivier Blondeau's essay has the immense merit of showing that something essential is at stake with the Internet: the emergence, in place of the passive viewer, of singular individuals acting as such in the common space of the media. What he calls the production of "new subjectivities", no more, no less. Become the Media is a song by Californian eco-punk rocker-activist Jello Biafra. After having joyfully taken down reality TV stars, the lyrics (more than music, they are "spoken words" recited with background music) launch an appeal that resonates like a challenge to the small world of media criticism: "We don't hate the media, we become the media." Becoming the media, the expression would have pleased Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, who saw in the concept of "becoming" (becoming-minority, becoming-woman) the way out by which the individual would escape his determinations (family, historical) and access his freedom, his truth, his desire - to become, therefore, a "subject". It is by placing himself under the double sponsorship of American radical rock and the authors of Anti-Oedipus that Blondeau elaborates his argument. Which can be summed up in a thesis: in the media space, becoming a subject means appropriating the media, making oneself media. This was already the meaning of the free radio movement, local television and activist films in the 70s. Today, "becoming media" would mean, pell-mell: setting up sites, building "free" software, downloading, podcasting, broadcasting videos, exchanging in P2P, creating discussion lists, putting archives online, establishing links, syndicating blogs, copying, pasting, sampling, but also drawing up a map of the Wi-Fi hotspots in one's neighborhood, clowning around in front of video surveillance cameras, inviting the inhabitants of a region to discuss online the route of the future national road. "Experimenting with new languages to produce new subjectivities, new causes and a new political perspective." One figure serves as a common thread in Olivier Blondeau's thinking: the hacker, capable of cracking codes, of wandering unhindered on the Web, of leaving his mark there, of inscribing his subjectivity (which is as much an impression as an expression). "The hacker is [.] the incarnation, the ideal type of this expressivism." At the crossroads of technology and politics, Blondeau shows the link that unites the militant "defection" of the 90s and the advent of Net-activism: mobilizing, which seemed to have lost its reason for being in traditional modes of action (unions, parties, etc.), becomes possible again with the Internet, where the articulation of the individual and the collective changes. Because the Internet is above all "communication", the "I" and the "we" are not contradictory, but call upon each other. From then on, acting on the Internet means producing a "social reality" where everyone will define their "relationship to the world". Far from being a gadget for politicians in search of a marker of modernity, the Internet appears as a powerful factor of democratic innovation, of rewriting the public space. It is therefore an eminently political reading of the Internet that this book proposes. The references illustrate the scale of the project: Michael Hardt and Toni Negri (in particular their concept of "becoming-common"), Félix Guattari (the "postmedia"), Michel de Certeau (for his distinction between tactical activism and strategic activism), Gilbert Simondon (his analysis of the technical object, which has not aged a day) and even Teilhard de Chardin (whose "noosphere" has become, forty years later, the favorite metaphor of Internet users to represent "the Web"). We regret (in addition to a proliferation of technical terms and a botched edition) that, focused on activism, Blondeau forgets that a "subject", in philosophy, aspires first to enjoyment and that in this respect the Internet resembles a cornucopia. Enjoyment of seeing, of being seen, of writing, of being read, of exhibiting oneself, of spying: "becoming media", is it not also a way of finding a consistency, a content, a unity? The book makes too many quick allusions to it, and one is surprised to think that, faced with the stars of Net-activism - Deleuze, Guattari, Negri -, a little Lacan would not have hurt.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1324

NEW YORK - Netscape Navigator, the world's first commercial browser and the launching pad for the Web's rise, is set to disappear for good after Feb. 1, 2008, after a 13-year run. Its current custodian, Time Warner's AOL division, will then shut down all development efforts and cease providing technical support, focusing its energies on growing as an advertising company. Netscape Navigator's popularity plummeted when Microsoft launched its own browser, Explorer, and it has all but disappeared with the arrival of its open-source cousin Firefox. Netscape CEO Tom Drapeau admitted in a blog post Friday that AOL's best efforts have not allowed Navigator to regain the ground it lost to Microsoft. For several years, Navigator has essentially been a slightly modified version of the wildly popular Firefox, which currently controls about 10 percent of the market. Users will be able to continue downloading Navigator indefinitely, but no updates -- security or otherwise -- will be offered after February 1. The Web was only a few years old, in April 1993, when a team at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications at the University of Illinois released Mosaic, the first browser to incorporate images, sound and words. Before Mosaic, access to the Web was primarily text-based, with images presented in separate windows. Several members of that team went on to found their own companies, and the first version of Netscape Navigator was launched in late 1994. Netscape was among the first to cash in on the virtual gold rush with its initial public offering in August 1995. Its opening stock price -- $28 -- doubled on its first day, and a company that had only had sales of $20 million ended up with a market capitalization of $2 billion. Netscape's success, however, caught the attention of Microsoft, which began including its own browser, Explorer, with its Windows operating system.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1325

Fighting the West, of course, but where? The answer given by the historical gurus of al-Qaeda has varied over time. The movement's great leaders have even disagreed on various occasions over the strategy to be deployed: defensive jihad in the land of Islam (dar al-Islam), on Afghan soil for example, or offensive jihad in the land of conflict (dar al-harb), taking the sword to lands populated by infidels. After failing, in the 1990s, to overthrow a single "corrupt" Arab regime, the "near enemy", al-Qaeda will find more success - at least in terms of the media - by attacking the "distant enemy", in New York, Madrid or London. Today, it clearly intends to lead the fight on both fronts, but with a recent refocusing on "apostate" Muslim countries. If Iraq and Afghanistan remain the main fronts, several speeches by Ayman al-Zawahiri, the number 2 and ideologue of the terrorist organization, set as a priority target the interests of Western countries that support "felonious" Arab states, whose borders are an insult to the mythologized Umma (community of believers). The carnage in Algiers on December 11, like the quadruple murder in Mauritania, seem to show that the message has been well received, in the Maghreb and throughout the sub-Saharan strip. This impulse from the "top", initiated by the leadership of al-Qaeda, is dangerously responded to by a movement from the "bottom" of a number of Islamist groups or small groups. Indeed, we are witnessing a "Qaedization" of Islamist movements almost everywhere - and particularly in the Maghreb. Weakened by the blows dealt by local security apparatuses, prey at best to divergences on the direction that the fight should take and at worst to bloody internal dissensions, these terrorist organizations find a certain interest in placing themselves under the banner of al-Qaeda. A "brand" that unites, legitimizes, and gives to the least of their actions - even minor - an international sounding board. We have seen, since 2006, the successive rallies of the Maghreb movements, Algerian GSPC, Moroccan GICM, Tunisian GICT and Libyan GICL last month. "The fact that leaders like al-Zawahiri are increasingly talking about Maghreb groups shows that, through their actions, they have shown themselves "worthy" of belonging to the movement," comments Dominique Thomas, a researcher at the EHESS (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences). This race for the "Qaedization" certificate worries Western intelligence services to the highest degree. They are thus expecting a resurgence of attacks against their nationals - expatriates or tourists - in Muslim countries, from Nouakchott to Islamabad. With a whole range of actions ranging from the meticulously planned attack to the opportunistic and amateur action. In the first case, massive attacks like the one that killed 11 French people from the DCN company in Karachi in 2002. In the other, spontaneous and poorly prepared acts against Westerners chosen at random, as was undoubtedly the case in the Mauritanian desert on Monday. "The The comparison may be shocking, but it works the same way, in a negative way, as when the Pope calls on everyone to do charity at Christmas, explains a specialist in anti-terrorism. An association could carry out a major operation while an individual could make a gesture of his own accord. And Zawahiri made his "wishes" on the occasion of Eid a few days ago, calling for foreigners to be attacked wherever possible. A structured group could carry out a major attack, while three more or less amateur militants could take a knife or a rifle and go and massacre two or three foreigners." In his "Call for Global Islamic Resistance," a sort of 1,600-page encyclopedia of jihad published on the Internet in 2005, Abu Musab al-Suri explained that al-Qaeda "is not an organization and should not become one," but that it is a "call, a reference, a methodology." Each day that passes confirms that al-Qaeda does not operate as an organization but as an "open community network," similar to those at the heart of the Internet today. The new al-Qaeda militants resemble, in their sad way, geeks (computer enthusiasts), working together to develop and perfect free software. The difference is that they are building a work of death. A researcher at IFRI (French Institute of International Relations), Mark Hecker recently spoke on this subject in Le Figaro of "wikiterrorism" (our editions of November 9), in allusion to collaborative networks, such as Wikipedia or YouTube. The response, as we can see, will not be easy. \* Senior reporter in the Foreign Service of Le Figaro.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1326

The Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (CNAM) is organizing, as part of a series of conferences on practices in innovation marketing, a debate on the originality and evolution of economic models in the free software sector, on Thursday, December 20, from 6:15 p.m. to 9 p.m., at the Ecole nationale supérieure des arts et métiers - Ensam - (75013 Paris). Free admission upon registration. Information: www.cnam.fr

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1327

The Ministry of Economy, Finance and Employment has joined forces with the Ministry of Health, Youth and Sports to open a portal aimed at promoting careers in social work and health. Fact sheets describe the skills and training required, places of work, pay, etc. The site also provides information on schools, competitive examinations, validation of acquired experience, etc. Young graduates too A quarter of graduates from Audencia, the Nantes business school, believe they have been victims of discrimination during recruitment, and 41% have witnessed such practices towards other graduates of leading grandes écoles, according to the Agence emploi formation (AEF). These results from a study conducted by two Audencia research centers among 450 former students are included in a "White Paper on Equal Opportunities in the Grandes Écoles", published on December 12 (www.audencia.fr). The economy of free software The Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (CNAM) is organizing, as part of a series of conferences on practices in innovation marketing, a debate on the originality and evolution of economic models in the free software sector, on Thursday, December 20, from 6:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., at the Ecole nationale supérieure des arts et métiers - Ensam - (75013 Paris). Free entry upon registration. 45 minutes to refine your project The Paris City Hall and the Salon des entrepreneurs are organizing the second edition of the Conseils d'entrepreneurs, on Tuesday, January 29, 2008 at the Hôtel de ville de Paris. The objective is to allow 1,000 people who want to create their own business to meet 100 business leaders. They will be able to talk with SME bosses or group directors. Progress for women The 3rd session of the Club Mixité et égalité professionnelle, presented by the National Association for the Interdisciplinary Promotion of Research in Human and Social Sciences for Businesses (Anvie) will take place on January 31, 2008 from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Cercle républicain (75002 Paris). The discussions will take stock of the role of women's networks, the persistence of stereotypes and obstacles to equal pay... Find the right training The 12th edition of the Studyrama Forum for Bac + 4/5 will be held on February 8 and 9, 2008 at Espace Champerret (75017 Paris). Universities, business administration institutes, and specialized schools will present more than a thousand training offers. The Association to facilitate the professional integration of young graduates (AFIJ) will advise students on career opportunities in the fields, the sectors that are hiring and the recruitment stages...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1328

Do new technologies have an impact on the methods and strategies of companies? For the Internet guru Don Tapscott, they are completely disrupting them. A site (1) invites us to extend the debate in a collaborative way. You say that the collaborative economy or "wikinomy" constitutes a mutation of the same type as the industrial revolution in the 19th century. Under the impact of globalization and new technologies, an old industrial model is disappearing and a new one is emerging. What is disappearing? An organization of the production of wealth in companies based on hierarchy, control and a vertical transmission of tasks in which everyone is someone's subordinate: the employee in relation to the manager, the seller in relation to the consumer, the producer in relation to the distributor or subcontractors. What is emerging? New collaborative models that rely on communities and are based on co-production and co-creation of wealth. How are these networks revolutionizing the economy? They are no longer limited to what was called at the turn of the 21st century the "new online economy". They are no longer used only to produce content, such as the Wikipedia encyclopedia, or software, such as the free Linux operating system. Networks are revolutionizing entire sectors of the economy, in the automobile and aeronautics industries, medical research and the pharmaceutical sector, cosmetics, etc. We can thus create mutual funds, produce new games or cheap motorcycles in China. This co-production model will become established everywhere. An example of a concrete application of "wikinomics" in a company? It was the story of a mining company managing a gold mine in Canada that gave me the idea to write a book. Its name is Goldcorp, and at the end of the 90s its deposit seemed exhausted, its closure inevitable. Its young boss, Rob McEwen, who had just attended a Linux conference in Boston, then had a crazy and risky idea. He decided to publish all of Goldcorp's top-secret geological data on the Net, and invited a thousand virtual prospectors on the Web to find new extraction "targets" by promising them half a million dollars. In a few months, this open-source method made it possible to find more gold than Goldcorp had ever dreamed of and to save two to three years of prospecting. McEwen had entered this "wikinomy" that tomorrow will generate innovation and the production of wealth. This sharing of intellectual property is considered by many to be one of the worst threats weighing on the company. The received idea is that you have to preserve this precious asset at all costs and send a battalion of lawyers as soon as you touch it. Hide your game to stay competitive, in short. But that doesn't work anymore. The major record companies are dying from sticking to this model, and everywhere the old monopolies in industrial knowledge are collapsing. I'm not saying that we should share everything, but at least some of our intellectual property. Take the case of IBM. This is a structured multinational that estimates that it has saved 900 million dollars [about 625 million euros, editor's note] per year by giving up - in part - its systems and betting on relying on free software produced by others. But this requires adopting new mental models and exploring new avenues in the search for value creation. Consumers, whom you rename "prosomers", also participate in this movement of co-creation, co-production. It is the advent of a fifth estate, that of Internet users! Amazon makes nearly 30% of its turnover via a million third-party sellers paid on the Internet. BMW invites its customers to participate in the interior design of its models. But the most spectacular example is that of Lego, converted into high-tech games. Launched in 1998, the Mindstorms experiment, which consists of giving users the possibility of designing their own robots online with programmable bricks, was such a success that Lego extended it to its more classic kits. These customers no longer buy Lego models, but their own models, accessible to all. Doesn't this new, outsourced business model signal the end of a model that had the merit of organizing work socially? If you mean that we are moving towards a riskier world, that anyone disconnected and resistant to this "wikinomy" will not survive it in the long term, yes. Everything is converging in this direction. But it is also a world in which opportunities are multiplied. I want proof that companies that have opened up to these models are more successful. Web 2.0 is already outdated, in short. This collaborative economy goes beyond the current boom in online social networks. We are going to move from a world of networking on the Web, of new online sociability, to a social and collaborative production. Companies have an interest in preparing for it now. (1) www.wikinomics.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1329

The French will be deprived of the Eee PC, the first computer at 300 euros, for Christmas! We will have to wait until January to see this machine built by Asus on the gondola heads of French distributors. The Taiwanese firm has succeeded in miniaturizing it without causing manufacturing costs to explode. This ultraportable weighing less than 1 kilo will, however, make North Americans happy. They have ranked it among the most sought-after items for Christmas, according to the specialist site cnet.com. Equipped with a small 4 gigabyte hard drive, a 7-inch screen and, above all, a Linux environment, the Eee PC connects in two clicks to any open Wi-Fi network. The pre-installed free software allows all forms of communication: email, messenger, IP telephony and even videoconferencing thanks to the integrated webcam. A set of office tools makes it a complete workstation. The Eee PC can do everything a big one can do, minus the comfort... but for a lot less money.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1330

Superflex is setting up its "Supercopy" workshop at La Box in Bourges. The Danish artists are the initiators of "Free Beer", the first "open source" beer and Copyshop, a shop in Copenhagen that only sells "modified originals, improved copies" and any product "that challenges intellectual property". Opposed to copyright, which is considered counterproductive, Superflex advocates the free circulation of ideas and knowledge. At 6 p.m., the plagiarists will stamp counterfeit Converse and imitations of designer clothing with their own logo: three screen-printed "Supercopy". These copies of copies will be exhibited alongside documents and videos on the culture of "free" and Creative Commons (non-exclusive web copyright), in order to continue the discussion on intellectual property. La Box, Ecole nationale supérieure d'art de Bourges, 9, rue Edouard-Branly, tonight from 6 p.m. until January 5. www.ensa-bourges.fr; www.superflex.net

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1331

Can you build a profitable business model based on a free software license (open source, as they often say)? That's the question asked last week by two well-known Montreal lawyers in the field of ICT (information and communications technology). Both are increasingly concerned that the "viral effect" of free software could harm the success of this approach. For many small IT companies, developing free software is an advantageous way to distinguish themselves from larger companies. This is understandable: it allows them to draw on the work of other developers, without having to pay for development that would otherwise be far too costly. On the other hand, these companies must in turn comply with the free software license (the most widespread being the famous GNU General Public License, or GPL, which is now in its third version). Now, one of the most important principles of this license is that it requires you to offer your own work freely, if it includes bits taken from other free software. This could seriously affect the profitability of companies hoping to make a living from this activity! Gathered at a conference of the Centre d'entreprises et d'innovation de Montréal (CEIM), several developers came to hear the two Montreal lawyers take stock of the issue. According to Ingrid Dirickx, head of communications for the CEIM, many are concerned about the fact that subsidies granted for software development are also increasingly slim. "The government insists that we must develop the ICT sector, but at the same time, subsidies are becoming rarer," she says. Marc A. Tremblay is a technology law specialist for Ogilvy Renault. He does not hesitate to say that free software is a disruptive phenomenon for a majority of companies. "In the 90s, it was rather marginal. Today, most of them deal with free software," he says. But their managers are not necessarily aware of it. "According to a survey conducted in the United States last year, more than 40% of American software companies have published their own code without management's knowledge." This is why Mr. Tremblay believes that free software is well on its way to stealing significant market share from "proprietary" software, the kind that you have to pay for, such as Microsoft products, for example. Exactly. "Microsoft makes $20 billion a year with only two software programs," adds the lawyer. "For them, every percentage of market share lost is very important." We won't hear anyone complaining about the American IT giant. In the case of an SME whose revenues are a little less, let's say, astronomical, it's more delicate. For those, Me Tremblay recommends taking a look at IBM and MySQL, which have developed a "hybrid" business model. The American multinational supports a free operating system, Linux, as well as other free software of the same type. However, last year, for the fourteenth year in a row, IBM filed more patent applications than any other company in the United States. This means that it can benefit from open source and proprietary software. "Free software is a challenge for software companies. In my opinion, we are going to see more and more (business) models like this one," concludes Marc A. Tremblay. After-sales service His colleague Jacques Lemieux fears that companies do not have perfect control over their product, which could harm them when it comes to seeking financing or, even worse, when negotiating with their customers. "With the advent of open source software, companies don't always have control over their freelancers or subcontractors," says the renowned technology lawyer. For example, you have to try to make sure that the client won't go and solicit your employees to employ them later to provide technical support for the newly installed software. Which, when the software isn't sold at a high price, is indeed more than risky.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1332

From the top of the enormous amphitheater of the Docks, in Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis), a myriad of laptops turned on catches the eye. Roughly, one in two spectators surfs, updates their blog, fills a photo gallery, uploads a video. On stage, the speakers discuss the Web, social networks, micro blogging or design. For its fourth edition, Le Web3, a kind of G7 of the Internet that has been held since yesterday in Saint-Denis, saw things on a grand scale: nearly 2,000 people, from 40 countries, are gathered in three large rooms. The first hosts the conferences. A tight sequence of debates and "keynotes", a conference by one person on a specific subject, between fifteen and forty-five minutes maximum. Among the speakers, Karlheinz Brandenburg, who participated in the creation of the mp3 format, and Joi Ito, investor and star blogger addicted to the online game World of Warcraft. "Networking". The second room is dedicated to "networking", or, in approximate French, "networking". This is probably the main motivation of the majority of participants. To know and make oneself known. We talk about financing, business plans, audience monetization and other necessarily rosy and lucrative future prospects. Cédric Malloux, director of the start-up AllPeers which develops an extension of the free Firefox browser, is happy to be there: "I live in Prague, and it is difficult for me to know the players of the European Internet. Here, it is the ideal place to meet people." In a very cozy setting, project presentations and sales speeches follow one after the other, always on state-of-the-art laptops. Enough to delight the organizer of the event, Loïc Le Meur. The former Internet advisor to candidate Sarkozy during the presidential campaign recently went into exile in the United States to set up a start-up, Seesmic. Obviously enthusiastic about the motivations and the course of his event, he explains, with restraint: "We are changing the world, participating in the creation of a new economic sector, making the world bigger." Less optimistic, Kevin Rose, the founder of the site digg.com, is convinced of the return of the Internet bubble: "It is different, but it really exists. Today, start-ups are not entering the stock market in large numbers, but there are huge investments in projects that are of no interest. Within five years, many of the companies present today will no longer exist." Competition. Moreover, the third room of Web3 is hosting a "start-up competition", where 33 companies present their concept one after the other, with the hope of attracting venture capitalists. Centered on an Internet that is lulled by fundraising and financial valuation, the atmosphere of this first day at Web3 has a very business-oriented tone. Enough to make some skeptical. As Tristan Nitot, president of Mozilla Europe, who runs Firefox: "What's a bit of a shame is that we're not going to talk much about free software on Web3. While everyone uses it. But that's not a problem: the main thing is that free software is useful. The important thing is not the glitz and the shine."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1333

Entrusting Denis Olivennes, CEO of Fnac, with a mission on illegal downloading is like asking Michel-Edouard Leclerc for a report on the future of mass distribution. Nicolas Sarkozy found nothing wrong with this choice by the Minister of Culture and Communication, Christine Albanel. He even eagerly adopted the anti-piracy system imagined by Mr. Olivennes. The scene took place on November 23 at the Elysée, where professionals in the sector were ratifying an agreement for the development and protection of cultural works and programs on new networks. The head of state decreed general mobilization against piracy. He had summoned three ministers for the occasion, for the economy, culture and justice, and was surrounded by the cream of French creators: Patrick Bruel, Didier Barbelivien, Jean Reno, Christian Clavier and a few others. Nicolas Sarkozy wants to be their protector, in the face of what he calls "shoplifting": peer-to-peer file sharing. The future is bleak for artists. CD sales have collapsed. Film piracy is increasing, facilitated by high-speed and soon very high-speed connections. The very foundations of the cultural economy are shaken, as were the steel and textile industries. The comparison with these industrial disasters is from Nicolas Sarkozy during the presidential campaign. It is pertinent but double-edged. It gives little hope to the major record and film companies of overcoming the crisis, unless they invent a new business model. This is what Denis Olivennes and the head of state do not want to hear. They believe in the sustainability of yesterday's economic model. In any case, they act as if they believed in it. They know how much piracy has become a habit, but they are convinced that by discouraging a percentage x or y of offenders, the music industry will avoid the worst. The system imagined by Denis Olivennes draws lessons from the current law on copyright and related rights in the information society. This DADVSI law, from August 2006, is not applied because it is inapplicable. It punishes Internet pirates - who number nine million in France - with three years of imprisonment and a fine of 300,000 euros. The penalty is so disproportionate that the chancellery had to send a circular to the public prosecutor's office to invite them to be lenient. In other words, not to apply the law. The Olivennes system will not replace the DADVSI law, but it plans, with the help of Internet service providers, to identify and punish offenders. A first warning message. A second. Then, if that is not enough, the suspension of the Internet user's subscription. Finally, for the most stubborn, termination. All under the control of the National Commission for Information Technology and Civil Liberties, an "independent" body to be created, and the judicial authority. To justify this system, the CEO of Fnac explains that in the countries where it is used, 70% of fraudsters give up after the second warning. Is this the right solution? Ingenious, certainly. Effective, we will see: French pirates are proportionally more numerous than American and British Internet users. And more undisciplined. Natives of the digital world, convinced of their rights, they live in a world where free (or its appearance) is taken for granted. This habit, acquired from a very young age, weakens the anachronistic agreement signed at the Elysée. The gold of the presidential palace, where it was ratified, evokes the "old" economy, the managed economy, the era when the State ruled cultural policy. Malraux, the ORTF. The ENA, where Denis Olivennes comes from. As its name indicates, the World Wide Web makes light of borders and national regulations. Internet users feel at home there. They consume the cultural works that appeal to them, in their own way, radically different from the past. Industry professionals are at a loss, even if they are forced to admit that we have changed times. This is the case of Edgar Bronfman, the boss of Warner Music, who recently declared: "We believed that our business would remain blissfully safe, while the world (...) of online sharing exploded (...). We inadvertently went to war against consumers (...). The result, of course, is that consumers won." » THE LITTLE GENIUSES OF HACKING Pirates will not win. The law must prevail, Nicolas Sarkozy retorts. Hence a seemingly simple system but difficult to implement in practice. To send a warning email to an offender and then punish him, he must be identified for sure. Nothing is more difficult. Many of the software programs used today by pirates are free or "open source" software. They are developed by communities of Internet users, not by a single individual. Their encryption, often sophisticated, makes it difficult to identify the offenders without searching their hard drive. Is this desirable? And feasible? To catch an offender, it is also necessary to install filtering tools on the Web, which Mr. Olivennes acknowledges are not all reliable. This is why the signatories of the agreement have given themselves twenty-four months to decide on the appropriate technical solutions. A century on the scale of the Internet, where the "arms race", police on one side, little piracy geniuses on the other, often turns to the advantage of the latter. Technically hypothetical, socially risky, the Olivennes mission does not explore alternative avenues. However, they exist. They are based on the observation that if many Internet users refuse to pay 1 cent to listen to a piece of music or watch a film, it is better to let them download them for free. This is what an American start-up, SpiralFrog, has recently proposed, which pays artists and rights holders a percentage of the advertising generated by the influx of downloaders. Other sites have preceded it in this direction or are preparing to do so. While it is a little early to judge their success or failure, they "stick" more closely to the reality of the Internet. Like Google, YouTube or Facebook, they have noted that free access is a primary requirement of Internet users. And that only advertising is likely to ensure their profitability, whether we are indignant or resigned to it.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1334

Concert tonight for the closing of Cimatics at the Mediaruimte Info.: www.mediaruimte.be http://cimatics.com www.lab-au.com/dexia Festival Jonctions until December 2 Info.: http://data.constantvzw.org www.imal.org Brussels, a miniature Berlin? The inhabitants of the Belgian capital, a French-speaking enclave in the Flemish community, do not hesitate to draw a parallel with German bohemia: the cultural offering is plentiful, artistic microstructures abound, cutting-edge festivals follow one another. After Radiophonic, devoted to "post-radio" creation last month, the sixth edition of Cimatics was held this weekend, devoted to audiovisual performances, and, until December 2, the tenth Jonctions/Verbindingen, which examines new technologies from a political angle. "Many artists and researchers come to settle here, it's in the middle of everything, real estate in the city centre is not yet too expensive and the cultural scene is very active," notes Yves Bernard, head of iMAL, the Centre for Digital Cultures and Technologies, which has just opened its new premises, 600 m2 located in a former warehouse in the heart of Brussels, which it shares with two other laboratories dedicated to digital cultures, Okno and Foam. "Wagons". The same observation at LAb[au], which opened its Mediaruimte in 2003, an experimental venue located on rue de Laeken, where the three members work on their creations at the border of design, urban planning, architecture and digital art, while hosting conferences, exhibitions, electronic music concerts, such as tonight's audiovisual performances by Blevin Blectum and Synchronator. "Brussels is teeming with very specialised initiatives. "Lots of small wagons, but no big locomotives," notes Manuel Abendroth of LAb[au]. If Berlin has its television tower, Brussels now also has its lighthouse, visible from all around. What, during the day, looks like a vulgar office building, built on the defunct Martini tower, a utopia of multifunctional architecture, is transformed at nightfall. The 4,200 windows of the Dexia tower - the second tallest in the city at 145 meters - light up like pixels. Each window of this building, owned by a bank, is equipped with a set of light-emitting diodes, emitting colored light and transforming the facades into giant screens and an exhibition space. The device is invested by LAb[au] who are working on permanent artistic lighting of the tower with their long-term project, Who's Afraid of Red Green and Blue, a cycle of six light variations declined over the year. The first transformed the tower into a graphic clock, visualizing the passage of time, the second, currently in place, allows you to know what the weather will be like the next day, the choice of colors being dictated by the weather forecast. "It's a step towards the Cybernetic Light Tower as Nicolas Schöffer dreamed of it," says Manuel Abendroth. The collective regularly invites artists to work on the tower. Last weekend, the glass facades sparkled to the rhythm of the light animations of Limitazero, Holger Lippmann and Olaf Bender, created for the last Nuit Blanche in Brussels and reprised for the Cimatics festival, which held its sixth edition at the Beursschouwburg. Listening comfort. Originally dedicated to VJing (the visual counterpart of DJing), Cimatics emerges in the context of the club culture that is still very much alive in Belgium. The festival has gone beyond the simple mix of images intended to exhilarate the dance floor. Now, he focuses on audiovisual performances, spaces of dialogue between sound and image, and privileges the listening comfort of the audience, screwed into the theater seats. "Today, the audiovisual is ubiquitous, our environment, covered with screens, explains Bram Crevits, one of the organizers. We wanted to give artists the opportunity to develop their own audiovisual language, to act as an experimental platform without giving up the party, which is why we present works in the context of both the club and a theater." The hypnotized spectators often forget to dance, immersed in this abstract and synesthetic visual music. The haunting Static Room, a sensory experience proposed by Scott Arford, where it is the video signal that generates the sound, acts physically on the spectator who it makes vibrate with its frequencies and flashing colors. The performance of the star of the evening, Ryoichi Kurokawa, an effective composition playing on the synchronization of sounds and visual compositions, garnered warm applause. Entities. While we were getting dizzy with images at Cimatics, a few steps away, at the Bellone, Manu Luksch was screening his science fiction film Faceless, produced exclusively with images captured by video surveillance cameras. The artist was invited by Jonctions, which this year is looking at "footprints in electr(on)ic fields". Organized by the association Constant, which works at the intersections of feminism, digital technology, copyleft and free software, Jonctions is concerned with these profiles and private information that we leave on social networks. Disembodied entities that also express themselves metaphorically in the ghostly sound installations haunting the courtyard of the Bellone, topped with a glass roof. These "E-traces" are the subject of an online game whose development is a pretext for public conferences and workshops. With Yoogle!, Michel Cleempoel and Nicolas Malevé analyze the economic mechanisms at work behind the attractive interfaces of Web 2.0. "The problem is that Web 2.0 is a reservoir of dormant data that can be activated. It is the collaboration of people in their own control", believe the artists who note that we are moving "towards absolute transparency of users, while the opacity of companies continues to grow". Constant is part of a dense and varied network of artistic laboratories (Nadine, Recyclart, Foam.) specifically Flemish, which allow experimentation, research, and the preparation of prototypes, without any production imperative. Dive. On the French-speaking side, the digital scene is limited to Transcultures, the CECN in Mons and iMAL. Yves Bernard is pleased that digital art has finally been taken into account since 2006 with the creation of a dedicated commission, even if the financial aid remains much lower than that granted by the Flemish. In the premises, we meet Yacine Sebti, one of the artists supported by the structure, whose interactive installation, Salt Lake, a dive into media hell, has just been presented at Almost Cinema, at the Vooruit in Ghent. A place of work, exhibition and meetings, iMAL wants to mix the different artistic, scientific and technical circles and is preparing to host, on December 18, the first Brussels session of Dorkbot, a gathering of "people who do weird things with electricity".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1335

The tremendous success of Facebook (the seventh most visited site on the Web, according to the audience analysis site alexa.com) and the recent entry of Microsoft into its capital, valuing the company at 15 billion dollars (around 10 billion euros), can be perplexing. The online photo album (Facebook, in English) is indeed far from being a new idea. In France, in particular, copainsdavant.com - published by Benchmark Group - has existed for several years without ever having generated enthusiasm comparable to that experienced by the American social network, founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. The gap between the two sites is based on two radically different conceptions of the Internet and its uses. Copainsdavant is a technically locked site, most of whose services are paid access. Facebook is a free system, widely open to external contributions, whose model is deeply influenced by the open source movement (free software), which saw the creation of Linux in the 1990s, then the development of other free software (Mozilla Firefox, Thunderbird, OpenOffice, etc.). JOINT WORK This mode of program development is based on the publicity of the source code (its free access) and on the collaborative nature of the production methods: several companies or individual programmers work on the development of a common work, free and copyable at will. Microsoft, on the contrary, based its success, at a time when the Internet was still in its infancy, on precisely the opposite principles: secrecy of the source code, minimal collaboration, paid model. This "culture" specific to Bill Gates' firm, very far from the key principles of what is commonly called Web 2.0, perhaps explains its difficulty in breaking through on the Internet and, in any case, in beating Google, the pioneer of Web 2.0. Facebook's originality is precisely to make the inexhaustible creativity of developers outside the company contribute to the success of its economic model. The latter can offer Internet users with a profile on the site applications that allow them to interact with their circle of contacts. These applications can be tools for comparing their musical, cinematographic or literary tastes; they allow you to play chess with your entourage, to send messages, photos, videos or virtual gifts, to give tourist advice by pinning the places you have visited on a world map, etc. Often fun, these small applications are also generally a way of collecting personal information from Internet users, which will then be valued by the sale of advertising space, admittedly restricted and delimited, in which these external and auxiliary companies can broadcast ads. By opening itself up in this way, in the spring, to third-party programmers, Facebook was able to maintain and strengthen the attractiveness of its system among Internet users. On the side of application developers, small companies or ordinary individuals, the craze is considerable. In about six months, more than 8,000 different applications have been added to the Palo Alto (California) company's website. This way of opening up its "code" to third parties also reinforces an economic model based on advertising. Indeed, any developer can earn money directly by placing advertisements on the home page of their application. Many people aspire to find the killer app that will make their fortune. This will of course be proportional to the interest that the service provides arouses among Facebook members. And this interest will further increase the site's audience, and therefore Facebook's advertising revenue. With its AdSense system, Google has done nothing else, by making any web page a potential advertising medium, whose author is then paid according to the traffic on his site. Google is sometimes portrayed as the big loser in Facebook's success, but nothing could be less certain. Many developers of applications integrated with Facebook actually use advertising banners placed... by Google on their dedicated space, within Facebook. Facebook's success therefore also benefits Google. The trend illustrated by the success of the Palo Alto firm is tangible in more traditional activities, such as online sales. For example, the e-tailer Amazon now offers on its own platform products put on sale by third-party companies or individuals, thus becoming as much a marketplace as a retailer. The idea is no longer just to destroy the competition but, when possible, to integrate it and thus make it compete for the audience of its brand.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1336

The good times are back in Silicon Valley, and so are the excesses of the dot-com boom of the 1990s. But when this nascent boom fades—as cycles tend to do—it is unlikely to follow the devastating path of the last tech bust. The initial tech boom began in 1995 when Netscape Communications, a pioneer in Internet browsing, went public. A gold rush ensued: investors poured billions of dollars into fledgling Internet companies, funding ventures in areas such as e-commerce and optical networking. Between 1995 and 2000, more than 1,100 technology companies went public. Then the good times ended. Trendy Internet companies, such as online grocer Webvan Group and pet-goods retailer Pets.com, hungry for publicity but short on profits, failed. Many investors lost their last shirts as the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite Index plunged. Silicon Valley lost 185,000 jobs, or one in five, between 2001 and 2005. The economic damage was severe in part because the companies that had fueled the boom gobbled up all the money and grew rapidly. At that time, Internet companies had to invest millions in computer servers and services such as Internet connectivity to get their businesses up and running. They hired hundreds of employees and rented large offices. They needed millions of dollars from venture capitalists, who back young companies (venture capitalists hope to make a profit when their companies go public or are acquired by larger corporations). Frenzy In 2000, at the height of the dot-com frenzy, venture capitalists poured nearly $95 billion into young companies. This time around, the growth potential is more modest. Investments in young companies -- especially those specializing in social networking and online video -- have increased sharply in the past two years, as have the amounts venture capitalists must pay for stakes in them. But overall, they are on track to pour less than $30 billion this year, VentureOne Corp. says. (VentureOne is owned by Dow Jones & Co., publisher of the Wall Street Journal.) Given the proliferation of cheap technologies such as open-source software and the ability to find cheap labor overseas, today's Internet startups generally need less money to run their businesses. In any case, this dearth of initial public offerings may contain the seeds of a future downturn. And because few private-equity companies are going public, many startups are relying more on mergers and acquisitions for cash. A handful of large potential buyers, such as Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft, are responsible for most acquisitions of Internet companies. But not all new dot-coms can be acquired by Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft. "There are tons of companies, but only a half-dozen buyers," says Peter Falvey, co-founder of the investment bank Revolution Partners. "If you're counting on Google to buy your company, and Google decides to expand internally instead, you're out of luck." A slowdown in the online advertising market could also help fuel a tech industry meltdown. Many of today's Internet startups generate revenue solely from selling online advertising, says David Liu, a technology investment banker at Jefferies Broadview in California. \* \* \* Few Buyers A handful of large potential buyers, such as Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft, account for most acquisitions of Internet companies. But not all new dot-coms can be acquired by Google, Yahoo! and Microsoft. "There are tons of companies, but only a half-dozen buyers," says Peter Falvey, co-founder of the investment bank Revolution Partners. "If you're counting on Google to buy your company, and Google decides to expand in-house instead, you're out of luck." A slowdown in the online advertising market could also help fuel a tech industry meltdown. Many of today's Internet startups generate revenue solely from selling online advertising, says David Liu, a technology investment banker at Jefferies Broadview in California.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1337

Two years ago, at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, Professor Nicholas Negroponte surprised the participants of the conference organized by the United Nations with a new project of his own. His new mission: to create a laptop for less than a hundred dollars and offer it free of charge to school-age children in developing countries. A simple, catchy concept, but one that quickly became more complex. Two years later, almost to the day, the team of the non-profit organization One Laptop Per Child succeeded in its challenge, and the computers are now heading to children. But to get there, Negroponte's team had to revise its strategy. The original concept called for the governments of the populations concerned to be proactive in the process, as did the governments of wealthier countries. But their collaboration has not always lived up to expectations. As a result, the organization One Laptop Per Child has decided to call on citizens to multiply the number of laptops that can be sent to children. But, unlike other organizations, other campaigns, this one does not ask you for a donation in exchange for a card from the child you will help, the OLPC offers you the same computer that the child will receive in his country in the hope that a child in your circle will benefit from it. But to participate in this vast educational project, because we are not talking about a computer connection campaign here, but rather an education program, you only have eight days left to join the "Give one, get one!" operation. Until November 26, for all Americans and Canadians who purchase the XO laptop at a cost of 399 US dollars, or CAD 388, an XO will be sent to a child in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Haiti or Rwanda. In return, in addition to an XO, you will also receive a tax-deductible receipt for $199 for the donation of a computer sent to a child in a developing country. The XO computer, which runs on the Linux operating system, offers a host of public domain software programmed using open-source code. This allows children and teachers to modify the software according to their needs. The computer comes with its share of software, including those for getting the most out of the Internet, but others for working, learning and playing locally. The XO is used to write and publish texts, to videoconference, to play music, to read e-books or to play online games. Created first and foremost for use in disadvantaged environments, the computer is obviously very robust, and its keyboard is protected by a rubber specially designed to withstand harsh climatic conditions. Better still, it is impervious to water, dust and dirt. The keyboard size is also specially designed to be easier to use by children's small hands. The basic idea being to allow learning and sharing, the XO computer is equipped with everything necessary to connect to a wireless network in a simple way. And the "ears" of the computer, which allow the WiFi connection, are of better quality than those of most traditional laptops. The child can thus connect to the Internet to share information or simply chat with other children. The computer can also be used to take photos, make videos or record voice. The device is also equipped with an integrated SD card reader. Question of autonomy, once again, according to its purpose, the device is exemplary in terms of energy efficiency. The XO uses a battery that can operate up to 2000 recharge cycles. This is four times the duration of a commercial laptop battery. Away from electricity, the device can be recharged manually by hand crank or using a solar panel. As for a traditional power supply, the XO is equipped with a power outlet that accepts a 110 to 240 volt power source. Be careful, the One Laptop per Child Foundation does not have a service facility or help desk for technical support. In the event of a glitch, technical problem or difficulty understanding the computer, we will therefore have to rely on other users, friends, family or bloggers to come to our rescue. However, the OLPC says it wants to set up a paid technical support service that will be available to those who want it. I conclude by quoting Kofi Annan who, when he was still Secretary-General of the United Nations, had said of this project: "It is not a question of simply giving a laptop to a child as if we were bewitching him with a magic spell. The magic is in everyone - every child, every scientist, every student, every citizen who does it. This project was designed to move forward, toward the light of day." For more information on the One Laptop per Child Foundation program, or to order an XO device, visit www.laptopgiving.org/fr. bguglielminetti@ledevoir.com Bruno Guglielminetti is a producer and new technology columnist for Radio-Canada's Première Chaîne. He is also the editor of Carnet techno (www.radio-canada.ca/techno).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1338

GOOGLE AFTER conquering PCs around the world, Google is taking on mobile phones. In about two weeks, the Internet star should declare its candidacy to win a mobile frequency during the auctions that will take place in January in the United States. Google is methodically advancing in the mobile phone universe. Already on November 6, the Mountain View firm had unveiled Android, the mobile operating system that brings together 33 partners (operators, terminal manufacturers, IT groups, etc.). The first devices to be equipped with Android should see the light of day in the spring. Google relies on free software and counts on the creativity of developers to invent new applications. But the Californian firm is not content to compete with Windows Mobile and Symbian, the operating systems of Microsoft and Nokia. It is also preparing to become a mobile operator. Indeed, according to the Wall Street Journal, the search engine should participate alone in the auctions organized in January by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and is preparing its financing plan. The amount of the license could exceed 4.6 billion dollars. Tests in Mountain View Google executives quoted by the WSJ justify this offensive: "Our goal is to ensure that American consumers have more choice in a competitive and open mobile world." The firm is especially eyeing the 95 billion dollars raked in last year in the United States by mobile phone operators. Google hopes to offer new offers without subscription or financed by advertising. The company is testing a mobile network in Mountain View where terminals equipped with Android are already working. Another experiment is also being conducted by Google in Great Britain with Ubiquisys, a company that uses "femtocell" technology that uses the Internet connections of individuals in areas poorly covered by mobile infrastructure. Google has chosen to venture where neither Apple nor Microsoft have yet ventured.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1339

New York - Google wants to create the "engine" that does everything for mobile phones, relying on thousands of volunteer computer scientists: users can expect a multitude of new functions, but also customized advertising that will enrich the internet giant. Google announced this week an alliance with 33 players in the mobile phone industry (operators, manufacturers, IT groups, etc.) to create "Android": a system at the heart of new phone models, and that any programmer will be able to enrich with new functions. Phones equipped with Android will arrive in mid-2008. If it succeeds in its bet, Google will win the jackpot: control over the "third screen", still in its infancy, but promised to have the same explosion as the TV and the computer. "Google is applying to the mobile space the same recipe that Microsoft did with the PC 25 years ago," commented Carmi Levy, vice president of AR Communications. "Before Microsoft's Windows system, the world of personal computers was fragmented between competing platforms. Microsoft launched its platform and changed everything, creating an ecosystem that attracted all the players big and small," he said. "If Google succeeds, the current landscape where phones are locked into carriers, which control their functions, will change: carriers will have less control and users more," he added. Google's system will compete with the current leaders: Symbian, the system that runs three-quarters of the world's phones - Nokia and its rivals: Apple's iPhone, Palm, BlackBerry (RIM group) - and Microsoft's Windows Mobile. But the firm Strategy Analytics does not predict a Google tidal wave: Android could equip two percent of phones by the end of 2008. Everything will depend, in fact, on the innovations that Android brings. To do this, Google is counting on the vast community of free software, and will publish, in a few days, the framework of Android, so that programmers can enrich it with programs of their own. This is the innovation model of free software: tens of thousands of programmers in the world, especially in France and the United States, voluntarily create programs, which each can in turn improve - out of taste, a desire to make themselves known or for academic research. It is this community, which is gradually gaining ground in the face of paid software, which makes the success of the social networking site Facebook, with 5,000 programs, fun or serious, adopted by millions of enthusiasts.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1340

NEW YORK - Internet giant Google announced yesterday that it is working with 33 allies - manufacturers, operators and developers - to develop an "open" and free system for mobile phones, and promised to release cheap phones running on this system in the second half of 2008. This platform, called Android, will include an operating system (the "engine" of the phone), an interface and programs, the group specified. It will be "open" to outside developers, based on the model of free software such as Linux. Among the members of this vast alliance are manufacturers Motorola, Samsung and HTC, as well as American operators T-Mobile (a subsidiary of German Deutsche Telekom) and Sprint Nextel, Japan's NTT DoCoMo, China's China Mobile, and, in Europe, Telecom Italia and Telefonica, but also eBay, Intel and Qualcomm. Such a system would allow Google to have devices specially adapted to all its Internet functions, such as search, email, Gmail, maps, YouTube and instant messaging, and thus increase its revenues in mobile phone advertising, a niche that should explode in five years. On the NASDAQ, Google shares rose more than 2% on the news, to $725.65. Rumors have been circulating for months about the upcoming release of a GPhone (for Google Phone), with some specialized sites even publishing photos of prototypes that Google is said to have developed with Asian manufacturers. Yesterday's announcement does not go that far, but places Google at the heart of a new type of phone. External developers will be able to enrich Android with new applications, notably based on the possibilities opened up by GPS location: social sites based on the location where one is, search for local businesses and, of course, geographically targeted advertising. It would compete with the currently dominant systems, such as Symbian, a group owned by several global manufacturers including Nokia, Ericsson, Sony and Panasonic, and which equips a good part of their phones, or Symbian's challenger, Windows Mobile. Google CEO Eric Schmidt had already suggested last May that the group would "probably build a creative platform" for mobile phones and "convince third parties to do it because that's where the innovation will come from". He added that "the new models of phones will be person-to-person", with exchanges of videos or other data between users. Google is very interested in mobile telephony: it indicated that it would participate in the auction of frequencies that the government will organize in January in the United States, which could allow it to set up its own mobile telephone network and become an operator. The launch by Google of a new system for mobiles will change the game especially in the United States, where operators control the distribution of mobile phones and their applications.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1341

New York - Internet giant Google, along with 33 allies - manufacturers, operators and developers - will launch a free "open" system for mobile phones, a long-awaited initiative that could give a boost to the mobile Internet worldwide. Google promised yesterday that it would release cheap phones running the system, called "Android", in the second half of 2008, which will be "open" to outside developers, based on the model of free software such as Linux. It will include an operating system (the "engine" of the phone), an interface and programs, the group said. Its allies include manufacturers Motorola, Samsung and HTC, as well as American operators T-Mobile (Deutsche Telekom) and Sprint Nextel, Japan's NTT DoCoMo, China's China Mobile, and in Europe Telecom Italia and Telefonica, but also eBay, Intel and Qualcomm. On these phones, Google could promote its own Internet functions, such as search, Gmail e-mail, maps or YouTube, and increase its revenue from mobile phone advertising. No GPhone For months, rumors had been circulating that a "GPhone" (for Google Phone) would soon be released. In the end, Google preferred to bet on a system that could be installed on many models. "We are not announcing a Gphone," said Google CEO Eric Schmidt during a conference yesterday, "but something much more ambitious: we hope that Android will be the engine of thousands of new phones, with new applications that we cannot even imagine today." By betting on external developers, Google is choosing a strategy similar to that announced last week on social networking sites, where, in alliance with about twenty large sites, it launched an open platform, where programmers can create applications for all participants. "The best model is openness," said Eric Schmidt yesterday. For mobile, where the range of possibilities remains largely unexplored, Google's platform could spawn a wealth of new features. Open platforms are "a huge motivator for us," said Max Levchin, CEO of Slide, which created many applications for social networking sites Facebook and MySpace and is eager to bring them to mobile phones. While users can hope for new features, Google can hope for new revenue. Some analysts predict a jackpot: Sandeep Aggarwal of Oppenheimer said Google could earn $2 billion to $4.8 billion a year in additional revenue - mostly from advertising - in the second and third years after the phones launch, and as much as $10 billion a year after four or five years. He estimated that Google would earn $2 to $4 per Android phone, compared with about $19 per PC currently. More nuanced, Charles Golvin, of Forrester, underlines that "the impact will be broad among all mobile players, pushing innovative developers to create functions" but that "these phones will initially represent only a very small share of the market". In any case, all analysts expect a boom in mobile advertising revenues, which should increase tenfold by 2011 to reach 14 billion US dollars. Not to mention that the world already has three billion mobile phones, of which 35% to 40% already have Internet access, a percentage that is rising. Google could even become a mobile operator: it plans to participate in the auction of frequencies that the government will organize in January in the United States, which could allow it to set up its own mobile telephone network.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1342

New York - The American group Wal-Mart put on sale yesterday a desktop computer for $199, which does not run Windows but an operating system from the free software Linux, intended to integrate Google's free software, reports the specialized press. This computer, manufactured by the Everex group and called gPC, includes a 1.5 GHz processor, 512 MB of RAM and an 80 GB hard drive.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1343

NEW YORK - Google is expected to unveil a mobile phone operating system in two weeks that will bring together all of its Internet functions, such as search, email, Gmail, maps, YouTube and instant messaging, the Wall Street Journal reported yesterday. Google wants the first phones equipped with its system to be released around June 2008, the newspaper said, and is currently negotiating with manufacturers. Rumors have been circulating for months about the upcoming release of a "GPhone" (for Google Phone), with some specialized sites even publishing photos of prototypes that Google is said to have developed with Asian manufacturers. This new operating system is intended to be an engine for any model of mobile phone, the newspaper explained. It could be free, based on the free software LinuXOS, and open to developers who could enrich it with new applications, notably based on the possibilities opened up by GPS location: social sites based on the location where one is, search for local businesses and, of course, geographically targeted advertising. It would compete with the currently dominant systems, such as that of Symbian, a group owned by several global manufacturers including Nokia, Ericsson, Sony and Panasonic, and which equips a good part of their phones, or even Symbian's challenger, Windows Mobile.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1344

GOOGLE THE AMERICAN GIANT Google should unveil within two weeks a mobile phone operating system that combines all its Internet functions: web search, Gmail e-mails, maps, YouTube and instant messaging, according to the Wall Street Journal. The goal is to release the first phones equipped with this system in mid-2008. Google is in the midst of negotiations with manufacturers. For months, rumors have been circulating about the upcoming release of a "GPhone" (for Google Phone), with some specialized sites even publishing photos of prototypes that Google is said to have developed with Asian manufacturers. This new operating system is intended to be an engine for any model of mobile phone. It could be free, based on the free software LinuX OS, and open to developers who could enhance it. Google is said to have already established contacts with several operators with a view to adopting it. However, France Télécom, whose name was mentioned, categorically denied yesterday any discussions with Google on the design of new mobile terminals.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1345

Internet The Xiti Monitor institute, which analyses Internet users' connection data, has just published its new "browser barometer", carried out over the month of September. While Internet Explorer continues to reign supreme in this area, the free Firefox browser is consolidating its position as a challenger. In September, in Europe, Firefox was used by 27.7% of Internet users. An increase of more than six points compared to September 2006. An impressive figure, given the sclerotic situation of the browser market just a few years ago. At the end of 2004, when the first version of Firefox was released, Internet Explorer was in a quasi-monopoly situation. Press (1) Representatives of the staff of Les Echos met on Friday with Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière, CEO of the Fimalac group. The latter declared himself a candidate in July to take over the daily newspaper, while Pearson, the owner, is in exclusive negotiations with LVMH until November 26. Friday's meeting was aimed at "getting him to clarify the strategic, social and editorial aspects of his acquisition project." LVMH, for its part, has not yet responded to the elected officials' request for a meeting. Press (2) European Press Freedom Day, called by the European Federation of Journalists, will take place on Monday, November 5 (and not October 29, as mistakenly announced yesterday). A rally will take place at 1:30 p.m. in front of the National Assembly, and journalists' unions will submit their proposals to the deputies with the petition launched on October 4 (www.intersj.info). Press (3) The "New York Times," which recently decided to switch to the "all free" model for its site, has also chosen to fully adopt open source and free software. Better still: employees of the New York Times have decided to participate fully in the movement, by releasing their own Web applications.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1346

A month after Microsoft was convicted of "abuse of a dominant position" by Brussels, François Lévêque (read below) takes stock of competitive practices in the high-tech sector. After its historic defeat before the Luxembourg court and the European Commission, will Microsoft get back on track? It's likely, this decision has already had an effect. Microsoft has agreed to give access to information that, until now, it did not want to communicate to software developers. This will allow the latter to develop "interoperable" products, therefore compatible with Windows, more easily and at a lower cost. The price for access to this information is reduced to a single amount of 10,000 euros for developers of free software! Will this decision really change the practices of multinationals? It will become difficult in Europe for firms that hold very high market shares in a sector to rely on their monopoly to extend it to a new market. Of course, in the case of Microsoft and the audio and video software MediaPlayer, there is no going back: these remedies will not correct the abuses of the past but, at best, prevent those of the future. But Microsoft and other super-dominant companies now know that they are under the surveillance of the competition authorities. They have also gotten into the habit of going to see them before launching a new product. This was the case for Vista, Microsoft's new operating system. Some say that to challenge monopolies these procedures are much less useful than innovation, as with Firefox, which did not wait for the support of the law to cut Microsoft's legs. Fortunately for consumers, innovation moves faster than the application of competition policy. Economists are right to think that a monopoly always ends up being eroded. It attracts competition lured by high prices and profits and, beyond a certain time, say ten years, competitors end up entering. In some cases, competition law can buy time. If the regulator intervenes after eight years, consumers gain two years. Should high-tech companies be able to predict monopoly rents to continue to innovate? We are in a sector where innovations are amplified by network effects: the more widespread a product is, the more consumers have an interest in adopting it for their ease of use. In high-tech, competition does not aim to acquire a market share, but to control almost all of it. This is the real driver of innovation. A company will dominate for a period, like Microsoft in the PC era or Apple in the early days of digital music, and then there will be another innovation and they will gradually lose their influence. The succession of monopolies is a fairly characteristic feature of high-tech. The Brussels sanction against the Microsoft company highlights the differences in conceptions in the United States and Europe. There is a cliché, completely false, which consists in saying that Europe protects competitors while the United States defends the interests of consumers. This was true, but in the last century! Where the Americans do not have the same vision is that they consider that the market will end up eroding ill-gotten monopolies more effectively than the regulator. Confidence in the virtues of the market is much stronger there. Let us not forget that competition law sometimes makes mistakes by condemning companies that have not abused their dominant position. The Americans are very afraid of this type of error because it costs much more to innovation than letting the guilty go! Should we then expect an inflation of procedures on the Old Continent? This decision will give the European Commission the energy to combat abuses of dominant position. Because of the differences perceived on both sides of the Atlantic, more and more American abuses will find themselves dealt with in Europe, on a remote battlefield. By perpetuating the cliché of a Europe that listens more to competitors, the latter tell themselves that their interests will be better defended here. This trend will become more acute and will not be without posing political problems if the Commission condemns other American locomotives such as Qualcomm (chips for mobile phones), Intel (microprocessors), etc. There is now a geopolitical issue in competition law.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1347

Brussels - The American software giant Microsoft yesterday dropped its last two appeals to the European Court of Justice against decisions of the European Commission, a new sign that it now seems determined to keep a low profile in Brussels. This announcement comes two days after the group finally decided to comply with a series of demands made three and a half years ago by Brussels, which had condemned it for abuse of dominant position to a hefty fine of 497 million euros (680 million $CAN). This condemnation was confirmed on September 17 by the European Court of Justice. The American group finally agreed to provide all its competitors, including publishers of free software, and at significantly reduced prices, the technical data necessary for them to design products compatible with its Windows operating system. The first abandoned appeal concerned daily fines imposed in July 2006 by the Commission for failure to communicate technical data to Microsoft's competitors in October 2006. The second appeal sought the annulment of the obligation to also communicate this data to manufacturers of free software.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1348

MICROSOFT "This is a victory day for consumers... not for the Commission," said Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes yesterday, after announcing that Microsoft had reached an agreement that would allow its competitors to obtain the information needed to facilitate dialogue between PCs and servers running on operating systems other than Windows. And thus simplify communication between the Microsoft and open source worlds. The standoff between the Commission and the American software giant therefore ends with a handshake. On 17 September, the Luxembourg Court of First Instance had already confirmed the sanctions imposed by the European Commission, but Microsoft still had the possibility of appealing. Yesterday, Microsoft specified that it would stick to this epilogue and "will continue to work closely with the Commission and industry to create a thriving and competitive environment for information technology in Europe and worldwide." The agreement provides that Microsoft will charge publishers a one-off fee of 10,000 euros to obtain technical information that will help them make their software compatible with the Windows operating system. In addition, the rights for the use of patents worldwide will become more affordable: they will reach 0.4% of total sales compared to 5.95% previously. A final point in the chapter "I hope this dark chapter is over," stressed Neelie Kroes, who expects Microsoft's market share to fall from 95% to 50% in the near future. "I have always said that free software developers should be able to benefit from interoperability. Now they can." The inflexible commissioner warned that she would be "vigilant", particularly with regard to Windows Vista, the latest operating system from the Redmond giant. "Microsoft should write that into its head," she exclaimed. In total, the European affair will have cost Bill Gates' group nearly 800 million euros in fines and penalty payments.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1349

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1350

Brussels - Three and a half years after fining Microsoft for abuse of a dominant position, Brussels finally got the American software giant to share better technical information about its flagship Windows operating system with its competitors yesterday. This "interoperability" requirement was formulated in March 2004, when the Commission fined Microsoft €497 million. The conviction was essentially confirmed last month by the European Court of Justice. After "final contacts very early this morning", "Microsoft has finally agreed to respect its obligations", announced the European Commissioner for Competition, Neelie Kroes, at a press conference. Microsoft has indicated for its part that it is not appealing the judgment handed down on 17 September by the European Court, which seems to put an end to the case. In concrete terms, the American group will allow free software publishers to access the data needed to develop products compatible with Windows, which equips more than 90% of microcomputers in the world. It had opposed this until now. Microsoft has also agreed to reduce the compensation demanded from each publisher to a single amount of 10,000 euros. The rights for the use of patents at the global level are also falling, to 0.4% of the total amount of sales compared to 5.95% demanded previously. Brussels considered the conditions imposed until now to be "totally unreasonable". "This is a day of victory for consumers", Neelie Kroes rejoiced, however judging it "regrettable" that Microsoft gave in "only after a considerable delay". Faced with the American group's lack of cooperation, the Commission imposed initial penalty payments on it in the summer of 2006. And its long standoff with Microsoft was punctuated by various legal actions and regular threats of additional penalty payments. "We no longer have any reason to impose further daily penalty payments on Microsoft from today," Neelie Kroes said on Monday. She promised a decision "as soon as possible" on the amount the group would have to pay, without saying whether negotiations with Microsoft were possible on this. In July 2006, the group was already exposed to 280 million euros in penalty payments. However, she warned it that it would be exposed to new fines in the event of a new infringement. A way of leaving the door open to investigations into other products of the group, such as the new version of Windows released since 2007 and renamed Vista. Other cases This victory over Microsoft could push the Commission to be more aggressive against abuses of dominant positions. "The store is still open," commented Neelie Kroes, mentioning "a few other cases" under study. At the beginning of October, it launched an in-depth investigation into the American manufacturer of chips for mobile telephony Qualcomm, accused by several equipment manufacturers of demanding disproportionate royalties for the use of its patents. For several experts, the Qualcomm case could be, after Microsoft, the new major battle for the Commission. Brussels also has in its sights the world leader in microprocessors Intel, pinned in July for illegal commercial practices aimed at excluding its competitors from the market. Intel has until January 4 to present its arguments. The Commission could also look more closely at the case of the internet star Google. It is still examining its controversial plan to buy the online advertising network DoubleClick.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1351

We hear a lot about free software and the alternative it represents to desktop software, or other software, that we inevitably end up having to buy. To get a certain number of them, however, you have to navigate from one site to another, do some research or know very precisely what you need. You can also go directly to the Google Pack page. This is a list of software, all downloadable for free, that are offered by the computer giant Google. This software obviously includes applications created by Google, such as the toolbar for Internet Explorer, or the photo sharing software Picasa. There are also some other useful software, such as the StarOffice office suite, the Skype internet telephony client and the Firefox browser, from Mozilla.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1352

This is a victory across the board for the European Commission. After losing its case against Brussels a month ago, Microsoft decided yesterday to fall into line. Not only has the American company "finally agreed to respect its obligations" as Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes declared, but the world's number one software company is for the first time giving up appealing a decision that is unfavorable to it. The group, which until now opposed Europe's interoperability requirements - compatibility between different computer systems - will now allow software publishers to freely access, for a single standard price of 10,000 euros, the data needed to develop products compatible with its Windows software. This victory over Microsoft could push the European Commission to be more aggressive against abuses of a dominant position. "The store is still open," noted Neelie Kroes, mentioning "a few other cases" under study such as Qualcomm or Intel.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1353

Cliptic on the lookout For clearing the way, we can count on sharp blogs such as Cliptic. In the selection, the interactive clip of Arcade Fire Neon Bible, the Lynchian one, directed by Patrick Daughters for the Liars or the pop animations with colorful lettering by Peter Mrzyk and Jean-François Moriceau for our diva Katerine (photo). cliptip. blogspot. com/ Scopitone in retro For the nostalgic, a kitsch selection of scopitones, reel-to-reel jukeboxes from the 60s, ancestor of the video clip, with among others Dario Moreno's Marmite, or the ravishing Mighty Mississippi (photo). scopitones.blogs.com/scopitonescom/watch\_scopitones/index.htmlP Concerts to take away, live For those who want to see music differently, all that's left to do is download Les concerts à emporter, sequence shots that capture the musicians: Elvis Perkins, Beirut (photo), Comelade. in unusual places, outside the usual context of the stage, precious moments captured live by the agitators of the Blogothèque. www.blogotheque.net/concertaemporter Before the advent of video sharing sites, we would wallow on the couch in front of the MTV or M6 clip tap, hypnotized by these formatted promotional images, spewed out at a hellish pace, in the often vain hope of coming across an indie gem that would have been lost in this bombardment of garish electrons. To watch more artistic clips, it was better to go to short film festivals (Onedotzero, Nemo, Resfest.) or pick up a DVD here and there. Then came YouTube and the like, a goldmine for music video enthusiasts who pour out thousands of them. Memory. The advantage and disadvantage of the system is that you have to dig through the depths yourself to unearth the desired clip. Last.tv provides an adequate answer for all the lazy people, by providing a continuous flow of images that match our musical tastes. This application is the video counterpart of the online radio Last.fm, a custom radio that broadcasts tracks based on our musical preferences. The more we listen to it, the more it resembles us, Last.fm remembers what the listener likes and what he skips, gradually building up his profile. Last.tv uses this profile to automatically search YouTube, find videos corresponding to the musicians listened to and broadcast them in a continuous stream. The search is done by artist name, without any other sorting. The music channel thus generated dumps everything that can be found in terms of images of our favorite artists (you just have to enter the name of your account or that of your "friends"): clips, live concerts, bootlegs, interviews and other fan parodies. "A simple concept followed by a slew of other applications offering similar things, notes one of the managers of Last.tv, Alper Çugun. The most interesting ones aggregate multiple video sources within a single Flash player." Among them, FIQL, whose slogan is: "You choose the songs, we'll find the videos." The site allows you to create or download your music playlist and obtain the matching video playlist. More restrictive but in DVD quality, you can also download Miro, the open source video player (www.getmiro.com), and download the clips podcasted by the Telemusicvision channel, including Take me back to your house by The Basement Jaxx and its high-energy choreographies of Russian dancers. Record crisis. Another option is to use an engine like Utrecht.cc, which specializes in searching for music videos on YouTube. It currently indexes more than 201,000 clips and concert videos. Based on the history of requests, it also promises to refine its recommendations and to give you a tailor-made selection in the "New for you" section, and also displays the lyrics of the song. Despite the proliferation of distribution platforms, video clips are not really in the spotlight, a victim of the record crisis. Investments in production are lower and quality clips are rare. lasttv.net/ www.fiql.com/tv/ fr.utrecht.cc telemusicvision.com /

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1354

Has Wikipedia created a quality source for history, probably the category with the largest number of articles? In an article entitled "Can History be opensource? Wikipedia and the future of the past (June 2006)", historian Roy Rosenzweig takes stock (Chnm.gmu.edu/resources/essays/d/42, translated into French on the site aphgcaen.free.fr/).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1355

I believe I have good skills to manage a National League hockey club, even to improve my team through judicious trades. At least, the new version of the NHL08 game makes me feel like a good manager and a good coach. However, if the game works well and has several technical improvements compared to the 2007 version, I had some disappointments regarding the basic lineups, the transfers between the NHL team and the farm club. Previously, in the Dynasty game mode for a current season, you could easily go and get or return players to the minor leagues. Currently, you have to make transfers in another section of the game before starting your season. If there is another method, I have not found it yet. Before, it was clear, simple, interesting and effective. I know the game was finished and released before the latest NHL club reorganizations, but there are some surprising errors in the player profiles, especially regarding rookies. On the Montreal Canadiens team, Higgins, Murray and Plekanec are on the rookie list while Carey Price, the new darling, is not even in the Canadiens' lineup or in the farm team's lineup. And that's the case for several other teams. So far, the only update on the official website concerns the players' jerseys and numbers. Hockey purists will have a headache. The starting interface, a depressing blue-grey, really lacks sparkle. However, when you start a game, the graphics look completely different. You also have to make sure you have understood the subtleties of the new controller controls. Personally, I couldn't get used to the slap shot with the little broomstick and, like several other players I met virtually on the forums, had to change the controls back to the basic ones in the 2007 version. Technically, there are some nice improvements, but also some disappointments. However, in Dynasty mode, I like the owner's weekly objectives and the rewards that follow. It's a good idea. The characters on the ice are well detailed. The game itself is very interesting. RATING: \*\*\* PC DVD. Minimum requirements: 1.3 GHz processor, Windows XP, 2000 or Vista, 256 to 512 MB of RAM, 3D graphics card at 64 MB, 4 X drive. Publisher: Electronic Arts. Suggested price: $50. Distributor: PMD Logisoft. REPROBATES A fantastic and distressing world The Future Games team, which produced The Black Mirror and NiBiRu, has just launched a brand new adventure that mixes fantasy, anxiety and even a bit of horror. Of the point and click type, the game requires more thinking than manipulating the controls like in sports games. However, to solve the puzzle, it will be a sport since you have to find objects, make assemblies, talk to the other characters to get an idea of where you are. There are tools to make to have a way to leave this island where people seem to have been mysteriously moved. An island or purgatory as Izmael supposes, a somewhat enlightened character, no one knows. The revelation comes in the last chapter. The other characters come from different countries, but also from different eras, which adds to the feeling of confusion of the main character Adam Raichl. The graphics, the definition of the characters, the smallest details of the settings are polished even if the universe in which Adam evolves is sometimes gloomy, like at the time of the suicide of Danica, one of the characters, or the discovery of a hanged man. The story is particularly astonishing, but well put together. The only negative point appears when the player must disentangle himself from small arcade games to go further. When you settle in for this type of adventure, the mini-games take away a lot of charm, especially that of the target to put out the fire in the wrecked car in the second nightmare. Personally, I find it useless in the unfolding of the story and I could have done without it. Despite this, the game is very well done. Yves Therrien RATING: \*\*\* PC DVD. Minimum configuration: 1.5 GHz processor, Windows XP or Vista, 512 MB of RAM, 3D graphics card, 4 X reader. Publisher: Micro Application, Future Games. Suggested price: $40. Distributor: DLL Presse. INSPIRATION 8 Visual expression of ideas The Quebec company De Marque has just launched version 8, in French, of the Inspiration software. It is a visual tool that students, and even adults, can use to organize their ideas for work or projects to make neat presentations. The software is easy to use. You can master it in a few minutes. Among the software's features, there is the Express Mode tool for brainstorming, a template creation wizard, the integration of sound and video and the option to export to a site skeleton to easily create a Web structure. Added to this are new features such as the "mind map" mode, the search for symbols by keyword in addition to thousands of new symbols. The transfer and export options have been improved and there are more automatic organization options. On the site http://inspira tion.demarque.com, you can see a demonstration of the possibilities in the guided tour section, download a trial version, or buy the version online for both Mac and Windows. A very practical software for those whose sense of logic is expressed more clearly with visuals. It is also easy to use, but there is a tutorial to learn how to master the different functions. Yves Therrien EVALUATION: \*\*\*\* Mac/PC hybrid disk. Minimum configuration: PC processor 486 or better, Windows 95 and higher. Mac with OS X (10.1.5). Display in thousands of colors. Publisher: De Marque. Suggested price: $98. ANTIDOTE RX UPDATE The Antidote software has just been updated (www.druide.com) to take into account computers with multiple processors, which makes it faster depending on the number of processors in the computer. According to the grand druid in chief, André D'Orsennens, this is a major update, not only because the engine of the linguistic tool takes into account processors to gain speed, but also because the acceleration of the analysis comes with an enrichment of the dictionaries while allowing the integration of the tool with new software. The documentation mentions more than 15 new software, including the recent Keynote and Numbers from Apple, and the InDesign-Illustrator CS 3 couple on Windows and Mac. Antidote continues its advances in the world of free software by being the first grammar checker integrated into OpenOffice.org, NeoOffice and Thunderbird on Mac OS X. It remains the only linguistic suite on Linux. In the linguistic improvements, the documentation notes the addition of 400 new words and 4000 new co-occurrences. So, if you have Antidote RX, the update is a must. If you don't have Antidote, you are missing the best linguistic tool on the market, in my opinion. And it will cost you a little over a hundred dollars. Yves Therrien Ytherrien@lesoleil.Com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1356

Challenge: to paint a man "who pleases everyone", according to his wife. The villain offers his stings. The eccentric, his ability to surprise. The author of an exploit, his story. But what to write, without falling into boredom, about the one who creates consensus? Bertrand Monthubert usually makes the job of the ordinary journalist easier. Always ready to respond to the latest ministerial declaration, to accept a quick interview for a radio station, to find a colleague to drive the Parisien to the Matabiau station (Toulouse). And even to quickly fry a duck breast for the portraitist who got off the train with an empty stomach. There is his physique. Elegance of raven-black hair whose suppleness highlights the sharp features of a fine and pale face that gives him an aristocratic look a thousand leagues from his social origins and the solid democratic feeling that drives him. But beyond that, the tile. We ask colleagues, friends, activists, even our spouses, and we come up against a problem. Nothing but compliments. A good mathematician, a good activist, a good father, a good musician, a good sportsman, a good comrade, a good teacher, modest with all that. and a handsome guy to boot. There remains an unhealthy hope that the task is beyond his strength. The task? Continue Sauvons la recherche, SLR for short. Do you remember? Spring 2004, researchers in the street, with many icons of Marie Curie, ironic slogans - no pipettes without money! -, mass resignations of lab directors. and finally, a President of the Republic (the one before) who, pitifully, disavows his Prime Minister. A movement embodied by Alain Trautmann, whose short, precise, implacable sentences for a government trampling on official commitments in favor of research, break through the 8 p.m. wall. For the past two years, SLR has been Bertrand Monthubert. This succession is logical, by the way. "First of all, for the symbolism," admits Trautmann, smiling into his moustache. "SLR was launched by an old CNRS biologist; that it was taken over by a young provincial academic, that was all good." Above all, Monthubert was already playing a key role in this disconcerting movement. From the first tremors caused by the budgetary destruction of public labs, Michel Broué, one of his scientific and political mentors, met at the École normale supérieure (ENS) where he headed the mathematics department, put him in contact with Trautmann. With the help of former ENS classmates who were free software activists, Monthubert launched the website that would become "the nerve center of SLR": an ordinary computer on his desk, upstairs in his house. With a mouse, Erwane, his wife, a teacher at the Toulouse Institute of Political Studies, validates the latest contributions to the ongoing debate taking place there. Without seeming to, the two accomplices in life and activism have invented a new kind of social mobilization where the Internet serves as the driving force for action. The affair began in January 2004. Monthubert put online the appeal written by a group of Parisian biologists. Through this text, the laboratory directors committed to resigning if the government did not reverse its job cuts. The success exceeded the wildest hopes. "We found ourselves, a little fascinated, clicking hour by hour to follow the rise in signatures in real time," says Erwane Monthubert. Even today, the score of this petition serves as a standard of measurement (225,000 including 75,000 scientists). As for SLR's 120,000 email addresses, they constitute a formidable political weapon. If the beginnings of the SLR adventure are the delight of activist memories, its current avatars are more complicated. A place of improbable dialogue and common action between bigwigs of the Academy of Sciences, young radicals and unionists divided into chapels and corporations, SLR owed its existence and success only to the sense of urgency that had seized the scientific community. Can it survive, while the euphoria of the demonstrations fades? Avoid becoming a closed field of union rivalries? Repel capture by a PS of which Monthubert does not hide being an inactive member, disheartened by its "fucked-up operation"? Rediscover initiative and the capacity for resistance in the face of a government that is reforming the university with a bulldozer, organizing the decline of research organizations? "Without Bertrand, it was dead", sighs a history of the association. This is where the "consensual" has done well, playing all his cards to bring together a motley movement. "Fortunately, he is less rough and ill-mannered than me," laughs Trautmann. "Plus, he likes it." His personality fits the role perfectly. "He is an unconscious seducer," laughs Catherine Jeandel, oceanographer, soul of SLR Toulouse. His young leading man's physique - "And not just classy" -, his oral ease, his aplomb allowing him to challenge ministers and political leaders are not altered by any arrogance. Reflecting an unfeigned modesty, witness this still lively feeling of having broken into a supposedly inaccessible environment when he succeeded in entering the École Normale Supérieure, a selection of a few dozen elite mathematicians in an age group. If the role suits him so much, it is because it is rooted in a strong family history. A couple of Freinet teachers and secular activists, a father who is an expert in maths teaching, a house filled with a rich social life. It is difficult to evacuate the parental model when Catherine Jeandel sees him as a "black hussar of the Republic". And, no doubt, he continues the family fight when he discusses the research budget after midnight. When he gets excited that a student asks him where to find Bourbaki's booklets, the mathematicians' bible. When he deploys treasures of diplomacy to get academics, researchers or unionists used to pulling each other's legs to act together. A way, perhaps, of still seeking paternal approval. While he leads a crazy life, reconciling research, courses and activism without giving up his private life, his two children, his couple - "I don't want to choose" -, only maths will extract a negative, surprising word from him. "It's painful", he says. Not the late meetings, the little betrayals between activists, the copies to be corrected. but his exploration of the mathematical continent discovered by Alain Connes, "noncommutative geometry". The pain comes from the confrontation "with his ignorance. A strange feeling of frustration in the face of the impossibility of finding an answer to the question posed, which makes the legitimation offered by teaching all the more necessary". This pain remains delicious. The isolation from the media and social noise required by the mathematical work, this ideal journey, leads him to favor real journeys - as when he goes to Brazil to cogitate with a colleague crossing the same calculative waters - in order to conduct this intense mental labor.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1357

Green light for the open source carThere is strength in numbers. This obvious fact is likely to become an economic model. After IT, the logic of open source has reached the automotive sector, notably via the "C, mm, n" project (pronounced "Common"). Thanks to the collective thinking of the environmental association Stichting Natuur en Milieu, the universities of Delft, Enschede and Eindhoven and companies such as Philips and Shell, a green car model is currently under construction. Expected release: 2020. Internet users, get typing for your comments and suggestions. Here, we are at the antipodes of the industrial secrecy that surrounds all the green prototypes currently being developed by car manufacturers. On the "C, mm, n" website, all the technical information and plans are available. A first model was even presented in April 2007 at the AutoRAI show in Amsterdam. Inside the concept car, there are many technological innovations geared towards the collective. Information sharing systems on traffic conditions, parking availability, and journeys are planned. A sort of road Wikipedia, if you will. The small four-seater city car will have no metal parts, but will be riddled with recyclable plastic and will be powered by a hydrogen-powered fuel cell. Anne Bate http://www.autoindetoekomst.nl A tram as beautiful as a truck In Amsterdam, some trams do not stop at all the stations. Two of them, to be exact. They use the same tracks as the others, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. But they do not transport passengers. Only goods and raw materials. These rather unusual shuttles, called "cargo trams", were introduced in March 2007 to reduce heavy goods traffic within the city. Their mission: to provide a link between logistics centres, train stations and supply hubs on the outskirts and supermarkets, shops and restaurants in the city centre. City cargo, this pilot project, was inspired by the manufacturer Volkswagen, which has been transporting its parts by tram to its site in Dresden (Germany) for six years now. Currently, a "cargo tram" transports the equivalent of four 7.5-ton semi-trailers. Amsterdam has had its calculators running: with 50 "cargo trams" in operation every day, the inhabitants of the City of 1,000 Canals would escape the daily nuisance of 2,500 trucks. With this system, the number of traffic jams and noise pollution would drop, and the bill for road maintenance would decrease considerably. At the same time, CO2 emissions would drop and 1,200 jobs could be created around this new distribution chain. Pauline Hervé http://www.citycargo.nl The highway code, a path to explore What if the rules invented in the 1920s were no longer fully adapted to city traffic? Motivated by the Belgian example, where the highway code was amended accordingly in 2004, several associations are calling for the establishment in France of a "highway code" that would redefine the relationships between the different means of transport in the city. With one objective: the systematic protection of the most vulnerable users (pedestrians, cyclists, disabled people, etc.) from cars. Among the measures proposed: generalize two-way cycle lanes allowing bicycles to use one-way traffic in the opposite direction, authorize cyclists to turn right on a red light, increase the number of crossing sidewalks (roughly speaking, pedestrian crossings on speed bumps), create "meeting zones" limited to 20 km/h where pedestrians would have priority over cars, including on the roadway, etc. The National Transport Council's report of June 2005, A road network for all, recommends studying the highway code. A commission bringing together government departments and associations was set up in 2006. "All that's missing is a little political will," assures Jean Sivardière, of the National Federation of Transport User Associations. Guillaume Launay A second wind for sailing navigation An 11 million euro bet. That of reviving the merchant navy under sail. But the Compagnie de transport maritime à la voile (CTMV) is not sailing on the nostalgia of old sailing ships. Its founders Frédéric Albert, grandson of a winemaker, Frédéric Girard, specialist in import-export logistics, Michel Péry, one of the commanders of the Bélem, and Philippe Videau, one of the founders of the Compagnie des îles du Ponant are looking offshore. They are banking on "the first sustainable, innovative, modern and clean transport". To achieve this, the three friends have launched the construction of two boats, the first of which should be afloat at the end of 2008. "They are all-steel sailing boats, 47 metres long and with a capacity of 210 tonnes, for which we had to delve back into the plans of boats from the beginning of the century. Then we worked with rigging specialists and the National School of Engineers of Armament Techniques in Brest to hone their hydrodynamics," says a manager from Ship Studio, the naval engineering firm in charge of the project. In the holds, there will be only Languedoc-Roussillon wine. Naturally cooled to 15 degrees, thanks to a system using the sea temperature, the bottles will initially be sent to Ireland. This four-day voyage will be carried out 75% of the time under sail. For maneuvers that are impossible under rigging or in case of calm, an engine running on rapeseed oil will be used. Currently, 55 producers from the region, gathered in the Sud Export group, have given their support to this adventure. And will promote this ecological transport with a specific logo on their vintage. Another way to raise consumer awareness. Anne Bate http://www.ctmv.eu

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1358

The Ile-de-France region has decided to provide a USB key to each of the 155,000 high school students in their second year and the 18,000 apprentices in their first year, as well as to each of their 40,000 teachers, in October. Each USB key contains 19 free software programs.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1359

OPERATION seduction yesterday at the National Assembly. Steve Ballmer, the president of Microsoft, responded to the invitation of French parliamentarians before going to Sciences Po to announce a partnership agreement with the famous grandes écoles. In front of thirty or so deputies packed into a small room, Steve Ballmer delivered a plea in favor of innovation. In France, the group has committed itself in several ways to this area. Two years ago, Microsoft invented a sponsorship of start-ups, called Idee. The group does not allocate any financial resources. It provides them with all the technical and material means that the founders of start-ups need. It supports them in their search for major clients or venture capitalists. "This year, 25 companies will be selected as part of the third edition of Idee," recalls Julien Codorniou, who heads this program. Overall, this support indirectly costs Microsoft 50,000 euros per year and per start-up." After a little over two years, the results of this initiative are encouraging: the sponsored companies have raised 3 million euros each and recruited 16 people on average since 2005. Since its inception, 550 jobs have been created. This "idea" has been taken up in around fifteen European countries, in Israel, China, India and Russia, as well as in the United States. Yesterday, Dassault Systèmes announced that it had just acquired one of them, Seemage, without revealing the amount of the transaction. In front of the elected officials, Steve Ballmer also recalled the agreement signed with Inria (National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation). "Fifty researchers from Inria and Microsoft work together, publish and file patents jointly." Weakness on the Internet "Tomorrow, everything will be digitized, books, documents. The impact will also be on culture and art. "Digitalization will break down the barriers of communication," predicted the Microsoft president, citing 75 revolutionary ideas presented in the framework of a five-year scenario. "You will come into a room and when you talk about a subject, thanks to voice recognition, you will have a card that will automatically appear on the wall to illustrate your words," he cited as an example. But the presentation became more complicated when the parliamentarians asked politically incorrect questions about the leadership of Google in the Internet or Sony in games consoles. Or when one MP recalled that the parliamentarians did not have Microsoft software on their computers but, on the contrary, free software. Another even asked Steve Ballmer to talk about the major failures that would have improved diversity and competition in the information society. "Not wanting to go into the Internet in 2000 was not a good idea," he acknowledged. "We were too slow. But we are working hard to rectify these mistakes. » He also discussed the "social issues" raised by the development of new technologies such as respect for privacy with the Internet. A theme for Sciences Po students. VALÉRIE COLLET

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1360

It's not every day that the CEO of Microsoft has the opportunity to visit a "Windows free" space. This was the case yesterday, during Steve Ballmer's visit to the National Assembly, received at his request by the elected members of the Internet study group of the UMP deputy of Loir-et-Cher Patrice Martin-Lalande. The boss of the company, whose software equips nine out of ten computers worldwide and who once called Linux a "cancer", spoke without getting upset in front of deputies whose workstations have rallied to the banner of free software! "There is a new economic model with people ready to work almost voluntarily to create products," explained the CEO of Microsoft to the twenty or so deputies present. "It's up to us to offer better." Two weeks after its condemnation by the European Court of Justice for abuse of a dominant position, the Microsoft machine came to convince the deputies that it has changed and that it wants to work towards the development of the information society in Sarkozy's country. Outlining a world in which an inch of LCD screen will soon be cheaper to produce than a square centimeter of blackboard, the boss of Microsoft highlighted his company's recent commitments in France: co-financing of a research laboratory with Inria (1), participation in the "Ideas" program from which French start-ups benefit and signing, yesterday, a partnership with Sciences-Po to support two chairs of "scientific humanities" and "regulation" of intellectual property. He returned to the manufacturer's defeat against the European Commission. "Microsoft will comply with the legislation in force," he continued, specifying that it is up to governments and not multinationals to set the rules. A speech well received by the Assembly. "Microsoft is aware that it is vulnerable and must focus on innovation rather than on its vested interests so as not to find itself pushed to the periphery," responded the socialist Christian Paul, who prefers this strategy of open seduction rather than "corridor lobbying in Brussels." "They realize that they are no longer the masters of everything," concluded Patrice Martin-Lalande, who expects results in the area of interoperability, this compatibility between systems in which Microsoft plays a key role. Christophe Alix (1) National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation.

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## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1362

The European Commission won a great victory against Microsoft on Monday, September 17, when its conviction for "abuse of a dominant position" of the world's number one software company was largely confirmed by the court of first instance at the European Court of Justice. Brussels will now be in a better position to demand that the American champion change its business practices. But isn't this already a rearguard action in a sector - technology - where competitive positions often evolve very quickly? And what if, in the Internet era, the most worrying industrial dominations were already elsewhere? The question is likely to make competitors and fans of free software (free and open programs) jump, who believe that Microsoft continues to enjoy unbearable market power in the PC world, stifling its challengers and hindering consumers' freedom of choice. It is true that, more than twenty years after the launch of the first versions of its two flagship products - its Windows operating system and its Office suite - the company founded in 1975 by Bill Gates still equips more than nine out of ten computers in the world. However, this is the feeling of some financial analysts, who now consider Microsoft less of a threat to the rest of the high-tech industry than a fortress attacked from all sides on its core businesses. And a giant overtaken by newcomers who are more agile in Web services, and who are promised great commercial futures. Its Zune digital music player thus pales in comparison to Apple's iPod, which, coupled with its iTunes Music Store online music purchasing program, is said to hold more than half of the digital music market. The search engine of its MSN portal comes largely behind Google, used for more than half of the queries made online today. The latter has become so essential on the Web that it is starting to arouse feelings of concern, like Microsoft a few years ago. The Internet could even lead to a rethinking of the notions of monopoly and dominant position. In fact, online, an application, a service or a site seem to be able to establish themselves much more quickly than in the real world, the network allowing information to circulate instantly and reach a very large number of users simultaneously. When Google launched the first version of its search engine in the late 1990s, it only took a few days for Internet users to definitively abandon one of the leaders of the time, Altavista. And what if, in the era of the Internet, the most worrying industrial dominations were already different?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1363

THE CONFIRMATION, on Monday 17 September, by the Court of First Instance (CFI) at the European Court of Justice of Microsoft's conviction for "abuse of a dominant position", opens a new era for the European guardians of competition. Neelie Kroes, the Commissioner in charge of this case, was pleased to be now in a position to force the software publisher to comply with the corrective measures ordered in 2004 in order to change its commercial practices. "I will not tolerate any persistent violation" of these remedies, she warned, while the Commission must say in the coming weeks whether the American giant has indeed communicated the documentation necessary to ensure interoperability between its operating system and the servers of its rivals. Brussels is now also in a strong position to broaden its investigations into Bill Gates' company. "This is about investigating complaints filed against other Microsoft applications," said Thomas Vinje, lawyer for the ECIS association, which brings together groups such as IBM and Nokia, which filed a complaint against Microsoft's Internet services and its Office suite. Beyond the Microsoft case, the Commission's entire action on abuses of dominant positions could be strengthened. "This ruling is revenge for the setbacks suffered in merger cases in 2002. It will open up breaches against dominant positions in technology [Intel and Qualcomm are already the subject of proceedings] but also in energy, where Brussels has opened proceedings against GDF, EDF and E. ON," said Antoine Winckler, lawyer for the Cleary Gottlieb firm. NEELIE KROES' CRUSADE This possible toughening is not to the taste of the American authorities, or of some of Microsoft's allies. The US Justice Department has expressed concern that "the criteria applied by the Court, rather than helping consumers, have the unfortunate consequence of harming them by discouraging innovation and competition." The US position could change if the Democrats return to power next year. "Microsoft lost, but we don't know what will happen to the rest of the industry: will Ms Kroes lead a crusade to poison successful companies?" worried the Association for Competitive Technologies (ACT), a group of technology companies. "Disappointed" by the CFI ruling, Brad Smith, Microsoft's number three, has pledged "to respect every point of the decision", while leaving doubts hanging over a new appeal before the European courts. Representatives of the American computer giant say, however, that they want to learn from their European legal troubles, which began in the late 1990s. "We have learned that being in a dominant position gives us responsibilities," assures Marc Mossé, director of legal affairs for Microsoft in France. "We have changed. The Microsoft of 2007 is no longer the one of ten years ago," he assures. In fact, perhaps thanks to - or because of - the accusations from Brussels, Microsoft is collaborating with some of its rivals in order to improve the interoperability of their respective products. The publisher thus signed a partnership in 2004 with Sun, the manufacturer of computer servers, which was at the origin of the complaint in Brussels in 2000. More recently, it announced an agreement with Novell, publisher of operating systems based on the free software Linux, one of the main competitors, with Apple, of its flagship Windows system. "These rapprochements probably come from the conviction of Microsoft's executives that their monopoly on PC software is becoming a handicap. Each time they launch a new product, they are suspected of wanting to lock their customers into proprietary systems," according to Emmanuel Tricot, a lawyer at the firm Hogan & Hartson.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1364

The computer group IBM is to launch, on Tuesday, September 18, a series of free office software, which will compete directly with Microsoft Office software, according to the Wall Street Journal. This software suite, called Symphony and downloadable free of charge on the Internet, includes a word processor, a spreadsheet and a presentation software. Symphony is based on the free software Open Office. A profit of 5.6 billion dollars in 2007 for the airline industry The International Air Transport Association (IATA) revised upwards, on Monday, September 17, its profit forecast for the entire sector worldwide, now targeting 5.6 billion dollars (4 billion euros) in 2007 against a previous estimate of 5.1 billion dollars. For 2008, however, the association revised its forecast downwards: 7.7 billion dollars against 9.6 billion dollars, due in particular to the price of a barrel of oil. Deutsche Bahn privatisation criticised by three states Three German states on Monday 17 September drew up a list of criticisms against the federal government's planned privatisation of the state-owned railway company Deutsche Bahn (DB), which could derail a project that has already been postponed several times. The transport ministers of Saxony-Anhalt, Brandenburg and North Rhine-Westphalia have indicated that the regional states could block the law in the upper house (Bundesrat). The regional states fear that once privatised, the DB will neglect small local routes and close some stations. US courts dismiss complaint against manufacturers over global warming Federal judge Martin Jenkins, sitting in San Francisco, dismissed on Monday 17 September a complaint filed by the state of California against car manufacturers, accused of contributing to global warming. The judge ruled in favor of six American and Japanese groups, which considered the civil lawsuits filed against them a year ago by Bill Lockyer, California's attorney general, to be unfounded. The complaint, filed on behalf of "the people of California," sought damages of an unspecified amount. It claimed that the car manufacturers had created a "public nuisance" by producing "millions of vehicles that collectively emit massive amounts of carbon dioxide." Rio Tinto extends its offer for Alcan until October 23 The Anglo-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto decided on Monday, September 17, to extend its friendly offer (OPA) for Alcan until October 23 to "allow the conditions of the offer to be satisfied, including obtaining the green light from several regulatory authorities." Rio Tinto, had only received 0.2% of Alcan shares as of September 14. According to Rio Tinto, Alcan shareholders are waiting for the mining group's general meeting to be held on September 28 in Melbourne. This meeting must give the green light to the $38.1 billion (€27.5 billion) takeover bid. The Netherlands gives the green light to the takeover of ABN Amro On Monday, September 17, the Netherlands gave the green light to the takeover of ABN Amro, the kingdom's leading banking institution, by a consortium of three banks led by the British Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), as it had given to the rival offer from the British Barclays. Meilleurtaux.com finalizes its round of financing The management of meilleurtaux.com has completed its round of financing as part of the sale of the credit broker. In addition to the founders, who would only keep 4%, Macif would hold 9%, Maif 9% and Nexity 3%. The Caisses d'Epargne, which were initially supposed to take control, will ultimately only hold 35%. The bank is expected to launch a takeover bid for the broker at a maximum price of 41 euros. However, the new shareholders want to put 40% of the capital back on the stock market at the end of the deal.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1365

It is not often, if not never, that Microsoft bites the dust to this extent. While the world leader in IT had until now always managed to avoid any jurisdiction drastically challenging its commercial policy, the Court of First Instance (CFI) at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg yesterday inflicted an unprecedented defeat on the American giant. Eight years after the start of the titanic "Microsoft v. the European Union" case, the magistrates largely confirmed the validity of the conviction of the multinational for "abuse of a dominant position" pronounced in March 2004 by the Brussels Commission. Yes, the CFI ruled, Microsoft did indeed abuse its "quasi-monopoly on the market for operating systems [with which it equips 95% of personal computers, editor's note] in order to restrict competition". Yes, it judged, the corrective measures imposed by Brussels to remedy this state of affairs were entirely justified. Record. The most immediate effect of a decision supported by more than 100 pages is to ratify the record fine (777 million euros in total) imposed by the European authorities on the firm founded by Bill Gates. But the essential is elsewhere, as summarized by François Lévêque, professor of economics at the École des Mines de Paris: "The CFI considered that the exceptional situation that Microsoft is in on its market perfectly legitimized the obligation imposed by Brussels to open the floodgates of its intellectual property. It is a decision that could change a lot of things in the future." While many predicted a mixed judgment due to the incredible complexity of the case, the CFI ruled in favor of the Commission on the two main points of dispute. He followed suit in his refusal to endorse the tying of Media Player (audio and video file playback software) with Windows, which allowed Microsoft to eliminate any serious competition in this market and to considerably weaken alternative solutions such as that of Real Network. And, to those who are ironic about the failure of the "remedy" (the sale of an operating system without Media Player), the European Commissioner for Competition, Neelie Kroes, replied that if it is up to the customer to choose, he must still have the choice. Even more importantly, the court also approved Brussels' fight to force Microsoft to implement interoperability in servers (compatibility between different systems) by providing better technical documentation to its competitors. Buoyed by what she calls a "major victory for consumers," Kroes made it clear that she now wants to see "a substantial decline" in Microsoft's market share, and that she will do everything she can to ensure that the company complies with its obligations as quickly as possible. Despite his defeat, Microsoft's number three and legal battle strategist, Brad Smith, held press conferences in Luxembourg in the morning and then in Brussels in the early afternoon. A good loser, keeping a low profile, he called the court's decision "disappointing" while repeating that Microsoft would comply with the Commission's demands as quickly as possible. Above all, he sought to debunk the idea that Microsoft's dominance had been a brake on innovation in recent years by recalling the agreements signed by the group on interoperability (with Nokia, Sun and even Novell, a player in free software) and that the company's investments in research on the Old Continent had gone from 3 million dollars to 500 today. In short, that the Microsoft of today is no longer that of yesterday. "Microsoft is trying to pass off this decision as anachronistic," judges François Lévêque. But that is not the point. By ruling in favor of the Commission, the CFI's decision serves to produce future effects much more than to correct past situations that can no longer be corrected." Procedure. Microsoft now has two months and ten days to appeal a decision that can no longer be annulled on the merits but only for procedural reasons. "Nothing has been decided yet," Brad Smith temporized, "we must read the ruling calmly and think seriously before making such a decision." At the end of the afternoon, Microsoft shares were down 1.21% in Europe and 0.9% on the Nasdaq where it is listed. CHRISTOPHE ALIX WITH JULIE MAJERCZAK (in Brussels)

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1366

God came up with the idea of designing the world all by himself and did pretty well. As for the innovations that have set the pace for progress, most of them are the result of personal intuitions (Leonardo da Vinci and Jules Verne continue to inspire fantasies today), of seemingly selfish needs (the Walkman was born from the desire of Akito Morita, president of Sony at the time, to listen to music while playing golf), of solitary observations (James Dyson invented the bagless vacuum cleaner even though he didn't have the technical skills but was faced with a question: how come my vacuum cleaner doesn't suck when the bag is only half full?). Or of daring experiments (the Post-itÆ, the result of an engineer who developed a glue that peels off, is rather disruptive for a company that makes adhesives!). Or even personal chance: such as the myth of Roquefort discovered by a shepherd who had left a loaf of bread lying around with milk that had fermented... Serge Tisseron is in the habit of saying that every invention is the realization of a fantasy. At the dawn of this third millennium where relationships and transparency are the new refrains of the hyperlinks that we all want to weave, it is now the ability to innovate together and to produce ideas collectively that seems to have become the way to realize this fantasy. Three ruptures have favored this evolution: the place taken by innovation as a management tool; the abundant interactivity of Web 2.0; the development of service economies. What connection could there possibly be between the RATP, the Creative Commons collective, Boursin cheese, the Icelandic singer Björk, the Swedish Linux, the new Fiat 500, the sites YouTube.com or MySpace.com, the French initiative Wat.tv, Mastercard, Findus, IBM's innovation jam, the Apple site ipodlounge, the Dove brand, Agoravox, the universals Wikipedia, Citizendium or answers.com, the Korean ohMyNews, the Americans Threadless, Boeing or Mom Inventors, or even EDF and Al Gore's Current TV...? All of them have opened up their creative process by inviting employees from different departments of the company, or customers or consumers, to get involved in something that a priori has nothing to do with them: design. After innovation at all levels of the company (cycle of the 1990s), the time has perhaps come when the doors of the company fly open to invite customers into the kitchen of the design of new initiatives. Welcome to an Ikea economy where we do the work! All studies confirm it: the end customer is becoming more and more marketing expert; he gets involved in his relationship with the issuers of offers that are the brands, no longer hesitates to contest when he considers that this relationship is unsatisfactory, begins to resist (cf. the attraction to hard discount or free...), or even boycotts (cf. the viral spread on the Internet). On the business side, human resources management is becoming more and more problematic due to growing demotivation. On the other hand, markets are increasingly porous, making brands potentially competitors of each other. This phenomenon finds its counterpart through the growing transparency of the boundaries between the company and customers. Permanent referendum To guarantee success, from now on, let's involve employees and customers to make them authors, designers and ambassadors of the offers that they will be consumers of tomorrow. And let's enter fully into the new economy of collective imagination. 2006 saw the emergence of Web 2.0; innovation has its network, it is now global. And above all, it is co-piloted by you and us. In a kind of democratic marketing by permanent referendum. This platform for exchanges, interactivity, creativity and design is part of a movement that sees citizens, consumers and users take an active part in their exchanges with the authorities, brands or the media. Jeff Howe of Wired magazine called this phenomenon "crowdsourcing", a principle that calls on the wisdom of the crowd to invent. The best example of crowdsourcing is Innocentive, a site initiated by Elli Lilly where researchers from all sides (different countries, different companies, different expertise, etc.) can contribute and be paid for it to jointly identify solutions to problems submitted online... by other companies. Not a day goes by without a new collective design initiative. What critical perspective could we bring to it through a few concrete cases? Linux laid the foundations for this co-design by inventing OpenSource, which allows enthusiasts (not necessarily professionals) to improve a beta version of software and thus become co-authors. More recently, Intel announced at the end of 2006 that it was offering $300,000 to customers who would come up with winning innovations. The winners were chosen at the Spring Intel Developer Forum held in March 2007 in San Francisco. And at the end of December 2006, Time magazine elected "You" as its personality of the year. In his editorial, Richard Stengel, the editor-in-chief, explains that this nomination is a tribute to what he calls the advent of "user generated content". This new collective behavior should, according to him, transform art, politics and commerce through the creative and relevant intervention of amateurs. When the RATP launches its participatory blog Vous-et-la-ratp.net, it is so that users and employees can invent and suggest improvements to the service. Which will then be selected and judged good to launch. But are these real customers who contribute? It is also EDF which is using the pretext of the launch of three new services (SuiviConso, Objectif Travaux and an e-shop) to launch into group design. To promote these new services, EDF created four "unfinished" advertising spots allowing Internet users to choose between several endings, several settings and several music tracks, by encouraging them to visit a site: www.lepouvoirdechoisir.com. Across the Atlantic, the Dove brand provided consumers with simple editing software, photos, music. In short, everything they needed to create the new DoveCreamOil.com advert dedicated to the product of the same name. "You don't need any experience or any special skills," stated the email. Since the summer of 2006, Fiat has encouraged its fans around the world to be creative during the launch of the new Fiat 500. Contributors were invited to submit their ideas on the site www.fiat500.com/lab around five themes (design, lifestyle, accessories, stores, communication). The British public, meanwhile, has been invited to take part in the largest blog in history, designed to leave future generations with a record of a typical day in Britain in the 21st century, which will be preserved at the British Library. Launched by British heritage organisations, the One day in History project invited all UK residents to record their day on 17 October 2006 on a shared blog (www.historymatters.co.uk). The country's 29,000 schools have also been invited to take part. On Second Life, Toyota is presenting a pixelated version of its latest SUV, the Scion xB, and is inviting potential buyers to improve its features and customise it as they wish. Consumer-buyers are dead, long live consumer-creators! Chicago-based Threadless makes T-shirts whose designs are based exclusively on online competitions with creative people from all walks of life. The four projects that obtain the best pre-order rates are launched into production each week. The winners are offered $2,000 and their name is promoted on the garment. Only advantages: saving on a team of designers, guaranteeing good involvement from future customers who play the role of buyer-selectors, limiting the risk of failure during marketing. In Japan, the distributor Muji via its community site www.muji.net solicits ideas for new products or services from its customers and asks them to pre-evaluate these ideas. The selection is then entrusted to professionals responsible for implementation and technical specifications. Rather than investing in heavy studies, Muji tests the completed projects with this same community of Muji addicts. If at least 300 people pre-order the new idea, it is put into production. Each month, the Top 10 best sellers are highlighted on the site, encouraging the system to feed itself. One of the most impressive examples of collective design is probably www.aswarmofangels: it involves co-designing and co-financing an entire film. Welcome to the era of cinema 2.0! It is an English initiative by Matt Hanson, film critic and founder of the first online film festival. Contributors (angels) subscribe around £25 (50 euros). 50,000 "angels" will be enough to raise the necessary budget (estimated at 2 million euros overall). A thousand angels have already registered and two scripts (entitled The Glitch and The Untold) are in preparation. They will be tested with the community swarm to choose the one that will be finalized. The filming will also be done collectively. Once the project is finalized, the angels will also be responsible for its promotion and distribution. The film will be available for free download on the Internet, under a Creative Commons license. It remains to be seen how good it is... Communication alibi Have we entered a monstrous, unmanageable mess? Most of the initiatives mentioned here have proven to be real messes to be developed and run. In order not to be overwhelmed by the creative overflows coming from within and outside, collective design requires a team of enthusiastic pilot animators. Furthermore, collective design, however sincere it may be, is often only a communication alibi. Thus, in October 2006, Boursin asked Internet users on its site for their most creative recipes using Boursin Cuisine. The ten most original (edible?) were rewarded with a half-day of learning with the media chef Cyril Lignac. The first 10,000 participants received a recipe guide using Boursin Cuisine, signed by the same chef. Another mistake: thinking that creating collectively is systematically collective. It's tempting, but unmanageable. Like team sports, it's often the aggregation of complementary individuals that creates the spark. And above all, it's the alternation of collective and individual phases, where everyone brings their specific expertise, that will guarantee the birth of convincing initiatives. It must be admitted that the result is often quite disappointing: Wat.tv is currently quite poor in content; and most of the nice ideas submitted on www.ipodlounge.com (where the prototypes presented are all of external origin, which puts a nice pressure on the engineers in the company: "Look at what our customers themselves are capable of designing without us...!") turn out to be technically unrealizable by Apple. Another drawback of collective design: questioning. Thus, the Ideastorm initiative, launched in February 2007 by Dell, a computer giant, with its customer community. More than a million visits, more than 7,000 suggestions generated... many of which did not go in the direction of the decisions that Dell management had planned. Another temptation: to believe that anyone can create collectively. Some artists, designers or creators, are truly autistic and cannot conceive of being mixed with other creative people, worse, with amateurs. There is also a perverse effect: to suggest that the company is no longer capable of surprising its customers and that it needs them for that. The delegation of creativity can then turn into a perceived resignation. The result is sometimes disappointing also because the collective initiative is paralyzed by its ambition: the idea dies because it is too politically correct, or requires a lot of courage and pugnacious energy. For the result of a collective design approach to be better than if it did not exist, and for the collective creative mess not to explode in flight, five conditions must be respected: 1/ mutual trust (a client who doubts the sincerity of the approach will not get involved); 2/ a clearly identified problem, which a creative community would be better able to solve than an isolated researcher; 3/ an agitator moderator (often a consultant, guardian of the temple and of mutual requirement); 4/ a fine cruise control to pilot the process. And, finally; 5/ a method of remuneration consistent with the stakes (thus, recently, YouTube resigned itself to paying people who send it videos). When the creative community is piloted without ulterior motives, when it invites collaborators, clients and citizens to get involved by clearly explaining to them the real stakes and the rules of the game, then, yes, the result can be convincing. And will strengthen, let's not mince words, the pride of having purchased a truly special good or service, since these new kind of creatives will have contributed to designing it. A new nervous system is being created that will change the way we perceive the world. But also the way the world changes. Its consequences are both difficult to know and impossible to estimate. Many creative dreamers will arrive, will they succeed in learning to play with others? l brice auckenthaler, partner of Experts Consulting, innovation management, teacher and author of "l'Imagination collective" (Liaisons, 2007).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1367

In all modesty, it's a bit like Christopher Columbus or Lapérouse: you have an intuition and you have to go and check it out." At 56, Marc Lubin has more than three decades of travel behind him. A former high mountain guide and group leader, he pursues his passion as a freelancer by creating new circuits for agencies. "It's a work of clearing the way and discovery that often begins with reading. Ideas don't come out of nothing." In fact, it's by reading expedition reports or travel journals that most guides responsible for reconnaissance find inspiration. "Eric Shipton, who was one of the first to spot the south side of Everest, or Maurice Herzog, who climbed the first 8,000 meters," confirms Didier Cour, production director at Terres d'Aventure. Many great treks in the Himalayas have also been explored for mountaineers..." His alter ego at the Allibert agency, Didier Mille, mentions a "first" he achieved ten years ago with a group in a valley in Ladakh, "following the narration of a 19th-century English geographer and botanist. I had taken photocopies of his travel diary and every evening, at the stopover, I read... It was fantastic." There are also these almost mythical sites, such as the citadel of Alamut, in northern Iran: Sylvain Philip, from Hommes et Montagnes, went there on the trail of Hassan Ibn Saba, the "Old Man of the Mountain", master of the Assassin sect, which was rampant in the 11th century. Treasures. The rare pearl detected, it remains to be seen whether the reality lives up to the original intuition. Because the landscapes are being damaged, roads are appearing, houses are being built... By searching for information on the Internet, by questioning small local agencies when they exist, by using networks of local guides or local carriers, the guides try to get a closer look at their new El Dorado. "A trip is a pyramid of knowledge," explains Tamera, a tour operator in Lyon. And the talent is asking the right questions." In this part of the Sahara, are there cave paintings? Are there dunes? What shapes are they? "It's really exciting," continues Jacques Chatelet, founder of Tamera. "And when you find something, you feel like you've found a treasure." Then comes the time to explore the terrain, with its logistical, political and geographical considerations. "The desert is a real little expedition. You can't go wrong with water or food," explains Jean David, a Sahara specialist at Allibert. The legend of the camel that doesn't eat is indeed a legend... It eats every night." "Ultimately, it's like a movie," concludes another guide. "The client wants to see the finished product, not thirty hours of rushes..." Their next big treks, their greatest successes? In Venezuela: a waterfall called Salto Angel, and its 1,000-meter drop. Marc Lubin wants to land there by plane and then "rappel down with 50 kg backpacks between his legs." At Club Aventure, Jean Belliot mentions an engagement party among the Lolos, in northern Vietnam. "It depends on the rice harvest. Difficult to schedule. Especially since when you think you've got a date, you realize that the inhabitants use a lunar calendar and everything has to be reviewed..." There is also this Everest tour that would leave from the Nepalese base camp to reach the Tibetan slope to the north. "Logistically, that wouldn't be a problem. But politically, for the moment, it is unfeasible," concludes Didier Cour. This is the last scenario: the stillborn trip. "Countries open up and close up again," notes the philosophical Jacques Chatelet, who remembers a trip to Sudan in 2004, where blockages, setbacks and delays accumulated. "Finally, we received the final authorizations but, Ramadan obliges, we had to wait another twenty-four hours. The next day, we returned to the military post to learn... that everything had been canceled. There had been thirty deaths during the night. The Darfur conflict had just begun." High-trek. Traditional expeditions risk becoming old with the appearance of new technologies. Such as Google Earth, a free software available on the Internet, which lists all the satellite views of the Earth in 3D. With just a few clicks, you can now virtually explore the most remote places on the planet and prepare almost any itinerary from your desk. "In desert areas and mountains, it's incredibly precise," marvels Fabrice Oudin, product manager at Nomade. On his screen, he details his agency's Saharan circuits, points out canyons, dune belts or the presence of oases... With a movement of the mouse, the map changes to relief, highlighting the coasts and the differences in altitude. Same type of technique at Terres d'Aventure, where Luc Guerrier, a former computer scientist, has just completed the reconnaissance of a Himalayan valley between Makalu and Kangchenjunga without having set foot there. He scanned topographic maps and defined the coordinates of his route, then visualized his itinerary via Google Earth. On the computer, the trip seems ready: small pyramids even indicate the location of future bivouacs. "Then, you need real field experience to decipher the views," continues Fabrice Oudin, who has thus unearthed real gems in regions that are currently inaccessible. In Afghanistan, in the Band-e-Amir region, kilometers of crystal-clear lakes are dotted in the heart of the mountains. Rare photos gleaned from the Internet confirm the beauty of the landscapes. "There, there is an almost pre-planned journey... with armed guards," laughs the young man. GPS has also become an essential tool. To establish the complete profile of the trek, calculate the hours of walking, and record the differences in altitude. "Four years ago, we carried out a reconnaissance in a completely unknown massif, the Nyenpo Yurtse in eastern Tibet," explains Didier Mille. Of course, no map existed. We drew one up from our GPS measurements. We still use it today..." Good to know, some tour operators offer the "first" commercial version of their circuits at cost price. Other agencies, like Hommes et Montagnes, have their core of loyal customers. Otherwise, hurry up and sign up for new trips. For example, this hike around Chinguetti in Mauritania about ten years ago has since become a Saharan classic. In the evening, bivouacs were set up on ancient Neolithic sites perfectly preserved by the desert climate. It was not unusual to find fragments of pottery, arrowheads, fossilized eggshells... "It was great," remembers Laurent, "you could sit in the very place where nomads had settled 10,000 years ago, and find their tools, as if they had abandoned them the day before...".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1368

Do you know the Firefox browser? Have you heard of the YouTube video portal? Miro is exactly at the crossroads of the two: it is a free software that allows you to subscribe to different online video sources, including YouTube. Whether you use Windows, a Mac or Linux. This application categorizes its different sources according to the subject covered: entertainment, information, technology, etc. It downloads the selected videos in the background while you browse through its impressive video library, which also includes several online TV channels, including some in high definition (HD). The last time we took a look, Miro gave access to no less than 174 channels in French. That's a lot more than traditional TV, and it's completely free. Miro is available at the following address: www.getmiro.com.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1369

WHILE the Ministry of National Education is renewing the "Student Microportable" operation for the fourth year in order to help young people equip themselves with laptops that fit their budget, several hypermarkets and websites are offering laptops for less than 500 euros. That is a price significantly lower than those offered by the operation's partner manufacturers. Good deal or bad deal? "Student Microportable" is aimed at first-year students. The operation is based on a partnership with universities, banks, distributors and computer manufacturers. Finally, it includes a financial component that offers advantageous payment terms, for example flexible loans without application fees or repayments of 1 or 2 euros per day over 36 months. Several major brands are participating in the operation, including Apple, Asus, Dell, HP, Sony, Toshiba, Fujitsu-Siemens, Elonex and Packard-Bell. The choice of the models selected is based on specifications that detail precisely the characteristics of the products, which are then authorized to bear the label of the operation: Wi-Fi connectivity, autonomy greater than 3 hours, 1 GB of RAM, hard drive of at least 120 GB, DVD burner, but also office suite such as Microsoft Office and various utilities including an antivirus. Some models have additional components, without this being mandatory, such as a webcam or a Bluetooth interface. The computer cannot be a destocked material and must be available in less than forty days. All the models proposed, which cost between 750 and 2,000 euros, are guaranteed for 2 to 3 years and have after-sales support. However, on closer inspection, we see that the prices of the laptops selected for the operation are higher than those of models sold online or in supermarkets. Thus, Conforama, Fnac and Surcouf are displaying the Fujitsu-Siemens Amilo LA 1703-P3508 on sale for 499 euros. 15.4-inch screen, 120 GB hard drive, 1 GB RAM, dual-layer DVD burner, Wi-Fi connection... Most of the criteria seem to be met. Except that this model does not come with an office suite (you can nevertheless install OpenOffice.org, which is free, or Microsoft Office from 120 euros) and that its AMD Sempron 3500 + processor, which is not really optimized for laptops, is a single core while the "Student Microportable" operation recommends a dual core, more efficient for intensive calculations. Its low price can however be a decisive factor, provided that it is reserved for basic office use and that free software or applications are preferably installed. No office software In terms of performance, we prefer the more modern Amilo Li 1705-P5208, which Darty and Pixmania.fr offer at the same price. It is equipped with a 1.6 GHz Celeron M520 processor. At GrosBill.com, the Acer Aspire 3104WLMI-X1012 is listed at 499 euros. Same AMD processor as the Fujitsu-Siemens Amilo LA 1703, same 120 GB hard drive and 1 GB RAM, and same accessories (DVD burner, Wi-Fi and 15.4-inch screen). A small advantage: it comes with Microsoft Works 8.5, which includes a word processor, a spreadsheet and a data manager. For its part, the Dell site presents the Inspiron 1501 model at 499 euros (but with a delivery charge of 30 euros). Light and well designed, it has an AMD Athlon 64 dual-core processor, a 15.4-inch screen, a 120 GB hard drive, 1 GB of RAM, a 3-in-1 memory card reader, a DVD burner and Wi-Fi connectivity. This PC comes with the integrated Microsoft Works software, but without a security utility. As always with Dell, you can change certain components and add options for an additional fee (for example, count 50 euros for the antivirus and 150 euros for Microsoft Office Basic 2007). The warranty only lasts 90 days. Superior equipment Overall, the price difference is justified: between 499 euros for a basic PC, without advanced software or accessories, and a little over 700 euros for a high-performance, upgradeable model delivered with ready-to-use software, the balance weighs in favor of the latter. First advantage of the models selected for "Student Microportable": the use of a dual-core processor and powerful graphics cards on many of them is a guarantee of power and allows demanding applications to run, particularly in the multimedia and gaming fields. Another positive aspect: the equipment of the labeled products often exceeds the criteria of the specifications. The least expensive model, the Packard-Bell EasyNote MX36-R-062 (799 euros in the manufacturer's catalog), has a 160 GB hard drive, a webcam and a keyboard with an integrated numeric keypad. The argument of the financing conditions is also to be taken into account: the credit rates offered by resellers are generally higher than those of the operation's partners. Finally, the assurance of having a recent model capable of adapting to technical progress is a security. In short, while the 499 euro PC may be suitable for taking your first steps or as a second machine, it is preferable to invest a few euros more to have sophisticated equipment that will better meet the work required at university.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1370

COMPUTING. Linux, the free software, is no longer the eternal forgotten part of the PC shelves of distributors. At the beginning of the week, two of the main manufacturers, Lenovo and Dell, announced that they were going to sell machines on which Linux operating systems will be pre-installed. This is great news for those who want to find an alternative to Microsoft products, which equip 90% of computers in the world. The American Dell has led the way. The world number two began selling PCs equipped with the Linux Ubuntu operating system, designed by a community of users, in the United States in May. Last Tuesday, Dell extended this program to the United Kingdom, France, Germany and China. Now, two models of "Inspiron" laptops equipped with Linux are now marketed in France. For its part, Lenovo plans to sell a whole range of computers equipped with a free and open source operating system. Equipped with Novell's version of Linux, they should be sold in the last quarter of the year. According to Raj Aggarwal, head of Lenovo's Thinkpad laptops - acquired from IBM - these PCs could represent 5% of the group's laptop sales in a few years. The general public will be able to relay the strong demand recorded in the public sector.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1371

Internet Wiki vs. Google Jimmy Wales, co-founder of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, is making progress with his participatory search engine project. His company Wikia has acquired the open-source technology Grub, which uses the computers of volunteer Internet users. The first version of this Google competitor should be online by the end of the year. Press "Jasmin" faded In an interview with Le Figaro, Axel Ganz, founder of the women's magazine Jasmin, announced the discontinuation of the title launched last October. "I saw that there was no prospect of making this investment profitable," explained the former head of Prisma Presse. The weekly, launched with 230,000 copies with a budget of 20 million euros, had stabilised its circulation at 100,000 copies during the first half of 2007. Axel Ganz's conclusion: "Women have less time to read a new magazine." Free Telephony alone in the running Only the Iliad group, parent company of the Internet access provider Free, is a candidate for the fourth 3G mobile telephony license, announced the Telecoms Regulatory Authority (Arcep) on Tuesday.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1372

We are the "Consumed Revolt" generation: every counterculture movement is so quickly spread - thanks to the Internet - that it is immediately taken up by branding, the super-marketing described by Naomi Klein. The Rue! festival at the Grand Palais was symbolic: a right-wing minister inviting graffiti artists to spray paint well within the lines in a historic building, that confuses the issues. Worse: a department store sign that imitates the "ad daubers" style, another the posters of May 68, it's hard to swallow. Clothing marginalism has also become impossible; the "lads" are in Lacoste and the "bab's" in Benetton. But our great generational character trait is that ideologically it's like for clothes: it's difficult to fight against "merchandising". Especially when the "tyranny of cool" is dictated by ourselves: it's difficult to be young when it's fashionable to be so. The flagship work of our generation is Fight Club, a cult film; to oppose brands and the sad straight line of an orderly life, Jack creates a double for himself who is as gay as he is heterosexual, as leader as he is an anarchist, who will set his Ikea apartment on fire and lead a terrorist group as violent as it is absurd. No opposition to the world order, therefore, without violent schizophrenia, fighting, fighting to the death, terrorism and suicide. To top it all off, this base of the underground that is Fight Club is produced by 20th Century Fox... See our problem. For our generation, the Internationale is over, the Béruriers Noirs are over, make way for Radiohead, Noir Désir and Sinik, much more complex and psychodramatic. With simple fighting and marginality being recuperated and becoming trendy, Baudrillard is outdated. The time has come for Chomsky and his Znet Web network: "A community of people committed to social change." "The time has come, closer to us, and more "subtle", to Naomi Klein, Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, who in Révolte consommée: le mythe de la contre-culture (ed. Naïve, 2005), elevate our problematic to the climax. The time is no longer for Sartre, Marat, it is for sustainable development; it is no longer for left-wing revolutionaries with beards and paving stones, it is for the "cool" business school student who does ecomarketing. Our generation is centrist. Peace & love is good, but we cannot allow ourselves such simplistic views, we are "pragmatic". The fact is that alter-globalization is really complicated. Gone is the head-on opposition between communists and capitalists, liberalism has won. And it is not even amoral anymore; Nike had its trial, Noël Forgeard will have his. With communism swept away, capitalism moralized and eco-labeled, it becomes difficult to fight against liberalism; difficult to fight against freedom and individual responsibility. Nicolas Sarkozy is symptomatic of our generation: while young people expected to be able to oppose head-on a right-wing president with xenophobic undertones, in line with the recent Dutch and Austrian elections, they find themselves stuck in the middle of an uninhibited openness. And all this with the help of the savior Internet: "Do you want to rebel? Start a blog." This rebellion will end in SkyBlog, and Skyrock, polite in all respects, will bring together these embryos of revolt, will make itself their spokesperson with Diam's at the PS and Joey Starr at Ardisson. It's a bit weak. And to cap it all, no left-wing leader is there to recover all this - cause or consequence, who knows. No more fanzines, goodbye to the Grand Soir, hello to the quarter of an hour of glory and tidy your room... Our generation no longer knows which inequality to devote itself to, which people to save, which culprit to accuse, and its crisis lacks targets. A Sarkozyist friend recently retorted to me: "You want to help the guys from the suburbs, the countries of the South? Open your arms to them, and, with your little white face, they will steal your watch." Sad, but difficult to counter. China is coming out of the hole, with it 1 billion poor people, and the countries of Latin America are not the object of privileged compassion either since the group of countries of the South, called G77, was created with an animosity - quite understandable - towards the condescension of the North; since also Lula and Chavez disappointed with their aggressiveness, Ravalomanana with his illuminations. A good part of our generation did not pity the United States in 2001, which got a bit of what it deserved. But how can we not denounce terrorism against civilians? And Sharia law? Same ideological dead end during the fight against the first employment contract (CPE) and the riots of 2005; compassion for the most disadvantaged classes of our generation is very present, but its theory is quickly undermined by the blind violence of the "thugs", by the High Authority for the fight against discrimination and for equality (Halde), positive discrimination, and even by those who get by. So, our generation is "moderate". And it must be the first! Young "moderate" people who fight for moderate alternatives that do not fight the "system", but integrate into it: sustainable development, fair trade, free software... A generation that almost apologizes for throwing paving stones. A generation where it's "cool" to be reasonable. Nothing too serious, it's even good. But the overhaul of the left risks being very weak.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1373

"IT'S BEIRUT!" Stepping over the rubble, this National Assembly agent is furious. For a year, part of the Assembly has been under construction and he had more or less gotten used to it. But since June 17, the 577 deputies have arrived, and he has to deal with a chorus of lamentations in the corridors. "It's simple, I have neither telephone nor computer," complains this deputy. "I was offered a tiny room in the attic: no place to install my assistant, no possibility of sleeping in Paris," explains this former minister who finally won his case and got a larger space. "I'm lucky, I have a telephone line. But I have to write my amendments, because there is no computer connection," says Guillaume Garot (PS). In principle, there are more than 600 offices available for some 577 deputies. They are divided between the Palais Bourbon itself, 233, boulevard Saint-Germain, rue Aristide-Briand, 101, rue de l'Université and, since July 1, 103 of the same street. At each new legislature, the quaestors, who are the great treasurers of the Assembly, calculate the number of rooms to which the political parties are entitled. It is then the leaders of the political groups who distribute them. "There is some bargaining" There begins a first arm wrestling match: "In general, the deputies want to be housed at the Palais Bourbon, close to the administrators, the commissions and the power", indicates a deputy from the East, who adds: "But there is little room, because the building is old." It is therefore necessary to convince most of them to go into exile elsewhere. In any case, whatever the location, the size of the offices varies from single to double. "There is some bargaining. And we understand that decisions are made at the client's head," grumbles a deputy. "The premises of 233 are far away: they put the blues like me there," says a newly elected deputy. As a head of the quaestorship modestly points out, "the parties have their own distribution criteria." This year, the tension was clearly focused on the UMP group, which had to "give back" fifty offices to the opposition. And then there are the famous works, which concern 25,000 m². From July 2006 to the end of 2008, thirty-year-old outbuildings will be renovated. The aim is to transform 10 m² rooms into double offices, with bathrooms and the possibility of having a corner for the assistant. "It was a strong request from the deputies. But it means a series of moves," they admit at the quaestorship. At the beginning of July, one hundred and fifty people had to pack up and go elsewhere. To date, around forty offices have already been delivered, and a second delivery is expected in November. Then, we will have to wait a year: because to limit noise pollution, the Assembly has asked construction companies to adopt flexible working hours. Hence the slow progress of the work. In the last month, logistical problems have also arisen. Some, like François Cornut-Gentille, no longer received their mail at the beginning of July. On July 12, the 1,200 computers ordered from HP had still not been delivered and the new free software system was "bugging". In short, many MPs ended up fleeing to their constituencies. "Reforms or not, there are limits", sums up one MP, who adds: "Morale is already not at its best..."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1374

Should patents be abolished? In the era of the Internet and the patentability of living things, a vast intellectual movement, with diverse origins, is calling for the legal protection of inventions to be abolished. In his latest book, the 2001 Nobel Prize winner in economics, Joseph Stiglitz, wrote a virulent plea against what he identifies as "one of the worst excesses of current capitalism". According to him, "it is a question of life and death, as we see in the fight for cheap copies of medicines. People or patents." Setting out on a crusade against the "locking up of knowledge", he asserts, forgetting to note that these means of transport have ultimately developed rather well, that "in the 19th century, patents nearly killed the airplane or the automobile". According to him, free access to knowledge is a "global public good" and constitutes a "moral obligation". He goes so far as to stigmatize Bill Gates: "How can he defend both patents for Microsoft and his foundation for access to health care?" But what would this man's fortune and his very commendable generosity be without his inventions and without their legitimate protection. Another approach, libertarian, considers, with the economist Murray Rothbard, that patents are incompatible with the free market, because someone who is not in possession of a patented good but who manages, by his own means and in complete independence, to invent the same type of good, is deprived of the use of the product of his efforts by the effect of an arbitrary public ban. The monopoly created by the invention patent would amount in some way to an illegitimate property right over the brains of others, depriving of their natural rights those who discover or who, more simply, carry out the administrative procedures, after the filing of the patent. If Stiglitz's caricatured remarks find an obvious echo among the anti-globalists and if the libertarian theory can seem intellectually attractive, the reality principle seems, on such a subject, to have to prevail. Indeed, from the moment that potential imitators exist, the inventor and the industrialist who exploits the invention cannot be encouraged to invest in research and the perpetual improvement of products if they are not certain of being able to be true owners of their creations. "The inventor must be compensated and rewarded," wrote John Stuart Mill. Once the novelty is accessible on the market, it can in fact be immediately plundered by copiers who profit from the work accomplished, without having borne the costs. Fundamentally classic, the traditional justification for invention patents remains always relevant. It is even more so, at a time when copying has become increasingly easy. The occasional intervention of the State in this matter is therefore not shocking since it only gives the first discoverer (who will hopefully be the first to declare) the means to prove, by the effect of a simple formalism of effectiveness, the existence of his property right with respect to third parties. This does not mean that the State is the creator of this right. This right pre-exists the accomplishment of this formalism, as is the case with material, movable and immovable property. The question of duration should, however, be able to evolve. If, with the patent, we mean to note and protect the existence of a property right, this should indeed be, logically, permanent. The owner is then free to transfer his property or grant licenses on it. However, with the current system, an invention is only protected for a period predefined by law. This symbolic barrier has no more meaning than justification. A family home does not fall into the public domain after seventy years! Such a design does not deprive, quite the contrary, inventors who wish, out of conviction or for the sake of promotion, to make the product of their research freely accessible. We are free to circulate, including for free, what belongs to us. The coexistence of free software and patented software is moreover most peaceful. Let us not force patent holders to communicate, against their will, the fruit of their efforts to their competitors. The right of ownership, which includes a right of exclusion, must be respected. But when the European Commission, under the pretext of defending an erroneous conception of competition (any inventor is necessarily in a dominant position since he is the first - and therefore the only one - to occupy a market that he himself created!), condemns Microsoft, in particular because this group would create interoperability difficulties due to the "secret" nature of its source codes, it violates the fundamental right held by the Redmond firm over its own inventions. The contemporary illusion of free and the barely veiled hatred of great successes must not make us lose sight of these essential principles, without which our country will have great difficulty in recovering. \* Lecturer at Sciences Po, author of La France est foutue, J.-C. Lattès. "Let's respect the right to property. A family home does not fall into the public domain after seventy years!"

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1375

TWO YEARS to network the Regions with competitiveness clusters. These Anglo-Saxon "clusters", responsible for promoting industrial production through collaborative projects between public and private research laboratories, were increased yesterday from 66 to 71. An ambitious global financial industry cluster is being launched in Paris and a cluster specializing in agri-food in Midi-Pyrénées. The other networks labeled by the Prime Minister favor grouping: Elastopole (rubber) brings together teams from Auvergne, Pays de la Loire, Ile-de-France and the Center. The aeronautical activities of Île-de-France and Paca (Astech and Pégase) are attached to Aerospace Valley in Toulouse. And various projects are integrated into existing clusters: tropical health research (Guyana) is backed by the Lyon Biopôle cluster, work on free software joins Systematic Paris Region. Public funding will not be increased, but will respect the initial budget planned (1.5 billion for 3 years). "The support system lasts until 2008 (...), it seems essential to perpetuate it after the precise evaluation of the action of each pole", stressed François Fillon. This assessment stage will be carried out by the end of 2008 before renewing in 2009 the allocations justified by "the development of new products and new jobs". The very consensual interministerial committee for regional planning and competitiveness (Ciact) took half an hour. The poles have clearly come full circle. The Prime Minister announced the launch of a new regional planning policy for autumn 2007.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1376

The Interministerial Committee for Territorial Planning and Competitiveness (CIACT), established under the Prime Minister, was due to announce on Thursday 5 July the labelling of 5 new competitiveness clusters out of the 18 files examined. This brings the total number of clusters to 71. These are the Finance Innovation cluster (Ile-de-France), Agrimip Innovation (specialising in agri-food research in Midi-Pyrénées), Elastopole (rubber industry in the Centre, Auvergne, Ile-de-France and Pays de la Loire regions); and two clusters specialising in aeronautics and space: Astech (Ile-de-France) and Pégase (Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur), created "in conjunction" with the Aerospace Valley cluster (Aquitaine-Midi-Pyrénées). Three other dossiers, which did not give rise to a cluster in the strict sense, will nevertheless be "backed by existing clusters", which should mean that the companies and laboratories involved will benefit from the same financial advantages as those of the clusters. These are the Tropical Health dossier (Guyana) backed by Lyon Biopole; Logiciellibre (Ile-de-France) backed by Systematic Paris Region; and Eco-efficient Technologies in Tropical Island Environments at Risk (Guadeloupe) whose backing by a cluster not yet decreed will be favored. These announcements of new clusters - although their large number has been criticized - show that the government is intensifying its policy of competitiveness clusters whose objective is to promote innovation through collaboration between public and private research laboratories. Thanks to national and regional funding (the amount of 1.5 billion euros between 2006 and 2008, initially planned, has nevertheless not been increased), but also to tax exemptions and reductions in social security contributions. This intensification also results in a relaxation of the geographical criterion. By labeling a center located in several regions, and by creating this new concept of "backing" which allows the collaboration of geographically very distant laboratories. Finally, the Ciact announced the renewal of public support from 2009 for the benefit of centers having, after evaluation, shown "tangible results".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1377

»BlackBerry or another PDA, it doesn't matter. There are clearly useful features, especially for decision-makers who always need to have the most recent information at hand. Now, the problem for me is the use of a closed, proprietary system (and not open source). Is the service provider a trustworthy third party? Does it archive our data without our knowledge? Is the data backed up? And there, there is room for maneuver. ALICE

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1378

"Of course, I am one of the privileged few who, thanks to their BlackBerry, can work whenever they want outside their office and be constantly reachable. However, I quickly realized that it had become a real obsession, and that I spent my time checking my emails. I then had the feeling of never being able to disconnect from my job, as if I were permanently connected to my company. In the end, what I initially believed to be a wonderful new tool for freedom turned out to be for me a real tool for alienation." GEORGES

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1379

Paris - "Globalization is both an inevitable and necessary phenomenon. It must not serve to aggravate inequalities between the South and the North. Until now, the least developed countries - particularly African ones - continue to suffer from the deterioration of the terms of trade. Raw materials and agricultural products are paid less and less. If we let this happen, we are heading for disaster." Abdou Diouf, 71, former Prime Minister and then President of Senegal from 1971 to 2000, has been Secretary General of the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF) since 2002. It is in this capacity that he received La Presse, a few days before his speech at the opening lunch of the Montreal Conference tomorrow, on the theme of Globalization and Economic Solidarity. "The OIF," he explains, "obviously has the vocation to defend French on the international stage in the face of the meteoric rise of English. But it also has the vocation to get involved in the world's major affairs." With a modest annual budget of 89 million euros, the OIF certainly does not have the means to compete with the largest international organizations. But, as Abdou Diouf says, "it works with multiple public and private partners, it can also advocate for development and education, facilitate projects..." Particularly with regard to black Africa, which, with more than 20 countries, forms the largest mass of entirely and effectively French-speaking countries. Through public interventions or more discreet work behind the scenes and in the field, the OIF is concerned with very diverse issues: for example, in the least developed countries, it trains civil servants in international trade negotiations. By its composition, it constitutes one of the voices of the poorest countries, often African, "threatened with being left by the wayside" by economic development: "Very recently, explains Abdou Diouf, four French-speaking African countries have taken action with the WTO to enable cotton producers to get by economically." The French-speaking world is also closely interested, with multiple private and public partners, in ways to prevent the "digital divide" in Africa, which would further undermine an underdeveloped continent. It advocates in particular for the allocation of free software. At the OIF, the rule of law and "good governance" are also discussed. In short: the institution and consolidation of democracy, most often in African countries. The head of the OIF, who was the first to set an example in Senegal in the 1970s and 1980s, publishes a report on the subject every two years "which is neither aggressive nor disrespectful, which highlights the progress made, but also the shortcomings and the efforts to be made". And when there was a coup d'état in Mauritania, the OIF "first condemned the coup, then encouraged and supported the return to democracy". Today, under a UN mandate, it is the OIF that is responsible for rebuilding the judicial system in Haiti, which monitors elections in Africa and provides advice. All of this therefore gives Abdou Diouf a certain legitimacy to intervene on current international issues. He also gives a tip of the hat to large organisations such as the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank: "At one time, these organisations were marked by a certain dogmatism. Not only did they set the objectives - sometimes laudable - but they themselves decided on the means to be used, which caused economic and social disasters: the remedy made the problem worse. For several years - for example, Michel Camdessus' term at the head of the IMF - we have understood that it was necessary to discuss and negotiate the reforms to be carried out with the governments concerned. With this caveat: in the commercial domain, it is essential that the interests of the least developed countries are truly taken into account. To avoid the worst and finally allow take-off."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1380

The "Paris Capitale du Libre" event rewarded twelve projects and actions in the field of free software. The complete list of these "Lutetia d'Or" (community, public, private, political, etc.) is on the Ecrans.fr website.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1381

A new shareholder for Duc VOLAILLE. The Centrale coopérative agricole bretonne (Cecab, 1.4 billion euros in turnover in 2006) has acquired a 17.38% stake in the capital of the Duc group, controlled by the financial holding company Verneuil, for 7.6 million euros. Cecab represents "a choice ally and a prestigious shareholder for Duc", declared François Gontier, president of the Chailley (Yonne) company. Free software is making headway IT. The players in free software and proprietary software are burying the hatchet. While free software is holding court in Paris until this evening, the French Association of Traditional Software Publishers (Afdel) has agreed to take part in the debates this year. The Afdel representative called for the two worlds to coexist or even converge. Free software represents 1.4% of the market. Lactalis improves its offer on Toury FOOD. Lactalis, the ousted buyer of Toury (milk, cheese, fruit juice), has improved its takeover bid for the Auvergne family group by 15 million euros before the Riom Court of Appeal. On May 5, the Clermont-Ferrand commercial court ordered the sale of the nine companies of the Toury group, in receivership, to four companies, to the detriment of Lactalis, the world's second largest dairy group.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1382

A new shareholder for Duc POULTRY. The Centrale coopérative agricole bretonne (Cecab, 1.4 billion euros in turnover in 2006) has acquired a 17.38% stake in the capital of the Duc group, controlled by the financial holding company Verneuil, for 7.6 million euros. Cecab represents "a choice ally and a prestigious shareholder for Duc", declared François Gontier, president of the Chailley (Yonne) company. Free software is making headway IT. The players in free software and proprietary software are burying the hatchet. While free software is holding court in Paris until this evening, the French Association of Traditional Software Publishers (Afdel) has agreed to take part in the debates this year. The Afdel representative called for the two worlds to coexist or even converge. Free software represents 1.4% of the market. Sodiaal and Bongrain are marrying their cheeses FOOD. Sodiaal, owner of Yoplait, and the cheesemaker Bongrain will create a joint subsidiary by bringing together the brands Raclette Riches Monts, le Rustique, Révérend for Sodiaal and Coeur de Lion for Bongrain (our editions of May 3). This division with a turnover of 500 million euros intends to weigh in against Lactalis. This unprecedented marriage must still be authorized by the competition authorities.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1383

The whole world has the right to have a PC supplied with Microsoft programs, which equip more than 90% of computers in circulation. Even small and medium-sized African companies, which cannot afford to buy a PC or pay the licenses required to use its software. The world leader in IT announced this at the end of the week in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) during a forum on new technologies organized by Microsoft in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the UN. An announcement against a backdrop of major maneuvers by high-tech giants in emerging countries and the rise of free software in these markets that are not yet solvent. Donors. Unlike "One Laptop per Child" (OLPC), a project at MIT in Boston initiated by researcher Nicholas Negroponte, and Intel's "Classmate", Microsoft's program does not aim to create from scratch a very cheap computer for poor countries. As in rich countries where Microsoft has been recycling PCs for years to give them a second life in schools in disadvantaged areas, the aim is to allow African SMEs to benefit from a program that has the advantage of getting users used to thinking of Windows when they turn on their computers. Coming from donors in rich countries, mainly companies (the United States alone retires 70 million computers each year), the PCs will be reconditioned with Microsoft software before being resold at very low prices. "By 2010, a billion computers will have to be recycled worldwide, and Africa will be able to benefit from more than half of them," promised Cheikh Diarra, the head of Microsoft Africa, according to whom there is very strong demand. According to Jean-Philippe Courtois, president of Microsoft International, this project could cost the American firm several tens of millions of dollars. Potential. "We will help transform the education system in the next fifteen years by providing broader access to new technologies throughout Africa" and by promoting "local talent," said Jean-Philippe Courtois. According to him, in fifteen years of presence in Africa, Microsoft has already trained 200,000 educators who have in turn trained 23 million students. Set up in collaboration with UNIDO, the United Nations Industrial Development Assistance Program, this project is just one facet of its so-called "unlimited potential" program, which clearly shows Microsoft's immense ambitions to equip the planet with computers. This project aims, by 2020, to provide new technologies to the 5 billion inhabitants of the planet who still do not have access to them.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1384

Until Sunday, the 3rd edition of "Pocket Films" will be held at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and it's thinking big. With 30 countries represented, more than 200 mini fictions or documentaries, most often one to three minutes long, shown on a big screen or on "mobile phone trees", workshops, professional meetings, guest filmmakers, the program of this free festival is enticing. "It's the largest event in the world dedicated solely to these films... we've received a thousand, the range is very open", says Benoît Labourdette, its coordinator. TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION "We are at the very beginning of a great story: that of the technological revolution brought about by this camera, which is at the same time its own screen and broadcaster", believes Laurence Herszberg, director of the Forum des Images which, closed for renovations, was unable to host the festival. After cinema, television and the computer, the mobile phone has given birth to a 4th screen coupled with a willingly clandestine camera, conducive to all kinds of experiments for filmmakers, artists and citizen bloggers from all over the world. A space for creation and democratic expression at the antipodes of "happy slapping" (filmed assaults) also born with mobile telephony. The festival provides proof of this with an international panorama completed by a range of short films by young French filmmakers from various schools. "Cartes blanches" allow you to discover films from the The4thscreen festival in New York, created by the artist collective "Lili range le chat", which builds a bridge between Europe and Uzbekistan, or by the artist Masaki Fujihata and his students from the Tokyo University of the Arts. THE WHOLE WORLD Africa, often absent from film festivals, is represented by the films of Zaanga, a cooperative audiovisual agency that advocates for the sharing of knowledge and the dissemination of free software on the Internet. Filmed without a budget in Togo, Niger or Burkina Faso, they show the daily lives of human groups invisible to traditional media. Because one of the trends of these mini films, whose aesthetic quality is increasing, is to allow a civic, social and political expression. Filmed by German teenagers on holiday in Lebanon last summer and already awarded, the documentary "Holidays" shows their vision of war. The way in which the mobile phone can be used for civic projects will be the subject of a debate organized during the festival, alongside lessons in filming and editing, and workshops, on community creation in particular.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1385

A small, innovative IT services company founded in Sherbrooke three years ago, Révolution Linux is expanding rapidly: the company has just obtained its ISO 9001:2000 quality certification, and its 17 employees are now based in new premises at 2100 King Street West. Révolution Linux offers businesses and institutions the management of simple solutions, particularly using free software on the Internet. This software is widely used because it is free (no licensing fees to pay, as with Microsoft products, for example). All that remains is to adapt it to the needs of its customers. The young company's customers include some thirty school boards in Quebec and Ontario, a series of government departments and agencies, a large international restaurant chain, and, most recently, the City of Sherbrooke ($50,000 per year following a call for tenders). "We also have a mandate with the City of Quebec for a feasibility study on migrating from Microsoft Office to Open Office," says Patrice Albaret, Director of Business Development, who adds that the savings on licensing fees will be numerous for this large employer with many Internet users. By eliminating Microsoft Office fees, we immediately save $700 per workstation... "It's a model that fits the reality of what we want to do in Sherbrooke. It's an innovative company in cutting-edge technology," says Denis-Robert Elias, special advisor to Révolution Linux as president of Alliance Novare, a creation of the Sherbrooke university hub (the two universities in collaboration with the CHUS). Mr. Elias is also Director of the Internship and Placement Service at the University of Sherbrooke. "They bring new money to Sherbrooke," he observes, in addition to promoting the retention of university graduates. "With the order book they have, I think they will be able to increase to 25 employees within the year." Currently, half of the employees were trained at the University of Sherbrooke. What are the company's future plans? "We want to continue to get closer to our customers, have a local service, continue our expansion in Ontario and the United States, be a leader," replies Benoît des Ligneris, President and CEO of Révolution Linux. "For our customers, we manage emails, accounts, file sharing, antivirus, backup copy systems (in case of failure or loss), IP telephony, and we provide technology advice," adds the young CEO. albert.berube@latribune.qc.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1386

Airplanes are always fascinating. What child hasn't had fun with a model airplane? Some take their passion further and are even rewarded for it. This is the case for the VAMU team at the Université de Sherbrooke (VAMUdeS), which received the Octas Prize for University Succession for its efforts. VAMUdeS is a team made up of about ten undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering at the Université de Sherbrooke. Last month, the team won the first UVS Canada student competition in the design of an unmanned aircraft, often called a drone. "The project started three years ago," explains Marc-André Lévesque, spokesperson for the group, "and it brought together students in mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and computer engineering. We chose an aeronautics project because we all liked the field, but also because we wanted to learn more." In the first year, the team went to a first competition in Germany. "We had designed a miniature aircraft that was piloted with a remote control. We weren't quite up to speed, since the other teams had planes equipped with autopilots." So back to the drawing board. "The cost of purchasing a commercial autopilot is about $10,000, too high for us. We then turned to the Paparazzi group at the École nationale d'aviation civile in France, which makes free software available on the Internet to build an autopilot." Participation in a second competition in Florida the following year allowed them to refine the machine. The UVS Canada competition has three stages. The first consists of submitting a technical report that gives a precise idea of the prototype of the unmanned aircraft that the team intends to build. It is after this stage that the finalists are chosen who will move on to the second stage, which is the manufacturing of the prototype. “It took a year to prepare the technical report and another year to build the prototype.” The final stage of the competition took place in Goose Bay and involved flying the aircraft and having it perform tasks. “The aircraft had to fly over a 4-square-kilometre forested area and participate in a search and rescue mission. The aircraft had to be able to locate and recognise targets, such as the crash site of an aircraft, [determine] if there were survivors and where they were.” The aircraft designed by VAMUdeS came in first. The drone The miniature unmanned aircraft – or drone – built by VAMUdeS is made of fibreglass. It has a wingspan of one metre, with a slightly smaller fuselage. The aircraft is powered by two electric motors powered by a rechargeable lithium polymer battery. The flight time is approximately 45 minutes. The aircraft takes off in a conventional manner, with the pilot guiding the plane using a remote control. But once the plane is in the air, the autopilot takes over. "On the ground, we just sit back and watch. And as soon as the plane disappears from our sight, we follow its flight on the computer screen." The plane is also equipped with a high-precision camera that transmits images to the computer in real time. A modem ensures the transmission of data between the plane and the ground station. The autopilot system is equipped with a computer and a satellite positioning system (GPS). "We can therefore specify points and trajectories that the plane recognizes and we follow its movement on a satellite map." The plane also has a stabilization system that allows it to maintain a horizontal position, make a turn, climb or nose-dive. "The stabilization system works using infrared sensors that measure the temperature difference between the sky and the ground, which allows the onboard computer to know the plane's position in the air." Electrical engineering student Marc-André Lévesque greatly enjoyed this adventure. "On the one hand, it's extremely educational. You learn almost more than in a class. On the other hand, it's a multidisciplinary project. So you have to know how to popularize your knowledge with the other members of the team." \*\*\* Contributor to Le Devoir

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1387

Like prophets, supporters of "open source" have been announcing since 1991 the day when the Linux operating system will demote Windows on the PC of ordinary mortals. But the hundreds of distributions delivered by the community, often terribly complex, have never gone beyond the stage of a sectarian movement. That was until Monday, May 28, when Dell began selling systems running Ubuntu. Downloadable on the Internet, this completely free operating system was born in 2004, at the initiative of the South African billionaire Mark Shuttleworth, member of the very select club of space tourists. After making a fortune with a computer security company, the entrepreneur, who participates in various educational projects in Africa, has given himself the mission of spreading the good news of Linux throughout the world. A few million dollars out of his wallet later, Canonical Ltd was born, with the main mandate of developing an operating system based on the open source code created by the Finn Linus Torvalds, with a shock philosophy to boot: "Linux for humans". The concept was a hit. The operating system, considerably lighter than Windows despite its advantageously comparable graphical interface, its integrated suite of office software (Open Office), its clone of Photoshop (The Gimp), language support covering 40 languages and all the necessary tools (Firefox and Thunderbird) to browse the Web, quickly carved out a place for itself in the Linux community. When Dell had the idea of launching the Idea Storm blog, asking its customers to provide suggestions for improving its products, more than 100,000 people wrote to ask for computers with Ubuntu pre-installed. On May 1st, Dell acquiesced to their request, a move celebrated as a profound revolution on the discussion forums devoted to Linux. The systems finally appeared Monday on Dell.com, and are selling for $100 less than identical machines running Windows. But for Chris Kenyon, director of market development at Canonical Ltd., it's just a "first step." "The deal with Dell allows us to get Ubuntu a little bit more out there," he says. "Our challenge is to make people understand that they now have a real choice when they buy a PC." "And we want to be clear: choosing Ubuntu is not choosing a low-end version of Windows, although our system will always be completely free," Kenyon says. (Secret) Offices in Montreal This free nature, a fundamental principle of Ubuntu's philosophy, is ensured by customer service contracts that Canonical Ltd. signs with its corporate clients. Enough contracts to pay the 80 or so developers who deliver all the updates to the London system, and to justify the opening of an office with about 15 employees in Montreal, in a tower located near the corner of Bishop and René-Lévesque. This is where all of Canonical's most recent hires have taken place, but don't ask the company's managers to give you a tour; the location is kept secret. "It's a very small office where we test, among other things, computer equipment belonging to major suppliers. There are open cases with the fans exposed," explains Jeff Bailey of Canonical Montreal. "You enter through the kitchen and there's not even a receptionist. Our confidentiality obligations to our customers prevent us from allowing tours of the office, but I assure you that at all hours of the day, seven days a week, customer service employees are answering calls from all four corners of the planet." Despite all the secrecy surrounding these Montreal offices, open source aficionados still manage to find the place. "We've had someone knock on the door asking for technical help. They managed to track us down by following us as we went to buy a latte," Baileys explains with a laugh. On the blog of Fabian Rodriguez, a Montreal employee of Canonical, you can also read half a dozen comments from Ubuntu users offering to serve free croissants in the morning or sweep the floor, for the simple pleasure of participating in the development of the operating system. An anecdote that illustrates quite well the extent to which Ubuntu users are devoted to the cause, almost religiously. This same community is trying to convert thousands of Windows users to make the big jump to Linux on blogs, websites and other forums. But Canonical's executives are already thinking much further. "We are working on developing an ultraportable version of the operating system for future generations of cell phones," Kenyon explains. To see Ubuntu in action, visit our journalist's blog: http://blogues.technaute.com/peloquin

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1388

Okay. So, there's the desktop computer. The notebook. The ultra-mobile computer. The handheld computer. The smartphone. And the wireless. Which one do you use to surf the Internet? If you chose "None of the above," then maybe the Internet tablet is for you. Nokia N800 Good news! The Internet tablet par excellence, now in its second generation, is finally being sold in Canada by Nokia. The N800, which is the successor to the 770, has the same main features as the 770, and adds a bit more user-friendliness. For example, two SD memory card slots (including one that can convert an SD card into additional RAM, if needed). And a swivel webcam that, despite its low resolution, allows you to have video conversations over the Internet. Since the device runs on a well-known Linux distribution, the community of cracks who adopted Nokia's tablet from its beginnings have already assembled a host of free and open source software for this device, from the instant messaging client to the media server, including all the traditional online applications (Web, e-mail, etc.). The media server, moreover, is surprisingly versatile: you can access audiovisual material stored on a remote server from the tablet, and redirect it to another device, for example another PC, in order to play the content there. It's completely useless, but it proves the capabilities of the N800. In conjunction with an application like Orb, free on the Internet, you can access the documents stored on your PC at home from any Wi-Fi access point. Or, failing that, from the digital connection of a cell phone paired with the N800 via Bluetooth. Naturally, the wireless ports will drain the device's battery more or less quickly. An hour or two of use will be enough to completely empty it. Also, for messaging fans, the lack of a keyboard will quickly become annoying. Typing on the touch screen with the stylus is quick, but there are limits! For those, Nokia separately details a foldable wireless keyboard, just in case. In short, for the price and size of a high-end portable music player, Nokia offers a device that, as a bonus, offers the best of the Internet and mobile multimedia. And in French, to boot! Nokia N800 www.nokia.ca $470 \*\*\*\*1/2 + Compact and versatile, the Nokia N800 tablet offers the best of the Internet in the back of your pocket. - Like most devices of this type, if you're left-handed, you're done for. HP iPAQ Travel Companion It's hard to say whether this digital agenda, powered by Windows Mobile 5, is an Internet tablet, a GPS guide for the car or, quite simply, a pocket computer. Let's just say, to sum up, that it's a three-in-one. With the Tom Tom Navigator 6 road guidance software, pre-installed on the iPaq Travel Companion, you also get a complete road atlas for North America. The device also comes with a base and an articulated suction cup to attach it to the dashboard of your vehicle. Practical for the upcoming vacations. Add to that the Wi-Fi and Bluetooth wireless connections, and you really get a mobile device par excellence. Too bad Windows Mobile is not yet available in French (it will be with version 6, later this summer). HP iPAQ Travel Companion www.hp.ca $650 \*\*\* + The Travel Companion is more than a digital diary: an Internet tablet, GPS guide and multimedia player all in one. - The touch screen is unpleasant to use and is very difficult to look at under the sun's rays. Pepper Pad 3 The "open source" alternative to ultramobile computers and mobile devices running Windows has a name: the Pepper Pad. It is a complete tablet, with a relatively large and good resolution display, which includes, as a bonus, a full keyboard separated into two sections on either side of the screen. The latter, in addition, is touch-sensitive. Not to mention the mouse. Pepper's tablet runs on a Linux distribution that already includes several applications for getting the most out of the Internet: a browser, instant messaging, RSS feeds, etc. And since it is a free system, a community of developers is constantly adding new applications. The device is also very good at multimedia: photos, videos and music scroll across its screen without problem. You can even display a universal remote control to control the devices in your home (an infrared port equips the Pad). In short, a beautiful and good entertainment. At a price that makes you hesitate, however. A lot. Pepper Pad 3 www.pepper.com $850 \*\*\*\* + With its integrated keyboard, Pepper's tablet also rivals the famous UMPCs. - Its price is enough to make you hesitate. Alain.mckenna@lapresse.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1389

IT GROUP Dell announced on Thursday, May 24, that it wants to abandon the exclusive sale of its computers on the Internet, a distribution method that had nevertheless been the recipe for its success in recent years. Starting in mid-June, two of the desktop computer models from the Texan, the world's second-largest computer manufacturer, will be sold in 3,500 Wal-Mart hypermarkets in the United States and Canada. "In the coming quarters, there will be new initiatives in this evolution towards global retailing," explained a spokesperson for the group on Thursday. Dell also announced on Thursday the upcoming launch of computers equipped with the operating system based on the free software Linux. These decisions come at a difficult time for Dell. In 2006, the manufacturer lost its place as world number one to the American Hewlett-Packard. For the 4th quarter of its 2006-2007 financial year (ending at the end of January), its turnover fell by 5.2% and its profit by 33%. And its share price has lost more than 50% of its stock market value over the past 18 months. In recent years, Dell had bet on computer equipment for businesses. It is now paying the price for having missed the take-off of laptop sales to the general public, a market that Hewlett-Packard and Asian manufacturers such as Acer have, on the contrary, been able to seize. While direct sales on the Internet could suit businesses, many consumers still prefer to buy laptops in stores. In an attempt to get Dell back on track, Michael Dell, its founder, took over the reins of the company in January, after having relinquished them two and a half years earlier. He had suggested at that time that he was ready to overhaul the company's structures and economic model. "The direct model was a revolution but it is not a religion," he wrote in an email to his employees and revealed on the Wall Street Journal website (Le Monde, May 3, 2007).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1390

THE FOUNDER of the Internet encyclopedia Wikipedia was recently on the cover of Fast Company magazine. His photo read "Google's worst nightmare" in bold letters. Jim Wales, a young bearded forty-something, pretends to be amused. "My mother bought ten copies of the magazine." He doesn't see why he would hurt Google and its 10,000 employees: "I'm all alone against them." A former trader, Jim Wales pretends not to follow Wall Street and emphasizes that he is not really a business owner. "I'm not a businessman, but a revolutionary who wants to destroy an entire industry," he jokes. "Jimbo" has indeed shaken up the Internet. The collective encyclopedia he invented six years ago, whose articles are created and modified by Internet users, is now among the fifteen most visited sites on the planet. It now contains more than 7 million articles, co-written by 280,000 people. Last December, he announced plans to launch a new search engine. He sees Google as vulnerable. "When they launched, they really stood out. The other search engines were really bad. To the point where I doubted the future of the Internet if you couldn't find anything on them." But he says Google has now lost its lead. "If you compare searches from Google, Yahoo! and the others, the results are very similar. No one has a clear advantage." A survey cited by Fast Company found that 21 percent of business users feel the engines understand their query. Only 10 percent find what they're looking for on their first search, and 93 percent still try by changing the words. Wales says Google may not be immune to further comparisons from consumers. "It's a tough market to lock down. Microsoft was able to get its share of the operating system market because everyone cared about compatibility. But if your friends are using Google and you're using something else, nobody has a problem with that." » A successful product Wales knows that he is not the first to venture into the field of search engines. "We could have invested a fortune to pay people to find a better search engine, but we would not necessarily have succeeded." Hence his idea, modeled on the operation of the encyclopedia, to involve the best in the creation of a new search engine. "It seems a little vague, but that's all I can say." The Internet world is growing impatient. The forty-something spoke about his project for the first time in December. Unlike the beginnings of Wikipedia, he explains that this time, he is obliged to have a fairly successful product before making it public. "When we launched Wikipedia, I could say we are launching an encyclopedia and only have four articles. Now, we are expected." To prove that his idea is progressing well, he highlights his hiring of Jeremie Miller, a free software developer famous for his discoveries in instant messaging platforms. But if he is counting on collaborations between researchers and companies to build "Wikia Search", this time, the development is being done in a commercial enterprise: Wikia, a company he set up in 2004 with venture capital (including an investment from Amazon) and which already offers community hosting. Led by Gil Penchina, the former European director of eBay, it now has around thirty employees. Around fifteen programmers work in Poland. As for its economic model, "nothing radical", Wikia will draw its revenue from advertising. Unlike Google and other search engines, the algorithms for ranking sites will be transparent. "I believe that by giving a lot of free content you can attract enough people to generate traffic." How will Wales succeed in reconciling free community and profit? Wikia Search and Wikipedia are officially independent projects. President of Wikia, Wales has remained on the board of directors of the Wikipedia Foundation. The encyclopedia is owned by Wikipedia, a nonprofit corporation, and runs on donations and the free time of volunteers. Would a commercial project generate as many volunteer contributions? "That's why we have to be nice," Wales says. "Those who help us can leave at any time." New York GUILLEMETTE FAURE

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1391

With all due respect to Mega Brands, the Lego brand recently took a serious technological turn by launching its Mindstorms range, based on the programmable NXT module and which allows young people who are quite knowledgeable in the field to build a robot with rather developed artificial intelligence. The NXT block is a small computer with a display on which an impressive number of sensors are connected: one for touch, one for sound, one for distance, one for light, etc. In fact, this technology is so advanced that a community of free software developers has recently been created to offer anyone interested free applications that bring Mindstorms robots to life. And like most gadgets, if it seems complicated to you, it's because you're already too old to have fun with it. More info at mindstorms.lego.com.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1392

For years, JAMENDO LA MUSIQUE has been searching for a magic formula that would ward off the curse that has befallen record sales since the advent of the Internet. In four years, CD sales have dropped by almost 40%! However, piracy is not inevitable. This is the conviction of Laurent Kratz, one of the three founders of Jamendo. This website puts artists in direct contact with the public. The time of record companies is over, according to the creators of Jamendo. "The production costs of a song have collapsed. With the Internet and effective tools, it is possible to distribute it for free," assures Laurent Kratz. There would therefore be no point in fighting against the wave of free music. "Paid music represents 2% on the Internet, while listening on iPods is booming. Just like concerts," he emphasizes. At Jamendo, copyright is inspired by the world of free software. The artist is forced to subscribe to a "Creative Commons" license that authorizes unlimited copying of the work on the Internet. In return, Jamendo promises to pay a portion of its advertising revenue to the artists. Jamendo also offers to organize the "sponsoring" of the artist by its fans. Internet users can pay the musician a minimum sum of 5 euros. Jamendo receives 10% in passing. This formula has not yet allowed the site established in Luxembourg to achieve a significant turnover. It is not alone in this niche. Sites like Last.fm, ArtistShare, Magnatune have already cleared the ground. Jamendo attracts approximately 500,000 Internet users per month and has 2,800 referenced artists. However, it is very far from MySpace, the American giant that has become the essential site for musicians in less than three years.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1393

For Tim O'Reilly, who coined what is now known as Web 2.0, software is obsolete in the new era of the Web. Data is now what matters. Since he first talked about Web 2.0 in 1995, Tim O'Reilly has been forced to repeatedly explain exactly what he means by the term. Does he feel caught up in the endless definitions? He laughs when asked. "Absolutely! But I have no regrets. I think there's still a lot of stuff that people don't understand. There's a lot of directions that people have taken in talking about Web 2.0 that are wrong." For Tim O'Reilly, understanding Web 2.0 means understanding that the Web is and will be driven by data and those who own it. Before IBM introduced the first affordable personal computer, O'Reilly says, control rested with those who owned the hardware. After IBM came along, software became more valuable. Then came open-source software. "The big question of Web 2.0 is what's valuable now? If you think it's software, you're missing out," he says. For O'Reilly, it's data that changes everything. "Look at Google. They have great algorithms. But if you had a copy of Google's software, you couldn't do anything with it. It's Google's data that's important." He points out that Google prides itself on "providing access to all the information in the world." Quite a challenge, he says, but Google has understood that information is the new El Dorado. "Software can be free and open source," says Tim O'Reilly, a leading proponent of open source code. "Because the fundamental rules are different. I think that's what people don't fully understand yet with Web 2.0. We're moving to a new platform with new rules." READ THIS WEEK Life is not a video game A questionable ad for the US Army's recruitment campaign uses the video game metaphor. www.blogues.technaute.com/ebacher

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1394

Almost all government software purchases are made without calls for tender, by mutual agreement, with suppliers of patented products such as Microsoft, deplore specialists in free software, who are asking Quebec to level the playing field. Cyrille Béraud, president of Savoir-Faire Linux, a company that sells services to users of free software, notes that purchases without calls for tender of Microsoft and other products are the rule. "Section 12.7 (of the Regulation respecting procurement contracts) allows the State to negotiate by mutual agreement when it wants to purchase software covered by exclusive rights. All purchases of Microsoft, IBM, Novell, etc. products are made under this section. For example, there has never been a call for tenders to evaluate an operating system other than Windows. In our opinion, there is an abuse of the use of section 12.7; these are millions and millions of dollars of purchases that are made by mutual agreement." There are, however, very reliable alternatives, he adds, "but without a call for tenders, we cannot assert them." He has also written to request that section 12.7 be repealed. The general director of acquisitions for the Centre des services partagés du Québec, Guy Chouinard, acknowledges that current conditions are not favourable to free software. "We sign umbrella contracts with companies to allow a ministry that needs to change the version of its software to automatically purchase other Microsoft, Novell or IBM products." Furthermore, if a ministry needs to buy 1,000 workstations, it will prefer to keep the same supplier to ensure that its IT equipment is consistent and stable, adds Mr. Chouinard. "This model slows down the implementation and development of free software." "There is almost no expertise in this area in the government," he continues. The free software industry is still a small, emerging industry that often lives on the corner of the table. We will try to set up a global service offering to support ministries that want to move in this direction," he concludes. Free software is nevertheless very widespread in public administrations in France, points out Daniel Pascot, professor at the Faculty of Administration Sciences at Laval University. "The French Ministry of Finance is completely on free software," he said, "and each member of parliament will receive a workstation entirely on free software in June." Mr. Pascot has just received Roberto Di Cosmo in Quebec, who chairs a project aimed at promoting free software in France. The government wants to create a competitiveness cluster to make France "a world reference for research, development and publishing of free software," indicates a press release from the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry. passelin@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1395

Free software is software that can not only be obtained for free, but can also be modified and redistributed at will. The best-known software is Linux, an operating system equivalent to Windows, and OpenOffice, the free counterpart to Microsoft Office. "Since free software is free, all the money invested in designing a system goes to local resources instead of going to multinationals like Microsoft," explains Daniel Pascot, a professor at Université Laval. "I haven't used Windows XP for five years and it works very well," he says. "Across the world, public organizations are massively turning to free software, and several American states have policies that are very committed to this type of software," emphasizes Cyrille Béraud, president of Savoir-faire Linux. "We are doing a contract for the Canadian Space Agency and that allowed us to learn that the space arm's control console runs on Linux." Pierre Asselin

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1396

What started as an informal gathering of Californian computer whizzes two years ago has become one of the most popular ways to unveil, improve and, why not, finance projects on the Internet. BarCamp Montreal, an informal gathering open to anyone who cares about new technologies, also allows you to take the pulse of Montreal's ICT (information and communications technology) scene. Obviously, when it comes to a more or less marginal event related to ICT, the connection with Silicon Valley is quickly made. BarCamp is no exception. The event was born in 2005, in response to an annual summit organized by the guru of what is called Web 2.0, Tim O'Reilly. A large community of developers on the American West Coast, who considered this gathering too elitist, organized a similar event open to all. It quickly snowballed: there are now meetings of this type all over the world. BarCamp In Montreal, the event is called BarCamp. It was held for the first time last October and will be held again on April 28, at the Société des arts technologiques (SAT), on Saint-Laurent Boulevard. There is also a BarCamp Québec in the Old Capital, but the date and location of the next meeting have not yet been determined. To understand how this event works, you have to be familiar with the culture of web 2.0, since the day is entirely dedicated to collaboration and participation. The organization of BarCamp sums it up this way: "All participants must give a demonstration, a session or help with one of them," we read on the website dedicated to the event. In other words, there are no spectators at BarCamp, only speakers. There is also no agenda. Or, to be more precise, the agenda is set by the attendees as they invade the venue, which seems to suit everyone. "Arrive early to secure a slot on the presentation schedule." So the conference rooms are available on a set schedule, but the content of the presentations - and the names of the presenters - will only be known when interested parties sign up for the schedule. Last October, the topics varied widely, although they were closely related to the Internet and ICT. Naturally. Networking On site, students, developers, entrepreneurs and investors - including a number of angel investors, more interested in emerging technologies than short-term returns - are interested in just about everything that happens during the day. For Austin Hill, a Montreal angel investor who closely follows the development of emerging technologies in the city, BarCamp and DemoCamp, two-hour express evenings using the same concept, are an inexhaustible source of discoveries. "In Montreal, the community of free software developers is one of the largest," he says. These events are good places to see this and to meet the people who are behind it." Thanks to these meetings, Austin Hill hopes that Montreal can reappear among the most favorable cities for starting businesses operating around the Internet. "There are more and more people who want to put Montreal back on the map, as a good place to launch new businesses." Of course, those who doubt it are invited to go to the SAT on April 28. A little tip: prepare a short presentation, you don't want to arrive empty-handed... Email To contact our collaborator alain.mckenna@lapresse.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1397

He is training himself in the use of free software, which he thinks will dominate the market when it comes out. I had started to take steps to register at Poissy, but I couldn't do it when the social services took things in hand. We are following these elections with as much fervor as the football World Cup. It is a recurring topic of conversation. Everyone has their opinion. There are people who are scary, like Nicolas Sarkozy. We fear his attitude towards the excluded and we are the excluded of the excluded. We need a candidate who does not toughen the prison regime. We are human beings, not barbarians. Anyone can end up in prison. Even when we want to do our best, follow the rules, we can be forced to make a gesture that changes everything. Prison conditions should be adapted to each human being, while we are plunged into an extremely harsh environment. If all the prisoners started voting, we would represent something.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1398

Three weeks before the presidential election, a white paper published yesterday (1), supported by an apolitical think tank on new technologies, reminds us that France has no reason to crow about the Internet. According to Renaissance numérique, which brings together the cream of web company bosses (Mats Carduner of Google France, Christophe Parcot of Yahoo France, Pierre Kosciusko-Morizet of PriceMinister, etc.) and academics, France is very behind, and the "very" is really not too much. The success of broadband, which our country can boast of, is like a baobab hiding... poverty. Because, only 44% of French households have access to the network, when the figure reaches 70% in Germany and Great Britain. Worse. The rate is even lower than recent entrants to the European Union such as Latvia or Estonia. Contribution. How can a leading economic power, ask the authors of "2010, Internet for All", be in this situation? "A double divide is being created: on the one hand, between France and the other developed countries that have jumped on the bandwagon of new technologies, this digital divide affecting our national competitiveness; on the other, between those who have access to the information society and those who are excluded from it." Concerned and patriotic, the members of Renaissance numérique have therefore decided to make their contribution in the form of fifteen measures. Notice to presidential candidates, who deal with recurring debates in their program (free software, the Dadvsi law or France's performance on broadband), but who "have not grasped the heart of the problem". To surf the Internet, you need a computer. However, France is under-equipped compared to its European neighbors. It depends on your point of view. But only 54.9% of French households had a PC in the fourth quarter of 2006 (according to Médiamétrie/Gfk). To push this figure, Renaissance numérique proposes as a flagship measure the "direct donation" by companies to employees of used PCs. French companies, which renew their fleet every two to three years, prefer the solution of the recycling center to donation to avoid complications (use value to be quantified, benefit in kind comparable to a company car?) and administrative hassles. In 2006, of the 7.8 million computers purchased, 43% were purchased by companies. If the government took "simple" tax and accounting measures, 7 million computers could be redistributed by 2010, according to Renaissance numérique. Another measure put forward is recycling. "One PC out of two is recyclable," explains the CEO of Yahoo! France. Out of 100 computers thrown away by individuals and the public or private sector, 50% can be reconditioned and resold at a price of around 99 euros." Politics. And why not imitate Sweden, where the rate of connected households is around 80%, which has introduced an income tax reduction for the purchase of a computer? Training in new technologies, strengthening the policy of support for VSEs (very small businesses), a communication campaign to raise awareness among non-users... The measures listed echo provisions already taken here and there, by the State and local authorities. Precisely, dispersion does not facilitate efficiency. "All the different aspects are handled by several ministries, so it is better to bring together all the initiatives under the same one, a ministry delegated to the Internet", notes Marie-Christine Levet, president of Club Internet/T-Online France. Recalling that the Web must remain a space of freedom. If the white paper is applied to the letter, 80% of French households will be equipped with a computer, connected to the Internet and trained in its use by 2010. Finally up to par... (1) "2010, Internet for all, 15 measures to reduce the economic bill in France", online at www.renaissancenumerique.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1399

The Internet, and especially the tremendous surge of expression by Internet users made possible by technological progress, is shaking up the "media house". Two debates, two weeks apart. In Lille, at the beginning of March, during the first Assises du journalisme, the atmosphere oozed the end of the century. On the contrary, on Saturday, in Saint-Denis, people were puffing out their chests at the Rencontres du cinquante pouvoir, organized by Agoravox, the so-called "citizen" media to which anyone can contribute. Face to face, the old world and the new world. "And now the innocent mouse is transformed into a lethal weapon. With a click of a button, a profession is about to disappear. After all, our countryside has seen the blacksmith close up shop, so why not the journalist absorbed by the Web?" asks Hervé Brusini, deputy director of information at France 3 (1). Challenged by the emergence of citizen journalism, the media began to react, by also appropriating this new tool. In the beginning, blogs It all started with blogs. These websites composed of news (or posts) as they came along, generally written in the first person, gradually gained ground in the media. Cyril Fievet and Emily Turrettini (2) date back to 1999, the first year of blogging. It was in 2003 that journalists took hold of them in turn, at the time of the war in Iraq, "which was an opportunity for several journalists to deliver their personal version of the conflict", they write. Some BBC "embedded" reporters then kept travel diaries, as a counterpoint to the more official coverage of the war. In France, Libération would open the ban. In December 2003, Pascal Riché and Fabrice Rousselot, then correspondents in Washington and New York, started a blog on "the race for the White House". Three years later, most major media outlets have caught on. Journalists' blogs, or blog platforms open to Internet users to gain an audience. And woe betide those who haven't followed suit. The latest to wake up, Le Journal du dimanche launched its Jdd.fr site this month. Within the same Hachette-Filipacchi Médias group, Paris Match is next on the list. The first advantage of a blog for journalists: an unlimited space, free from the constraints of pagination, where they can pour out information, experiences or comments. The exercise is not without risk. The blogger is entering an arena where all verbal blows are permitted. "In real life, we react in a polite manner. Conversely, on the Internet, the first reaction is often to punch people we don't know in the face," notes a blogger. "But once this barrier is overcome, the exchange can turn out to be a real pleasure." The blogosphere also provides a new mine of information. Skimming blogs can help you unearth gems. As long as you don't spare your effort because you often have to rummage through hundreds of comments to find the link, the information, the reflection worth sharing. From forum to participatory On media websites, forums and chats are the first format where the public is given a voice. But these debates generally take place in a marked space, where it is still the media that decides on the theme or the guest. Recently, the system of direct reaction to articles has appeared, at the newspaper Le Monde, at 20 Minutes, at Libération. An additional step in trying to take into account the spontaneous opinions of Internet users. It aims to establish a direct relationship of exchange between the reader and the author, or even between the Internet user and the politician. In this spirit, giving the possibility of questioning candidates during election periods is essential. "Why not a referendum to determine the importance we are prepared to give to ecological issues?" asks Jérôme, from Villeurbanne. He filmed himself, before posting his 1 minute 16 video online on Dailymotion, the French video sharing site. It may be selected by the i-Télé channel to air on the campaign news. Partners in the operation, Dailymotion and i-Télé (3) see it as a "very good initiative to liven up political debate, and an excellent example of a partnership between "old" and "new" media". But the recipe is already flourishing on a number of channels. The video is exploding, its exploitation is rich in audience promises. Since July 2006, the American CNN has also offered an online content sharing service (4) inspired by YouTube. Internet users can express themselves through posts, reports, images. And TF1 is already doing the same with Wat and M6 with Wideo. The new TV The interview lasts two and a half hours. Without editing or embellishment. It was filmed on February 12 at the opening of the Erika trial. "Ms. Voynet likes long durations." The Politic Show (5) too. Nicolas Voisin and Julien Villacampa, 27 and 28, embarked on the adventure with a camera down: asking each candidate for an interview. The first, with Jean-Marie Le Pen, having lasted a long time, why not make length a constitutive principle? "We took the opposite approach to traditional media which are on very short durations," explains Nicolas Voisin. "We made the choice to refuse to submit our questions beforehand, not to cut, not to format, to give time to the politicians." Only Ségolène Royal and Nicolas Sarkozy refused to play the game. Experience has shown that politicians can be made to drift onto subjects other than those usually addressed during the campaign period. But what about the visibility and profitability of such programs? Thanks to their "first citizen political webTV", Voisin and Villacampa may bounce back on TV. They are talking about a project for a show on Canal +, or even a free channel on ADSL. Conversely, television journalists are also experimenting with new formats on the Web. A militant fallback position for some who no longer find their place on air. Such is John Paul Lepers who launched Latelelibre.fr, or Karl Zéro installed on AOL. Others are trying new programs like iPol (6). This weekly political magazine, launched in mid-January, covers blog and Internet news, "the stuff you don't see on TV". The iPol team is made up of journalists and audiovisual professionals (Canal +, Paris Première, Reservoir Prod, Image and company...). For Thomas Blard, from LCI, the Internet can make it possible to produce programs that would be difficult to pass on television. "LCI has limited time and space. Televisions must seek the lowest common denominator, he explained on Saturday at the Agoravox Meetings. With the Internet, we can seek the PPCM, the lowest common multiple." He himself hosts Décideurs.TV, "which allows entrepreneurs who do not necessarily have visibility in traditional media to express themselves." Even the report? "How is the Armenian genocide treated in Turkish school textbooks?" asks an Internet user. And there you have it. Without further ado. Tristan Mendès France, a freelance journalist who went to Turkey to report on the memory of the Armenian genocide, seized on it. The next day, he went to the University of Ankara to relay the question to a university professor. He inaugurated the process in December 2006 in Cambodia. "We produce a kind of participatory documentary, a report in which Internet users are involved in the editorial line." Gone are the days of the "one to all" documentary, delivered to viewers who only have to watch a finished and polished product. Its goal is to involve them and to progress with them in the report. Next destination: Darfur, with an invitation to follow its team of blogtrotters day by day (7). Another bold attempt, that of the Dauphiné libéré. Stimulated by the adrenaline of the campaign, the regional daily launched Quelcandidat.com, "entirely participatory media", which allows Internet users to "express themselves, send their information, give their opinion alongside articles by professional journalists and news dispatches". The Rhône-Alpes newspaper invented the concept of "village reporter", the first "collaborative" blog produced from the small village of La Murette (Isère), where a journalist works with the inhabitants to produce an interactive two-month report. The content is written by the journalist based on suggestions from residents and Internet users... But what is the point of traditional media doing citizen journalism since there is already Agoravox and Dailymotion? Benoît Raphaël, from Dauphiné libéré, answers on his blog: "It is precisely used to animate, sort, edit, and promote this new material. It is a real profession." Towards "proam"? Where are these all-out initiatives leading? Will the media of tomorrow be mixed, "proam" (for professional-amateurs)? The first major hybrid between media and citizen emanation has been out for less than a week. Assignement Zero (8) was launched by the American magazine Wired in collaboration with Jay Rosen, professor of journalism at New York University. In this open-source journalism, Internet users contribute to articles by providing their information (crowdsourcing). The subjects are discussed between professional journalists and citizens, with the writing being delegated to the former. In France, similar ideas, bringing together professional journalists and enlightened amateurs or even experts, are being developed. This is the case of Rue89 founded by former Libé employees. This is the case of Owibi, an online magazine specializing in fashion and decoration. "I believe a lot in participatory in these areas," says Julien Jacob, co-founder of Obiwi, "we are not on topics where we spend our time insulting each other." The team will be made up of journalists and a community of experts, a thousand members at the base. "Between the media that have clumsily opened up to participatory and an Agoravox with a very militant vision, there is a place between the two." Like an outstretched hand between the old and the new world. photos JEAN-MICHEL SICOT (1) Le Monde, March 5, 2007. (2) Blog Story, Eyrolles. (3) www.dailymotion.com/group/30652 (4) www.cnn.com/exchange/ (5) blpwebzine.blogs.com/politicshow/. A book about this adventure is coming out on April 5: Politics on the Net, published by Max Milo. (6) www.ipol.fr/ (7) www.blogtrotters.fr/ (8) zero.newassignment.net/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1400

Let's see. Antivirus? On. Phishing filter? On. Backup? On. PC performance optimization? All set. An all-in-one software suite that does it all? It exists. It's brand new, it's sometimes imperfect, but it achieves the impossible: simplifying data security on your home computer. SYMANTEC NORTON 360 Here's the best-crafted security solution to date. Symantec, one of the world's largest software developers, has just launched the Norton 360 suite, which, as its name suggests with charming poetry, covers the whole issue. For Windows XP or Vista. On the menu, four solutions in one: protection against external threats (viruses, zombies, etc.), automated and discreet system of backup copies of specified files (online security account of 2 gigabytes included) and protection against scams in general (phishing, etc.). Symantec adds to this a simplified version of Norton's optimization tools, such as the famous hard disk defragmentation, and customer service by instant messaging, live and in French, during opening hours. We can hardly hear the Hindi accent! It's an impressive list, but Symantec simplifies it into four large icons on a yellow background, with an easy-to-understand color code: red, yellow and green. It's a presentation that, according to Symantec management, "will be understood by everyone, including your mother." And everything indicates that this is the case. To achieve this, Symantec has sacrificed a certain transparency, which risks annoying the most curious. Even the phishing filter isn't too forthcoming when it comes to explaining its behavior. Note in passing that it is guaranteed to be compatible with Microsoft's Internet Explorer, as well as Firefox, the open-source Web browser from the Mozilla Foundation. Symantec Norton 360 $90 ($70 per year thereafter); www.symantec.ca \*\*\*\*1/2 (+): All the protection tools are included in an effective, no-hassle formula. (-): Parental control tools probably would have been a good fit in a suite at this price. MICROSOFT WINDOWS LIVE ONECARE If you've been following along, you'll have gathered that Microsoft launched Windows Vista, Office 2007, and now it's offering Windows Live OneCare, an all-in-one suite that can be downloaded from the Windows Live portal as a trial version, for three months, or in full, for $60 per year. OneCare offers the same services as Norton 360 for Vista, except that its presentation is much more polished. Its operation is just as simple: information bubbles appear each time the software makes a decision regarding the security of operations in progress on the computer. There is no doubt that Microsoft developers have mastered the graphic aspect. The mechanics, however, leave room for improvement. Independent analyses rank Microsoft's protection tools, including OneCare's antivirus and phishing filter, dead last out of 15 comparable software. Norton 360 ranks fifth. Finally, the backup service integrated into OneCare does not include a free online storage space, unlike its Symantec counterpart. Microsoft promises to fix all these problems by the end of the summer. In the meantime, since it is an all-in-one suite that is free for three months, we would be crazy to do without it. Microsoft Windows Live OneCare $60 per year (first three months free); http://onecare.live.com \*\*\*1/2 (+): The presentation is very neat. Its ease of use is heartbreaking and the first three months are free. (-): The impermeability of the protection tools leaves something to be desired. MCAFEE TOTAL PROTECTION Everyone has definitely spread the word. Even McAfee offers an all-in-one suite called McAfee Total Protection. It includes no fewer than 10 tools to protect and optimize the performance of your computer. Some are exclusive to McAfee: utilities that speed up file and printer sharing, you won't find them in Norton 360 or OneCare. The main window is not as polished as its rivals. This tool gives the user a little more leeway in configuring its various functions. For people who want to avoid having to get their hands dirty, you'll have to come back. In terms of protection against external threats and other malware, McAfee ranks lower than Symantec, but still better than Microsoft. McAfee Total Protection $100; www.mcafee.com \*\*\*\*1/2 (+): This suite supports functions not covered by its rivals. (-): It is a little less simple to operate than the other two. Horror movie? After viruses, worms and Trojan horses, here is the new threat against PCs connected to the Internet that turns them into real "zombies." This is the official term to describe the 11% of computers in North America infected by malicious code that hackers can control remotely. alain.mckennalapresse.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1401

1. Expansion of the Exhibition Centre The Québec City Tourism Office is proposing to increase the exhibition area of the Québec City Exhibition Centre from 125,000 to 200,000 square feet. Its president, Pierre Labrie, describes the project, estimated at $24 million, as "realistic, profitable and urgent." The investment could make it possible to hold two medium-sized trade shows at the same time or to host larger events. According to the Office, the City of Québec (which has already included this project in its capital program), the Government of Québec and the Government of Canada could contribute to its realization. 2. Beautification of Route 138 on the Côte-de-Beaupré The MRC of La Côte-de-Beaupré is proposing to gradually beautify and redevelop Route 138, between downtown Québec City, the Côte-de-Beaupré and Charlevoix. The idea is to offer new signage that would highlight major tourist attractions such as Mont-Sainte-Anne, the Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré Basilica and the Massif de Petite-Rivière-Saint-François, to do some landscaping and to bury the wires. The developer believes that international tourism will increase in this area and that this is a great opportunity to make the eastern gateway to Quebec City "an entrance worthy of the international reputation of the regions concerned". Several partners such as governments, CLDs and business people have been identified but the costs of the project have not been estimated. 3. Guided tours of the Quebec Bridge infrastructure Two Quebec City entrepreneurs, Sylvain Gagné and Ghislain Lévesques, from the Grimpont organization, want to organize guided tours of the Quebec Bridge infrastructure. They would like to introduce the engineering aspects of the bridge and its history. Their goal is to develop a new high-level tourist attraction product in the west end of the city. The partners identified include the Parc Aquarium de Québec. 4. Establishment of the St. Lawrence Seaway The Route Bleue Québec, an organization chaired by André Lévesque, wants to establish a safe navigable sea kayaking trail along the St. Lawrence by June 2008. The goal is obviously to develop ecotourism in the region. According to the promoters' plans, the project would include launching sites, safe shelters, as well as rest and lodging areas. 6. The Momentum Technology Centre Alain Gariépy and Steeve Lapointe want to launch a service company in the fields of video, television, film and music. According to them, Québec must be able to count on world-class production infrastructure to "recover the audiovisual production that is slipping away from us for the unilateral benefit of the Montreal region." To carry out their projects, the promoters hope to obtain financial support from a number of partners, including private investors, the Fonds d'investissement de la culture et des communications and FondAction CSN. 7. Leonardo da Vinci alchemist PE Poitras, a company that specializes in event production, including exhibition services, is working on preparing Leonardo da Vinci alchemist, a technological and "multimedia" exhibition. The promoter would like to create a reconstruction of Leonardo da Vinci's laboratory workshop and thus allow visitors "to be projected into the imagination, into the brain of the great Italian master." Among the partners considered, the company identifies the Italian honorary consul as well as partners with ties to Italy. 8. Quebec, cruise port The Quebec City Tourism Office supports the development of Quebec City as a place of embarkation and disembarkation for international cruises. Its objective is to increase the economic benefits, in particular by extending, for example, the length of stay. The Office also intends to develop a partnership with a cruise line in order to exploit new products. 9. Le Diamant, a venue for artistic presentations Ex Machina, Robert Lepage's company, wants to transform the highway tunnel located under Honoré-Mercier Avenue into two performance halls that will be used to present theatrical productions. Among the objectives put forward by the promoter, there is that of consolidating and developing the activities of three cultural organizations and of "recouping the significant investment made 30 years ago for the construction of a tunnel that has not been used since." The Centre de diffusion pour l'enfance et la jeunesse les Gros Becs, the Carrefour international de Théâtre de Québec and the City of Québec are Ex Machina's partners. 10. Certification: Savoir-faire île d'Orléans The Union des producteurs agricoles, the CLD and the Chambre de commerce de l'île d'Orléans want to establish a certification mark that would be called "Savoir-faire île d'Orléans". This certification would be awarded to agricultural and agri-food products, as well as to service companies that meet specific criteria. This exclusive brand, they believe, is a way to guarantee the identity of products and services from the island. According to the promoter, the Bureau de normalisation du Québec should be able to offer its expertise in order to develop the specifications that producers must comply with. It will be the certifying body. 11. Life Sciences Business Incubator In partnership with the CHUL Research Centre, the Centre québécois d'innovation en biotechnologie wants to launch a business incubator specializing in life sciences. This incubator would facilitate the start-up of companies specializing in this field by reducing risks and costs. The Centre québécois d'innovation en biotechnologie claims to have the necessary infrastructure (equipment) and rental spaces capable of accommodating start-up companies. 12. Québec, a wireless city ZAP Québec, a non-profit organization, was created in November 2006 to make the national capital a wireless city. The organization wants to create public Internet access zones that would allow people to connect from anywhere. Tourists, students, business people and, of course, the general public would benefit from such a service and, according to the promoter, could "participate more actively in the dynamism of their community." Approaches to the relevant government authorities have been undertaken, but "instead of waiting for the implementation of a centralized and very costly municipal infrastructure, ZAP Québec uses existing Internet connections, those of hundreds of corporate and institutional citizens." 13. Charlevoix, a learning region Promoters would like to implement a learning region concept in Charlevoix. This territory would thus maintain privileged links between the education system, the research system and the entrepreneurial system. Formation continue Charlevoix is leading this project. One of its objectives is to create interactions between stakeholders in order to promote the transfer of research and learning to business start-ups. Various educational institutions, including the Centre d'études collégiales de Charlevoix, the local school board and the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, are identified among the partners considered, as are the ATR Charlevoix and Groupe le Massif. 14. Centre dedicated to free software Savoir-faire Linux wants to bring together, in the form of a kit, resources (in free software) that are directly accessible and shareable. This kit would provide businesses with the means to benefit from the advantages and contributions of this free software and thus improve their competitiveness. Businesses could also pool their efforts to make better use of this software, to the extent possible, of course. Savoir-faire is a company that offers support for the use of Linux, an operating system (a bit like Windows) that has the particularity of being free. 15. National School of Interactive Entertainment Companies specializing in video game design, in collaboration with Pôle Québec--Chaudière-Appalaches, want to set up a National School of Interactive Entertainment. This school "would be a unique place offering access to programs and initiatives provided by existing educational and training institutions." Behind this school, there is the objective of ensuring the growth of this sector by ensuring that the current pool of expertise is increased. 16. Indoor soccer stadium The Notre-Dame-de-Foy Campus is considering building an indoor soccer stadium that would include five playing areas. According to the Campus management, this project would allow for a rapid improvement of collective infrastructure. This stadium "meets the needs expressed by users and supports the growth of commercial and tourist activities." The municipality of Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures, the Commission scolaire des Découvreurs and the Association régionale de soccer de Québec are contributing to the advancement of this project. 17. Geospatial Excellence Centre Pôle Québec--Chaudière-Appalaches wants to make the national capital a centre of excellence in geospatial technology and, to achieve this, it is considering setting up a geospatial technology institute. The institute would have the mandate to refine the brand "Québec, centre of excellence in geospatial technology" in global business and innovation networks, which should help increase revenues, exports, investments and, of course, jobs in this field. The first steps taken by Pôle Québec--Chaudière-Appalaches have shown interest in the project from companies in this sector. 18. Innovation City Université Laval would like to develop the space located between the CHUL, the Laval hospital and the university campus to encourage business creation, along the Robert-Bourassa highway. In this way, the university believes it can diversify its support activities for teaching and research programs and encourage new partnerships between Laval, public organizations and the private sector. 19. World-class optics and photonics A committee bringing together Pôle Québec--Chaudière-Appalaches, businesses and research centres wants to develop an optics and photonics development centre, which would support the region's position in this field on an international scale. Behind the approach, there is, of course, the objective of supporting the creation of new businesses and encouraging companies from outside to come and set up in Québec City. Pôle believes that, by putting this structure in place, the turnover of companies in the region in this sector would increase from approximately $200 million to half a billion dollars. 20. Technology integration centre The Technopôle Défense et Sécurité is considering creating a Technology Integration Centre that would establish a defence and security district. This district will allow the pooling of research infrastructures to accelerate product development. In addition, a marketing office would allow development opportunities to be qualified and new markets to be targeted. In five years, the promoter of the center expects to increase the number of jobs related to defense and security by 10% (from 6,000 to 6,600).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1402

Online recruiting sites have been around for 10 years now, but their formula hasn't really changed. For companies looking for candidates who stand out from the crowd, the solution sometimes lies off the beaten path. With all the possibilities of the Internet, these are not the original ways of announcing that you are looking for talented workers. "With new media, like blogs and online video, you can find new ways to recruit online for a tenth of the price charged by some specialized sites," says Austin Hill, co-founder of Zero Knowledge, a Montreal start-up that he later sold to become an angel investor. "To attract original and talented employees, you also have to prove to them that your company is at least as original and talented as they are," he adds. There's no doubt that Mr. Hill knows his stuff. The number of honours he has received over the past few years - ranging from the title of Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year in Quebec in 2000, awarded by Ernst & Young, to the title of ICT Pioneer by the World Economic Forum in 2001 - is evidence of this. But the fact remains that the Alberta native is himself looking for talented and gifted people in ICT, for a new Web community project considered promising, called the Ojibwe Project. Originality on the cheap "For a relatively secret project like this, recruitment sites are not very effective," he says. "To introduce yourself, you have to conform to a standardized formula that is the same as the one that newspapers used 100 years ago. And then you get a ton of resumes from overqualified people, whose personality and talent you don't get." For the Ojibwe project, Austin Hill and his partner, Alex Eberts, decided to rely on YouTube, LinkedIn and a "vlog" (video blog) that they launched two weeks ago. On this site, a short video clip mocks recruitment sites, while describing the type of jobs they have to offer (for the record, they are looking for two Python and Java programmers). To apply, the rule imposed by the two adopted Montrealers is this: no resumes. We want to see your personality. "In less than 48 hours, we had 2,400 visits and we received job applications that we would never have had otherwise," summarizes Mr. Hill. Applications coming from as far away as the United Kingdom! Taking inspiration from Silicon Valley In Canada, "start-ups" have a lot of difficulty recruiting. However, they generally offer jobs that are highly sought after by skilled workers. They see these emerging companies as a golden opportunity to participate in the birth of a new project, or to fully leverage their talent or expertise. Basically, in a career, it has the effect of a turbocharger. Montreal tech companies are no exception to this phenomenon. However, there is no shortage of skilled workers in the Quebec metropolis. "Especially in the development of free software, Montreal has an impressive bank of talented programmers," believes the former president of Zero Knowledge. Except that with the traditional communication channels that exist in Montreal, it is very difficult for candidates and companies to stand out. More and more observers are noticing this, the best description of this situation coming from Ben Yoskovitz, a Montreal ICT consultant who recently listed, on his blog, Instigator Blog, the "nine signs that the online job market is broken (sic)". Yoskovitz has no solution to offer. Instead, he throws the ball back to Hill, who thinks that entrepreneurs should take more inspiration from Silicon Valley. There, he says, start-ups are a more than common phenomenon.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1403

Office work has never been more efficient. Office suites, whether purchased at a high price at the corner store or downloaded for free from the Internet, have never been more versatile. From letters of recommendation to timesheets, it has never been easier to create and share digital documents. Microsoft Office 2007 When you think about it, it's been a big year for Microsoft. In addition to Windows Vista, the Redmond multinational has revamped its Office suite from start to finish in order to simplify its use. The result is so convincing that one wonders why the media is talking so much about Vista's flaws, and so little about the qualities of Office 2007. Because the new Office includes very, very versatile office tools, a more intuitive graphic presentation and a host of small improvements here and there. Without really adding new functions to its basic applications (Word, Excel and PowerPoint), Microsoft is making the functions already present in its software easier to find, to the point where we wonder why we didn't use them before. To achieve this, we use a toolbar that is more visual and better structured than traditional drop-down menus. Microsoft calls this bar the "ribbon". It groups functions by theme (Drawings, tables, formatting, etc.) and, this is the charm of this new feature, it adjusts itself according to the size of the window in order to offer the best compromise between the available space and the number of functions displayed. In the same vein, Microsoft has pushed a little further the use of its display that was formerly called "wysiwyg" (for "What you see is what you get", which the OQLF translates as "tel-tel"), and which allows you to instantly see on the screen the effect that changing the font, document style, and so on will have. As soon as the cursor hovers over an item in the list of style choices, for example, the entire document is immediately reformatted from that style, before our eyes. Cool. Microsoft Office 2007 $180 (Home & Student), $500 (Standard); www.microsoft.ca 4.5/5 \* With the layout of the icons in the "ribbon" of Office 2007, it is easier to improve the presentation or functions of your documents. - The new save format is not compatible with older versions of Office. Google Apps For those who are not annoyed by working from a Web browser, Google has cobbled together a completely free online solution that includes a spreadsheet, a word processor, a personal calendar and a document sharing platform. The whole thing has been dubbed Google Apps, a name that may change when Microsoft's self-proclaimed new rival unveils the final version of its office suite. For now, it's still in beta, but judging by the ease of use of the Spreadsheet and "Document", the word processor, we can't wait to see it when it's fully functional. In both cases, you can import and export documents created in rival applications (including Word and Excel files, of course), which you can modify at will and then save on your personal computer's desktop or in the virtual folder that anyone registered with Google has (which gives you a Gmail address as a bonus). You can then share the documents contained in this folder by inviting other members to access the desired files. Handy for creating an efficient and mobile workflow, or for having a database accessible from any Web access point. Google Apps Free; docs.google.com 3/5 + The strength of Google tools is that they can be easily shared and modified from anywhere in the world. - Google's suite of Web applications is still in an incomplete beta version. OpenOffice 2.1.0 As its name suggests, OpenOffice is a free office suite offered free of charge on the Internet. It includes just about every application you could hope for in a professional suite, it is compatible with Microsoft file formats and it can be installed on a PC running Windows, Mac OS or Linux. For anyone who does not want to shell out the few hundred dollars required to obtain a legitimate copy of Microsoft Office, it is the ideal alternative. As a bonus, its graphic presentation is strangely similar to that of an old version of the Microsoft suite. In other words, it is easy to find your way around. Like other free software, the success of OpenOffice is based on a community of developers who are committed to improving the product. As a result, an impressive number of document templates are included, or can be downloaded as needed, from the son's class presentation to the spreadsheet for family expenses. OpenOffice 2.1.0 Free; fr.openoffice.org 4/5 + The OpenOffice suite is the ideal tool for working at home: homework, budget calculations, etc. And it costs nothing! - The omnipresence of applications like Microsoft Outlook in the workplace makes OpenOffice less attractive for the office. alain.mckenna@lapresse.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1404

Techno Centre logiciellibres (TC2L) did not exist in 2005. Today, the Quebec SME has 94 employees, a third of whom come from abroad. It has opened offices in Montreal and Ottawa. But to whom or what can we attribute such success? To the rise of free software, answers without hesitation the president of Techno Centre, Roger Laberge. He himself has been a fierce supporter of free software for years. He has made it the raison d'être of his company. Among the known free software products, we find Linux, Mozilla, Openoffice.org, which counterbalance the paid products offered on the market. However, if the client no longer has to pay royalties to multinationals for the ownership of software, he must pay for free software services. However, TC2L lives, grows and employs about a hundred people thanks to the training, consultation, development and support services that it provides to ministries, municipalities and companies that have adopted the free software solution. "Our goal is to free our customers from the shackles of proprietary software, to make them switch to free software by replacing paid operating systems," continues Mr. Laberge. In Quebec, TC2L stands out for its TYPO3 programming of websites. It's their trademark. In fact, the University of Sherbrooke has just chosen TYPO3 as a web management tool for the redesign of its 250 sites. "Personally," says Mr. Laberge, "I was in favor of free software well before it became popular with governments, ministries, and institutions. I found that the business model of proprietary software was flawed. In fact, multinationals sell you a user license for a recipe that is valid in a single kitchen and for your food only. Furthermore, any modification of this recipe is strictly prohibited," he explains. "The philosophy of free software is the opposite. It gives you the freedom to use the software for any purpose, to study how it works, to adapt it to your needs, to redistribute copies and even improve the program so that everyone can benefit from it. It's a global sharing community," continues Mr. Laberge. "And that's what I like." About 30% immigrants But for now, Roger Laberge is facing a shortage of qualified workers. "The reality," he says, "is that in Quebec we lack computer scientists." He himself has had to step up his efforts to find TYPO3 programmers. And to meet his workforce needs, he has turned to immigration. About 30% of his workers come from abroad. "Many are French," he says, "because they are recognized as TYPO3 specialists." For now, Roger Laberge refuses to move part of his activities to Asia or elsewhere. "On the contrary," he says, "my goal is to attract programmers from India to Quebec. They have good talent there. It's up to us to go and get them." The businessman also hopes that CEGEPs and universities will do more to promote computer science programs to young people. There are very interesting careers in this sector of activity that are not known," he says. Meteoric rise For three years, "free" has experienced a meteoric rise. The public sector has adopted it. "Free software meets the needs of ministries and organizations while being very secure," Roger Laberge points out. Who would have thought, for example, that the Ministry of Culture and Communications of Quebec would one day have a free software website? But since 2006, it has been done. And other organizations have followed. One of the effects of the free software revolution is to have rebalanced the market that was until then dominated by multinationals. For Roger Laberge, open source is a must. As proof: the constant growth of TC2L over the past 20 months. But the CEO does not hide the fact that he has a creative business approach. Despite everything, Mr. Laberge admits that when he created his company, he did not think that it would go so fast and so far. lfournier@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1405

Eric Schmidt, Larry Page and Sergey Brin are at the helm of the hottest company right now, but their salaries would be the envy of many. For the third year in a row, they will be paid $1 a year... at least officially. That's according to a legal document filed yesterday by Google. Google CEO Eric Schmidt and the company's two co-founders had reduced their salaries to $1 a year in 2004, just before the company went public. It's a safe bet that the three Google executives won't be living in poverty, since they own multiple shares of the company. According to documents filed last year, Larry Page, who will soon be 34, owns 32.1 million shares of Google, worth about $14.2 billion. His colleague Sergey Brin, 33, owns 31.6 million shares, worth $13.9 billion. Eric Schmidt is no exception. His 12.5 million shares are worth about $5.5 billion. In the past year, Google's three CEOs have sold some of their shares. But, according to the company, they didn't get any bonuses. They're not the only executives who take $1 a year. Apple's Steve Jobs and Yahoo's Terry Semel earn the same amount. FRANCE WANTS TO STOP HAPPY SLAPPING Under a new law that goes into effect today, happy slapping, which involves filming an act of violence with a cell phone and posting it on the Internet, is becoming illegal. The practice began in England and quickly spread among young people. Despite its name, the acts are often violent and committed against randomly selected victims. They are then posted on online video sites such as YouTube. French people who engage in this activity could now be sentenced to up to five years in prison. The new law makes it illegal to film acts of violence, unless you are a professional journalist. The Crime Prevention Act states that it "shall not apply when the recording or broadcasting results from the normal exercise of a profession whose purpose is to inform the public or is carried out in order to serve as evidence in court." Some freedom of expression advocates have spoken out against the new law, saying it would discourage ordinary citizens from filming cases of police brutality. In a statement, Reporters Without Borders points out that Internet users are now actively involved in creating and disseminating information. "Reporters Without Borders considers that it would be shocking if this type of activity, which constitutes an important safeguard against possible abuses of power, were criminalized in a democratic country," the organization wrote. Marie-Ève Morasse READ THIS WEEK: Freesoftware does not mean freeware Many people seem to confuse freeware, opensource and freesoftware. Nelson Dumais sheds light on this issue. www.technaute.com/nelsondumais

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1406

After Google, it is the turn of MySpace, Second Life and many others to invade Europe. The most profitable services of Web 2.0 are invested, without real competition, by groups, most often North American. And it is not being anti-American to say so. Although the network is reputed to be homogeneous and distributed, the phenomenon is centralized to the extreme; all the data ends up in machines located in Palo Alto or elsewhere. This technical centralization goes hand in hand with the financial concentration specific to information capitalism, which considers common knowledge as sources of profit. Today, even Yahoo is struggling against Google and its 155 billion dollars of market capitalization. This is to say that, in this global Monopoly, the European Internet economy has already lost. We will be digested, unless we decide to abruptly change the rules of the game, technical, legal and political. Moving to an "acentric" Internet: many centralized services can also be carried out in an acentric mode, without the intervention of any server, and therefore any operator. Examples? Maay (2), a P2P search engine developed by researchers at France Télécom, carries out searches, admittedly less massive than Google, but more "social", all without any center. VReng (3), designed by researchers at ENST, works like Second Life, but without any server. IPv6, the future Internet standard, kept under wraps for years by telecommunications operators, could achieve to the power of ten what P2P prefigured, that is to say, symmetrical exchange between all Internet users, without depending on third parties. The international foundation for the P2P alternative (4) and the French initiative IPv6PourTous (5) have shown it: operators only have to press a button to make this possible. Enough to send the monopolistic failings of Web 2.0 to the souvenir shelf. Funding the authors of free software. What proprietary software does, free software does even better. According to some candidates for the Elysée, the State would massively convert to it. But what about funding them? By supporting research and free software service companies? Without a doubt. But we must not forget other essential players. The most creative free software is often the work of developers from all backgrounds, working, not according to the competitiveness criteria required by innovation agencies, but in a spirit of cooperation. The uses they pioneer indicate the way forward. In France, Parliament has virtually declared P2P software authors outlaws. Across the Atlantic, industrialists draw inspiration from their ideas and aspire to the most brilliant individuals. To get out of this depressive spiral, we must support, independently of monopolies, services and research. Free authors must also be adequately financed, for example in the mode of self-determination of projects and credits by the authors themselves. Develop common goods. The State's intangible assets would be much better valued if they were given the status of freely exploitable common goods (6). A simple calculation: the IGN (National Geographic Institute) is 50% financed by the State and finds the rest of its resources by selling its maps. To whom? Mainly to local authorities. In short, the IGN is 100% financed by public funds. Therefore, not only are its marketing costs totally unproductive, but the fact that its data is proprietary means that their valorization, outside of public circuits, is almost impossible. This results in a deficit of economic activities and therefore of jobs. This is true for the IGN and also for public bodies dealing with statistical, heritage, urban, tourist data, etc. And how many patents from public and even private research, awaiting improbable industrial projects, could be thus valorized? At the opposite end of the spectrum, the authors of the Lévy-Jouyet report (7), commissioned by Thierry Breton, propose that the State engage in a frenzied trade in its intangible assets. It is a waste of time, faced with information capitalism, it is futile to protect oneself behind Maginot lines. The public service would definitively lose its soul. It costs more to sell than to give. So, let us give away our common goods, on condition that we avoid their subsequent prevarication. An acentric network, fueled by free software, could contribute to this. Change perspective. The incredible capital concentration that is taking place before our eyes is siphoning off the global economy and perverting the spirit of the Internet. We must return to fundamentals. What political project can we formulate for the network of networks? Where do we want it to go? In my opinion, nothing less than towards a major invention, similar to the "spatial perspective", which marked the transition from the hierarchical world of the Middle Ages to the geometrized world of the Renaissance. We must leave the era of the "temporal perspective" born with the telegraph, whose last vanishing points are television transmitters and websites as we know them. It is a question of entering the time of the "digital perspective" (8), whose universally shared "vanishing codes" will allow human communities to form and exchange as they wish. If the Republic still has any meaning, it must do everything to ensure that what now constitutes the invisible heart of human exchanges is not an end, but a means. In this way, the network will be able to contribute to responding to major global challenges, and to inventing new ways of living together. (1) http://overcrowded.anoptique.org/ (2) http://maay.netofpeers.net (3) http://vreng.enst.fr/ (4) http://p2pfoundation.net/ (5) http://ipv6pourtous.free.fr (6) http://paigrain.debatpublic.net/? page\_id = 57 (7) http://rubyurl.com/EjB (Lévy-Jouyet report) (8) http://perspective-numerique.net

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1407

At 10 Downing Street, petitions are now posted online. Seduced by the sirens of participatory democracy, Tony Blair opened a virtual mailbox in November to submit grievances of all kinds. All demands are accepted except for party matters, requests about ongoing judicial inquiries, mentions of MPs or ministers by name, defamatory remarks or humorous requests. In the meantime, petitions are flourishing by the thousands (1). Among the most popular: the disappearance of inheritance tax, the abandonment of the national identity card project or the cancellation of the plan that provides for a tax for drivers based on the kilometers traveled. This petition has rallied nearly 1.8 million disgruntled people. A record that has made the pillars of power tremble. "The person who set up this e-petition system is an idiot," Douglas Alexander, the Secretary of State for Transport, who initiated the project, is said to have criticized. "Before the site was open, we would have had to organise a campaign group and employ activists to get the petition signed on the streets," says Peter Roberts, the petition's author. "I just had to post emails with a link to the government website. The new system allows us to act more cheaply and more quickly." London from our correspondent Within the government, enthusiasm is more lukewarm. Of course, this system allows Blair to collect valuable data on his fellow citizens, but through this service, he risks being caught red-handed on a deaf ear. To avoid any symptoms of this kind, some are already dreaming of a threshold of signatures from which a petition would be placed directly on the parliamentary agenda. A dream shared on the other side of the Channel. In her presidential pact, Ségolène Royal promises that any petition gathering at least a million signatories will become a bill that can be examined by Parliament. Nothing could be easier, according to Tom Steinberg, founder of mySociety, which manages the site: "The system we use is free software. The aim is that governments of all countries can use it and make it their own." (1) http://petitions.pm.gov.uk

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1408

SMILE, you are being watched! We can't imagine the amount of personal information that can be retrieved on the Web by people with varying degrees of good intentions. "On the Internet, there is no longer really a private or professional sphere," emphasizes the CNIL (National Commission for Information Technology and Civil Liberties) website. "You only have to type your name into a search engine to realize all the traces you have left, in spite of yourself, in cyberspace. A signed petition or registration with an association can be seen by everyone without you knowing it." Moreover, sometimes we quite knowingly entrust the Web with information that we would not give to our neighbor. Articles and comments published on a blog, images posted on a photo-sharing site or contributions left on a forum provide information about our lives, our tastes or our entourage. As Damien Bancal, creator of the security site Zataz.com, notes, "people often pay less attention to what they write on the Internet than to what happens in their real lives. They feel like they are protected. However, danger can be everywhere, we don't know who the person in front of us really is." And he insists: "It's incredible the number of people who share very personal information on their blog, like photos of their children. We've already seen such images hijacked by pedophile sites..." hackers and vigilantes We can also be tracked on the Web, and against our will. As Damien Bancal notes, "some kids, using a few very simple lines of code, have fun tracking a computer and its wanderings on the Internet." These methods are also those of hackers and cybercriminals. For them, "tracking" an Internet user generally comes down to distributing stealth programs that open a door on their computer through which the hacker will "enter", without the knowledge of the owner of the machine. The goal? To recover confidential information such as the username and password used to connect to a bank account consultation service. And then, to quietly empty the account in question... Surfing the Internet without leaving a trace is almost impossible. Firstly because Internet service providers are required to keep information on the IP addresses of the sites visited for a month, in accordance with the Digital Economy Act (LEN). Don't imagine evading this surveillance by going to an Internet cafe. As in any public place allowing Internet consultation (library, community center, ANPE, etc.), connections are archived. Tracking Internet users sometimes serves commercial interests. Thus, some record companies and copyright management companies track those who illegally download and distribute protected works on peer-to-peer (P2P) networks. With means that are not always very legal, as Loïc Dachary, president of the FreeSoftwareFoundation France, points out: "These companies or organizations distribute files on P2P networks to locate the IP addresses of those who download. They replace the police in the search for offenders without necessarily respecting the law." Moreover, the only case judged on the basis of information collected in this way resulted in a dismissal, the agents who had collected the evidence having failed to declare this collection to the CNIL. Companies sometimes go further in their desire to track and control users, as shown by the pitiful Sony-BMG rootkit affair. This small program integrated into audio CDs was installed on the computer and connected to the Internet without the user's knowledge to send Sony-BMG information on the CDs listened to, while preventing more than three copies of the discs purchased from being made. Faced with the scandal, Sony-BMG put an end to the process, replaced the infected CDs and provided means of eradicating the spyware. "This affair, like the desire of the majors to impose DRM (technical protection measures to prevent music piracy), shows above all the desire of these companies to control users to the detriment of respect for their private lives," believes Loïc Dachary. The CIA is listening Today, the most pernicious aspect of tracking on the Internet comes from state surveillance, particularly in the context of the fight against terrorism. In the United States, the USA Patriot Act requires airlines and travel agencies selling trips to the country to provide personal data on visitors, such as credit card numbers and the email address used to book the flight. The American government can use this information to verify the traveler's purchases, before and after their stay in the United States, and to consult the letters sent and received in their mailbox! As noted by Blandine Poidevin, a lawyer at the Lille and Paris bars specializing in Internet law, "we don't know how this data will be used. It can be redistributed to any organization, without control. Which opens the door to the most absolute arbitrariness. The worst thing is that we can't do anything because the European Union has accepted this constraint even though it is completely illegal under French law and European directives." Don't think that you're not at risk just because you have "nothing to hide." As one organizer of the Big Brother Awards, which denounces organizations and individuals with little respect for privacy, points out, "we have seen perfectly innocent people suspected of terrorism. And we can no longer count those "who had nothing to reproach themselves for", victims of regimes that thought differently... We must not mix everything up: having nothing to hide is one thing, demanding respect for one's private life is another." How can you protect yourself in these circumstances? First of all, replies Damien Bancal: "Just as you lock your door, you have to be careful about your behavior on the Web." Then, by updating your operating system and software, to benefit from the best reliability. Finally, prevent intruders from reading your email, using data encryption software, such as PGP. Knowing that it remains difficult to escape the multiple eyes that watch over you...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1409

For three years now, a young company has been making its mark in Sherbrooke and elsewhere in Quebec in a specific niche in IT services: Révolution Linux. The company is a specialized software infrastructure services company, and it is in the process of obtaining ISO 9001:2000 certification. Last year, the company was a finalist in the "young company" category at the Reconnaissance Estrie gala. It was founded by men with complementary IT skills: Benoît des Ligneris, Jean-Michel Dault (who each hold 45 percent of the shares) and Francis Giraldeau (co-founder of the Edulinux project). "We set up in Sherbrooke at the end of my master's and doctoral studies at the Université de Sherbrooke," says the company's president, Mr. des Ligneris. It should be noted that Mr. Dault is the co-founder of Abacom and NetRevolution. The company, which now has 17 employees, specializes in infrastructure services, everything related to the world of servers, security, networks, and it has the particularity of working mainly with free software, that is to say free and that customers can modify and redistribute; software that is therefore economical for customers who integrate it without having to pay a license. It offers solutions, among other things, for email servers, antispam and antivirus filters, network consulting, with a specialty in the deployment of thousands of users. "Our first market is school boards. It started with Edulinux," notes Benoît des Ligneris, who holds a doctorate in physics. "The organizations that we aim to support to help them save money are the government and the health world."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1410

The debates on the future of books and the digital revolution are off to a bad start. Many booksellers are worried that some publishers, endangering the very existence of bookstores, to which they owe so much, have already embarked on the path of "dematerialization of books". The publishers incriminated protest: digital technology does not threaten bookstores in any way; the paper book will be the future of books for a long time to come, and bookstores its preferred means of distribution. The fact is, we believe, that the development of digital books and online sales is inevitable and that its effects on bookstores will be considerable. The most catastrophic scenario is that of the disappearance of a large proportion of independent bookstores, as happened a few years ago for record stores. Booksellers will not be the only victims. Publishers, whose business will still depend on the existence of a dense network of bookstores, will also pay a high price. This scenario is not at all improbable. In fact, it is probably the most plausible at present. Competition from online "bookstores" such as Amazon or Fnac already has a high cost for traditional bookstores, a cost that will most certainly continue to increase. Once digital book technology is sufficiently developed and disseminated, essential parts of book production (manuals, practical books) will initially escape traditional bookstores and, so to speak, destroy the current bases of the book and bookstore economy. This development will be further aggravated, as far as paper books are concerned, by the development of print-to-order services and by that of electronic paper - which combines the respective advantages of paper and digital. It would be wrong to see the latter as nothing more than a chimera: the British company Plastic Logic, for example, is preparing to market electronic paper within three years, the prototypes of which are already very convincing. The only remaining obstacle to this upheaval is the interests of the major publishing companies, whose profits are known to come largely from their activities as distributors and broadcasters, profits which are therefore threatened by the digital book. As soon as Editis, Hachette, Gallimard and Flammarion-Rizzoli have solved this equation and found a way to make more profit from digital than from paper, a large part of publishing will quickly switch to the digital age. And certainly, since its sacrifice allows them to maintain or increase their profits, these groups will not shed tears, or even crocodile tears, over the bookstore, whose independence they have already considerably reduced through their commercial practices. The outlook for booksellers is therefore not very encouraging. In these conditions, it is rather indecent to urge them to "be positive", as if the difficulties they already face did not exist, as if the threats weighing on them were not real, as if it were enough, to face them, to demonstrate a willingness to adapt to the new times. We therefore fully understand the anger of Christian Thorel, Jean-Marie Sevestre and Mathieu de Montchalin (Le Monde of December 15, 2006). But what to do? In order to preserve and even develop the independent bookstore, it is necessary to develop a realistic strategy, commensurate with the "power" of digital technology and capable of diverting part of it to the benefit of bookstores. Because if the Internet and the digital book have the power to radically transform the world of books, reading habits, and the behavior of book buyers, it is because they are endowed with a certain power, a certain attractiveness; It is good that they have their interests and advantages, capable of meeting or arousing the needs and desires of readers. The sites already developed by some bookstores and the projects of online sales platforms common to several independent bookstores are encouraging first steps, but they certainly do not constitute a response to the extent of the transformations underway. Only a few will perhaps come out on top. From this point of view, the choice of some booksellers to join the Amazon Marketplace program is not unrealistic - in the short term. In the longer term, Joël Faucilhon, the founder of lekti-ecriture.com, recently stressed (Le Monde, November 30, 2006) how much such a strategy increased the dependence of bookstores, transformed into Amazon's outsourced stocks. It is also almost certain that, as in the United States, Amazon will take advantage of its hegemony to reduce the share of sales profits going to associated booksellers. Two complementary responses can be provided: on the one hand, the creation of appropriate tools allowing booksellers to create and manage, easily and at a lower cost, their own online sales sites; on the other hand, the creation of a shared platform, open to all booksellers who would like to join it, offering the same services as the large existing online bookstores, and more. But these projects require technological expertise and significant initial investments. The community of promoters of free software could play an essential role here. Booksellers may also find unexpected support in Google and its Google Books and Google Base services. Finally, the State's bookstore support policy, based on a book economy doomed to disappear, should be radically reoriented to take into account the challenge posed by digital technology. Public funds would probably be better spent supporting initiatives to help booksellers enter the digital age than maintaining the illusion that it is possible, with a little help, to continue as if nothing had happened. The Post Office would also have its role to play, by offering booksellers reasonable, if not advantageous, prices. It is on this condition that the inclusion of books in the city and the fundamental role of facilitators and promoters of independent and demanding publishing that booksellers play can be preserved. Booksellers will have to redefine and reinvent their profession. Supporting them on this path means helping ourselves, publishers who do not consider books to be a commodity like any other. It also means helping society as a whole, which would suffer greatly from a reduction in the diversity of media and networks for the dissemination and circulation of thought and ideas.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1411

What you told me, I heard. What I knew, you confirmed. Today, I propose the presidential pact: 100 proposals so that France can rediscover a shared ambition, pride, and fraternity (...). This presidential pact, it is together that we will implement it (...). THE PRESIDENT OF REGAINED CONFIDENCE 1. - Increase during the five-year term of the research budget and public credits for innovation by 10% per year (...). 2. - Implement an industrial policy capable of preparing for the future and reducing the risks of relocation with the creation of a National Agency for Reindustrialization. 3. - Support SMEs [small and medium-sized enterprises] by creating regional public participation funds and by reserving a share for them in public markets. 4. - Give priority to business investment with a lower corporate tax rate if the profit is reinvested and a higher rate if it is distributed to shareholders. 5. - Secure the path of young creators by supporting the creation of businesses, by generalizing the creation workshops in all regions, by improving the social protection of entrepreneurs and by setting up a mutual guarantee mechanism (...). 6. - Reform the State. A successful decentralization. Quality public services present throughout the territory and accessible via the Internet. Generalization of free software in the administration. THE PRESIDENT OF GUARANTEED PURCHASING POWER 7. - The minimum wage will be raised to 1,500 euros as soon as possible in the legislature (...) A national conference on salaries, incomes and growth bringing together the social partners will be organized in June 2007 (...). 8. - Immediately revalue small pensions: they will be increased by 5%. The minimum old-age pension will be paid monthly. The payment of social security pensions will be restored on the first day of each month. 9. - Immediately increase allowances for people with disabilities by 5%. 10. - Double the back-to-school allowance, which will be paid to families in two installments. 11. - Bank charges will be regulated by the State. Bank charges and penalties related to payment incidents will be capped (...). 12. - Increase housing benefits so as to limit the amount of housing expenses for low-income households to 25%. Build 120,000 social housing units per year thanks to an incentive for the Livret A. The State will be able to replace mayors who do not apply the SRU law [solidarity and urban renewal, which requires municipalities with more than 3,500 inhabitants to respect a quota of 20% of social housing]. Create a public deposit service (...). In return, the procedures for evicting tenants in bad faith will be simplified. Make tax benefits and public aid conditional on rent moderation. Re-let speculative vacant housing (...). In social housing, tenants who have paid their rent for fifteen years will be able to access property ownership. Financially sanction municipalities that do not respect the average ratio (...) for emergency accommodation. 13. - Set up several price indices reflecting household spending (...). THE PRESIDENT OF WORK FOR ALL 14. - Make public aid to companies conditional on a commitment not to lay off employees when the company is making substantial profits and obtain reimbursement in the event of relocation. 15. - Adjust aid to companies and exemptions from social security contributions according to the nature of employment contracts and eliminate the CNE [new hire contract] to make the CDI [permanent contract] the rule. 16. - Develop collective bargaining at all levels and on all topics (...). On the 35-hour week: open negotiations to determine how to consolidate this achievement and reduce its negative effects for workers and employees. 17. - Create the right to a first job for young people, so that no young person remains unemployed for more than six months without access to training, supported employment or paid tutoring. Open 500,000 springboard jobs to young people (...). 18. - Establish a zero-rate plan of 10,000 euros for each young person to help them build a project. 19. - Set up an active solidarity income (RSA) allowing the improvement of a third of their resources for any beneficiary of minimum social benefits returning to work. 20. - Systematically implement a process for validating acquired professional experience and recognize everyone's right to training and retraining inversely proportional to the length of their studies. 21. - Establish a professional social security system guaranteed by the State, allowing each person without employment to be offered (...): remuneration for one year, equal to 90% of the last net salary received; qualifying training; personalized assistance in finding employment. This service will be provided by the public employment service. THE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SUCCESS 22. - Organize a general assembly of teachers in a participatory manner (...). 23. - Establish a public early childhood service and compulsory schooling from the age of 3 (...). 24. - Organize free academic support for all students using tutors. 25. - Limit the number of students per class in CP and CE1 in ZEP [priority education zones] to 17 and set the allocation to schools per student in difficulty at 25% more than the ordinary allocation. 26. - Revise the school map to eliminate school ghettos, ensure social diversity and establish priority education networks. 27. - Strengthen the adult presence in establishments (...). 28. - Establish preparatory classes for the grandes écoles in neighborhoods that do not have them (...). 29. - Create parent jobs, generalize parent schools and family mediation consultations (...). 30. - [Universities] Adopt a programming law. In five years, spending per student will be brought to the same level as the average for OECD countries. Strengthen the autonomy of universities within the national framework. Involve the regions (...). 31. - Create a public guidance service (...). 32. - Autonomy allowance for young people, subject to resource conditions (...). 33. - Initiate the national project proposed by the Council for Employment, Income and Social Cohesion [for the 190,000 young people left behind by the education system]. 34. - Support cultural creation and employment. 35. - Include education and artistic practice at all levels from nursery school to university (...). THE PRESIDENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY 36. - Implement a major plan for the prevention and research of serious diseases (...). 37. - Ensure sustainable funding for public hospitals, (...) while ensuring territorial equality of access to care. 38. - Create clinics, particularly in rural areas. 39. - Implement a youth health card for 16-25 year-olds entitling them to one free consultation per semester. Free contraception for young women under 25. 40. - Strengthen the resources of school and university medicine, and occupational medicine. 41. - Reaffirm the right to CMU [universal health coverage] and sanction refusals of care. 42. - Adapt the conditions for granting the disabled adult allowance (AAH) to progressive diseases with uncertain diagnosis. 43. - Implement a policy to combat obesity (...). 44. - Restore the resources removed by the right for care for foreigners in an irregular situation (...). 45. - Negotiate with social partners to strengthen the independence of occupational medicine. 46. - Defend access to care for patients in developing countries (...). 47. - Open broad negotiations with social partners, in particular on setting a minimum guaranteed pension, taking into account arduous work, the employment of seniors, the method of financing special schemes, and the upgrading of the pension reserve fund. 48. - Develop home care for the elderly. 49. - Increase the number of places in reception facilities (...). THE PRESIDENT OF THE FIGHT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE 50. - Education programs to teach children to manage conflicts through speech (...). Guarantee everyone can travel without fear on public transport (...). Place guards in all social housing. 51. - Fight against school violence (...). Recruit middle school supervisors, provide each establishment with a school nurse and a full-time social worker. 52. - Implement a policy for the early prevention of violence (...); develop juvenile brigades in each police station in large urban areas. (...) Emergency plan for juvenile justice. Elimination of prison sentences for minors except in cases of serious harm to persons; development of reinforced educational centers, if necessary with military supervision. 53. - Adopt a framework law on domestic violence (...). 54. - Create a new neighborhood police force (...). Assign experienced police officers, with real pay differentials, to more difficult areas (...). 55. - Facilitate and modernize the filing of complaints (...). Make a lawyer available to victims of serious violence within an hour of filing a complaint. 56. - Double the justice budget to make it faster and more respectful of rights. 57. - Strengthen legal aid. Strengthen justice and law centers. Public service to help recover damages awarded to victims. 58. - Ensure the presence of a lawyer from the first hour of police custody. Strictly regulate the use of pretrial detention (...). Ensure conditions in prisons that allow the reintegration of the detainee. Create an independent prison monitoring body. 59- Modify the composition of the High Council of the Judiciary to guarantee its pluralism and the balance between magistrates and non-magistrates. Recompose the judicial organization (...). Reform the labor justice system after consultation (...). Establish the possibility of conducting "group actions". THE PRESIDENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE 60. - Anticipate the depletion of oil by massively supporting renewable energies to reach 20% of consumption in 2020 (...). Create a public energy hub between EDF and GDF. 61. - Generalize insulation and energy savings in housing. (...) Develop public transport thanks to an exceptional levy on the superprofits of oil companies. Apply the polluter-pays principle (...). Establish the truth of the costs of transporting goods by road by negotiating an eco-tax (...). 62. - Make new building permits conditional on the adoption of High Environmental Quality objectives across the entire public housing stock. Encourage eco-industries by a VAT tending towards zero. 63. - Create a position of Deputy Prime Minister responsible for sustainable development. The Deputy Prime Minister's remit will be extended to include regional planning. Transform the Economic and Social Council into the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (EESC). 64. - Promote the creation of a World Environment Organisation. 65. - Promote the reorientation of the CAP (Common European Agricultural Policy) towards agri-environmental aid and ensure transparency and better distribution of aid. Transfer the management of direct aid to the regions. Encourage farmers' contributions to energy supply (biomass, biofuels, biogas, wind farms). 66. - Stop field trials of GMOs, pending the results of a major public debate (...). 67. - Encourage, through tax incentives, industries that commit to eliminating toxic compounds beyond the constraints imposed by the European Reach regulation. Implement a national pesticide reduction program. Achieve the zero industrial waste objective by 2012. 68. - Promote the idea of a "global CAP" (...). THE PRESIDENT OF A NEW REPUBLIC 69. - Establish the non-accumulation of mandates for parliamentarians. 70. - Introduce a proportional element for the election of deputies and modify the voting method for the election of senators. 71. - The Prime Minister will seek the confidence of Parliament upon his appointment, the blocked vote and 49-3 will be abolished for ordinary laws. The presidency of the Finance Committee will be entrusted to a member of the opposition. 72. - Eliminate the Senate's right of veto in constitutional matters. 73. - Introduce participatory democracy in all public authorities (...). Citizens who have collected one million signatures will be able to ask Parliament to examine a proposed law. 74. - Refuse any challenge to the 1905 law on the separation of Church and State and include a charter of secularism in the Constitution. 75. - Give the right to vote in local elections to foreigners who have been legally resident in France for more than five years. 76. - Systematically organize consultation and negotiation prior to any reform in social matters, by basing the representativeness of organizations on the election and by generalizing the principle of majority agreement. (...) 77. - Promote mass unionism through transparent public funding and by instituting systematic information on union rights (...). 78. - Establish a civic service for young people. 79. - Establish a High Authority for Pluralism. (...) 80. - Strengthen anti-concentration measures. 81. - Tax advertising revenues from private channels in favour of public broadcasting. 82. - Guarantee territorial continuity by imposing reinforced public service obligations on airlines. 83. - Introduce teaching about overseas territories in programmes, particularly on the history of slavery. 84. - Apply the principles of environmental excellence to overseas territories (...). 85. - Enforce gender equality, particularly at work (...). 86. - Strengthen the resources of the High Authority for the Fight against Discrimination. 87. - Guarantee equal rights for same-sex couples. THE PRESIDENT OF A FRANCE STRONG IN EUROPE AND ACTIVE FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD 88. - Build a Europe that is more protective and more in tune with the needs of its citizens. Rapidly implement ambitious common policies on major issues (research/innovation, energy, environment); preserve, through a framework directive, the development of quality public services. 89. - Include the growth-employment objective in the statutes of the European Central Bank; create a eurozone government. 90. - Raise living standards and social protection in all European countries through a social protocol. 91. - Negotiate an institutional treaty subject to referendum so that Europe functions more democratically and more efficiently. 92. - Launch with our European partners an initiative for an International Conference on Peace and Security in the Middle East. 93. - Equip our national defence with resources that are equal to the new risks. Our nuclear deterrent capacity must be preserved. 94. - Include our defence effort in a European security policy. (...) The objective is both to strengthen our security and to rationalise our expenditure. 95. - Introduce a hierarchy of standards into the WTO that balances commercial measures with respect for social and environmental standards. Deeply reform the IMF and the World Bank (...); Tobin-type tax on financial flows. 96. - Move towards genuine co-development by promoting concrete projects directly involving beneficiaries. 97. - Relaunch Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. 98. - Introduce a visa allowing multiple round trips over several years, so that migration adapts to the real needs of the labour market. 99. - Re-establish the ten-year rule as a regularisation criterion. 100.- Regularise undocumented migrants based on criteria based on the length of stay in France, the schooling of children and the possession or promise of an employment contract.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1412

1- The President of the regained confidence 1. Invest massively in innovation and research: increase during the five-year term of the research budget and public credits for innovation by 10% per year [...]. 2. Implement an industrial policy capable of preparing for the future and reducing the risks of relocations with the creation of a National Agency for Reindustrialization. 3. Support SMEs with the creation of regional public participation funds and by reserving a share for them in public markets. 4. Give priority to business investment with a lower corporate tax rate if the profit is reinvested and higher if it is distributed to shareholders. 5. Secure the path of young creators by supporting the creation of businesses [...]. 6. Reform the State: a euro spent must be a useful euro. A successful decentralization. Quality public services present throughout the territory and accessible via the Internet. The generalization of free software in the administration. 2- The president of guaranteed purchasing power 7. Increase salaries: - The minimum wage will be increased to 1,500 euros, as early as possible in the legislature. - A national conference on salaries, income and growth bringing together social partners will be organized in June 2007. This conference will be annual. 8. Immediately revalue small pensions: - Small pensions will be increased by 5%. - The minimum old-age pension will be paid monthly. - The payment of Social Security pensions will be reestablished on the first day of each month. 9. Immediately revalue allowances for people with disabilities by 5%. 10. Double the back-to-school allowance, which will be paid to families in two installments. 11. Reduce banking costs [...]. 12. Lifelong housing security: - Increase housing benefits to limit housing costs for low-income households to 25%. - Build 120,000 social housing units per year. - Create a public deposit service [...]. - Make tax benefits and public aid conditional on rent moderation. - Re-let speculative vacant housing [...]. - Encourage access to property by extending zero-interest loans. In social housing, tenants who have paid their rent for fifteen years will be able to access property. - Financially sanction municipalities that do not respect the average ratio of one per thousand inhabitants for emergency accommodation. 13. Set up several price indices reflecting household spending (minimum social benefits, minimum wage, pensions). 3- The president of work for all 14. Condition public aid to companies on the commitment not to lay off workers when the company generates substantial profits and obtain reimbursement in the event of relocation. 15. Modulate aid to companies and exemptions from social security contributions, depending on the nature of employment contracts, and eliminate the CNE to make the CDI the rule. 16. Develop collective bargaining [...]. On the 35-hour week: open negotiations to determine how we can consolidate this achievement and reduce its negative effects for workers and employees. 17. Create the right to a first job for young people, so that no young person remains unemployed for more than six months without having access to training, supported employment or paid tutoring. Open 500,000 springboard jobs to young people. 18. Establish a zero-rate plan of 10,000 euros for each young person. 19. Establish an active solidarity income (RSA) allowing the improvement of a third of their resources for any beneficiary of minimum social benefits returning to work. 20. Strengthen the qualification and ability to return to work of employees threatened with dismissal [...]. 21. Establish professional social security allowing each person deprived of employment to be offered: - remuneration, for one year, equal to 90% of the last net salary received; - qualifying training; - personalized assistance in finding employment; 4- The president of educational and cultural success 22. Organize a general meeting of teachers to improve their working conditions, ensure full recognition of their missions and prepare a multi-year recruitment and training plan. 23. Establish a public early childhood service and compulsory schooling from the age of 3. 24. Organize free academic support for all students through tutors. 25. Limit the number of students per class in CP and CE1 in ZEPs to 17. 26. Revise the school map to eliminate school ghettos and ensure social diversity. 27. Strengthen the adult presence in schools, including [...] by having a second adult in classes. 28. Establish preparatory classes for the grandes écoles in neighborhoods that do not have them. 29. Create parent jobs, generalize parent schools and family mediation consultations to help them strengthen their authority. 30. Adopt a programming law to give our universities the means to excel. [...] Strengthen the autonomy of universities within the national framework. Involve the regions in upgrading universities (buildings, student housing, etc.). 31. Create a public guidance service so that young people are fully informed of the opportunities offered by each sector. 32. Create an autonomy allowance for young people subject to resource conditions. 33. Initiate the national project proposed by the Council for Employment, Income and Social Cohesion. 34. Support cultural creation and employment. 35. Include artistic education and artistic practice at all levels from kindergarten to university. 5- The President of Social Security 36. Implement a plan for the prevention and research of serious diseases (cancer, AIDS, Alzheimer's, orphan diseases). 37. Ensure sustainable funding for public hospitals. 38. Create dispensaries, particularly in rural areas. 39. Implement a health card for young people aged 16 to 25, entitling them to one free consultation per semester. Free contraception for young women under 25. 40. Strengthen the resources of school, university and occupational medicine. 41. Reaffirm the right to CMU and sanction refusals of care. 42. Adapt the conditions for granting the disabled adult allowance (AAH) to progressive diseases with uncertain diagnosis. 43. Implement a policy to combat obesity [...]. 44. Restore resources for care for illegal immigrants. 45. Negotiate with social partners to strengthen the independence of occupational medicine. 46. Defend access to care for patients in developing countries by promoting less expensive generic drugs. 47. Pensions. Open broad negotiations on: - setting a minimum guaranteed pension close to the minimum wage, - increasing small pensions, - taking into account arduous work and family responsibilities, - increasing the employment of seniors, - the method of financing special schemes, - upgrading the pension reserve fund. 48. Develop home care for the elderly. 49. Increase the number of places in existing reception structures. 6- The president of the fight against all forms of violence 50. Restore civility: - Teach children civility: programs to educate children on respect for others to teach them to manage conflicts through speech rather than violence. - Guarantee everyone can travel without fear on public transport. - Put guards in place in all social housing buildings. 51. Fight against school violence by increasing the presence of adults in establishments: - Recruit middle school supervisors. - Provide each establishment with a school nurse and a full-time social worker. 52. Be firm with violent minors: - Early prevention of violence: reinforced educational supervision, reference tutors. - Develop juvenile brigades in each police station in large urban areas. - Take firm and rapid sanctions (recruitment of juvenile judges, educators, clerks) - New solutions to remove minors from delinquency: abolition of prison sentences for minors except in cases of serious personal injury; reinforced educational centers, if necessary with military supervision. 53. Make the fight against domestic violence a national priority; framework law on domestic violence. 54. Create a new neighborhood police force to better ensure daily security: - Fairer distribution of personnel: priority to sensitive areas. - Assign experienced, better-paid police officers to more difficult areas. 55. Help victims: - Facilitate and modernize the filing of complaints: improved reception at police stations, possibility of filing complaints online. - Make a lawyer available to victims of serious violence within one hour of filing a complaint. - Respond to the need for justice. 56. Double the Justice budget to make it faster and more respectful of rights. 57. Facilitate access to justice for the poorest: - Strengthen legal aid. - Strengthen justice and law centres. - A public service to help recover damages awarded to victims. 58. Protect citizens: - Ensure the presence of a lawyer from the first hour of police custody. - Strictly regulate the use of pretrial detention, in particular by imposing time limits. - Strengthen alternatives to preventive detention. - Ensure conditions in prisons that allow the reintegration of the detainee. - Create an independent prison monitoring body. 59. Make justice impartial and effective: - Modify the composition of the High Council of the Judiciary to guarantee a balance between magistrates and non-magistrates. - Reorganize the judicial system according to demographics. - Reform labor justice. - Establish the possibility of conducting "group actions". 7- The President of Environmental Excellence 60. Prepare for the post-oil era: - Anticipate the depletion of oil by massively supporting renewable energies to reach 20% of consumption in 2020 [...]. - Create a public energy hub between EDF and GDF. 61. Fight against climate change: - Generalize insulation and energy savings in housing. - Develop public transport thanks to an exceptional levy on the superprofits of oil companies. - Apply the polluter-pays principle [...]. - Establish the truth of the costs of transporting goods by road by negotiating an eco-tax to discourage transport by truck and transfer freight to rail. 62. Develop environmental added value: - Condition new building permits on the adoption of HQE objectives in the entire public real estate portfolio. - Encourage eco-industries by reducing VAT towards zero. 63. Mobilise the whole of society in the service of environmental excellence: - Create a position of Deputy Prime Minister responsible for sustainable development. - Transform the Economic and Social Council into an Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE). 64. Promote the creation of a World Environment Organisation (WEO). 65. Promote agriculture that ensures quality food that respects the environment: - Promote the added value of our agricultural products in order to improve incomes and encourage young people to set up; - Promote the reorientation of the CAP towards agri-environmental aid; - Transfer the management of direct aid to agriculture to the regions; - Encourage farmers' contributions to the supply of energy. 66. Stop field trials of GMOs [...]. 67. Prevent the impact of pollution on health: - Encourage industries that commit to eliminating toxic compounds beyond the constraints imposed by the European REACH regulation. - Implement a national program to reduce the use of pesticides. - Achieve the goal of zero industrial waste by 2012. 68. Promote the idea of a "global CAP" to [...] give a real chance to agriculture in developing countries. 8- The President of a New Republic 69. Establish the non-accumulation of mandates for parliamentarians. 70. Introduce a proportional element for the election of deputies, modify the voting method for the election of senators. 71. Revalue the role of Parliament: the blocked vote and 49-3 will be abolished for ordinary laws. The presidency of the Finance Committees will be entrusted to a member of the opposition. 72. Remove the Senate's right of veto in constitutional matters. 73. Introduce participatory democracy in all public authorities (citizens' juries, participatory budgets, etc.). Citizens who have collected a million signatures will be able to request the examination of a proposed law. 74. Refuse any challenge to the 1905 law, and integrate a charter of secularism into the Constitution. 75. Give the right to vote in local elections to foreigners who have been legally residing in France for more than five years. 76. Systematically organize consultation and negotiation prior to any reform in social matters [...]. 77. Promote mass unionism through transparent public funding [...]. A tax credit will be granted for union dues. 78. Establish a civic service for young people. 79. Media. Establish a High Authority for Pluralism, whose members will be appointed by Parliament by a 3/5 majority. 80. Strengthen anti-concentration measures. 81. Tax advertising revenues from private channels in favour of public broadcasting. 82. Overseas. Guarantee territorial continuity by imposing reinforced public service obligations on airlines. 83. Introduce teaching about Overseas in school curricula, particularly on the history of slavery. 84. Apply the principles of environmental excellence to the Overseas Territories [...]. 85. Enforce gender equality, particularly at work: - Development of a charter for equal access and equal treatment [...]. - State commitment to equal promotion of women and men for positions of responsibility. 86. Strengthen the resources of the High Authority for the Fight against Discrimination (Halde). 87. Guarantee equal rights for same-sex couples. 9- The president of a France strong in Europe and active for peace in the world 88. Building a more protective Europe, more in line with the needs of its citizens: ambitious common policies in research and innovation, energy and the environment. Preserving the development of quality public services. 89. Including the growth and employment objective in the statutes of the European Central Bank. Creating a government for the eurozone. 90. Raising the standard of living and social protection in all European countries through a social protocol. 91. Negotiating an institutional treaty subject to referendum. 92. Launching with our European partners an initiative for an International Conference on Peace and Security in the Middle East. 93. Equipping our national defence with resources that are equal to the new risks [...]. Our nuclear deterrent capacity must be preserved. 94. Including our defence effort in a European security policy, with cooperation in research and innovation and equipment. 95. Control globalization: introduce a hierarchy of standards at the WTO that balances trade measures with respect for social and environmental standards. Deeply reform the IMF and the World Bank. Implement a Tobin-type tax on financial flows. 96. Review our development aid policy: move towards genuine co-development by directly involving beneficiaries. 97. Relaunch Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. 98. Introduce a visa allowing multiple round trips [...], so that migration adapts to the real needs of the labor market. 99. Reestablish the ten-year rule as a regularization criterion. 100. Regularize undocumented immigrants based on criteria based on the length of presence in France, the schooling of children and the possession or promise of an employment contract.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1413

On the Saint-Martin-d'Hères campus, near Grenoble, is one of the oldest research laboratories in Europe specializing in machine translation, Geta (Study Group for Machine Translation), a direct heir to France's pioneering commitment in this field. At the dawn of the 1960s, when the United States was beginning to despair of being able to instantly translate natural language, the first experiments were underway in France. In 1959, when Atala (Association for the Study and Development of Machine Translation and Applied Linguistics) was founded, the CNRS created Ceta (Study Center for Machine Translation). Eight years later, the laboratory presented a pioneering result, the first demonstration of translation from Russian to French on a computer. Since then, the laboratory, a team made up of computer scientists and computational linguists, has had its ups and downs. Detached from the CNRS, now called Geta, it has lost some of its resources over the years. "In 1960, it had about forty people," explains its current director, Christian Boitet. "Today, we have eighteen permanent staff and twenty-five PhD students, and the CNRS's investments have been steadily decreasing for ten years." However, Geta has recently produced original research, such as the development of the pivot language, an intermediate passage between the source language (to be translated) and the target language (the translation). Other successful projects have followed. But the financial resources are no longer there. "There is not much public money in France for machine translation," laments Christian Boitet, who also rants about the calls for tenders that are inevitably written in English, even when they are European. In the United States, Darpa [Defense Research Agency, Editor's note] is making gigantic financial efforts. In France, there have been no major research and development projects since 1992." While in Germany, adds Hervé Blanchon, lecturer at the Pierre-Mendès-France University and member of Geta-Clips (Language Communication and Human-System Interaction), a project is bringing together 100 laboratories for translation applications intended for mobile phones. Saint-Martin-d'Hères special correspondent Here, of course, we do not believe in perfect automated translation without human intervention. "It is an insoluble problem," believes Christian Boitet. "We would like three incompatible elements: automaticity, quality and coverage." In Grenoble, we prefer to talk about CAT (computer-assisted translation), which designs tools for the human translator. Among the flagship projects of recent years, there is Lidia, on which Hervé Blanchon worked, which focuses on interactive disambiguation: the system provides several translation suggestions, for the human operator to choose. As for the path of "speech TAO" (automatic oral interpretation), it has been explored since 1996, with the entry of France into the first international consortium C-Star (Consortium for Speech Translation Advanced Research). It involves working on a system of simultaneous oral translation for tourist reservations. But for Christian Boitet, one of the ways to resolve the problem of translation, which is so costly, may be found in a collaborative network of translators on the Internet, organized on the model of that of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia. "When we see that Mozilla, a free software, manages to be translated into seventy languages, we can imagine using tools for pooling human translation such as Wikitranslation.net." Another route to Babel opened by the Web.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1414

When we die, what will remain? A few old bones and the vague memory that our friends will keep of us. Since the entry into the digital age, we also leave behind countless traces (photos, videos, texts, etc.) on blogs, forums, online shopping sites, emails, etc., so many digital and rot-proof ashes that survive us, scattered in cyberspace. "The dead continue to exist as biomass and traces in global memory, in government databases, family and professional archives, and in the emotional data stored in the biomemory of our social network," analyzes the company etoy.CORPORATION, at the initiative of a (very) long-term project, Mission Eternity, which could profoundly reconfigure the cult of the dead. The main arsenal of this Swiss artistic collective to access immortality consists of creating "capsules" that contain digital fragments of our lives, particles of data that would circulate forever in the infosphere. Confronting time. Etoy (1) became known by heroically standing up to the American toy giant eToys (with an "s") during a historic performance battle, "Toywar", in 1999, to keep its domain name (2). With Mission Eternity (3), the agitators confront existential questions, such as memory (its preservation and loss), time and death. A subject that arose while they were visiting retirement homes, questioning the elderly on their relationship with new technologies. "Death was an obvious theme that came up often. While in our society, it is taboo, they look it in the face. We wanted to do something with the old, these people that no one really cares about. Moreover, death is one of the most virtual things you can imagine, and the post-mortem experience is a tailor-made subject for etoy,” say agents etoy.ZAI, president, and etoy.HAEFLIGER, in full white suits, met in a Parisian bar. Two years ago, a dozen etoy agents, from various backgrounds (architects, designers, researchers, lawyers, scientists), secluded themselves in the Swiss mountains to think about the question. From this brainstorming session came the idea of “arcanum capsule” (arcanum meaning secret or mystery in Latin). “It’s nothing really revolutionary, people talk about the deceased, they tell each other stories to keep them alive. Someone continues to exist as long as they are remembered.” This capsule would store information about a missing person, visual information, voice samples, photos of their family and friends, pieces of music they liked, possibly a DNA extract, or messages for their loved ones. Each capsule is identified by a code that allows access to its contents. "It is not a data cemetery but an interactive portrait of the missing person," the authors specify. The project does not consist of copying or cloning life in cyberspace. The content is carefully sorted, in conciliation with the pilot, it is not exhaustive. Remembering is also loss, forgetting." Sepp, the pioneer. For his experiments, etoy needed a volunteer to encapsulate. His name is Sepp Keiser, he lives in the small town of Zug in Switzerland and is 83 years old. This microfilm pioneer, an actor in his spare time, makes an ideal test pilot. "We wanted a series of pioneers of the information age, Mr. Keiser is in some ways a grandfather of etoy," rejoices the ZAI agent. Between the summer of 2005 and the winter of 2006, they met their pilot several times, collected and scanned official documents, photographs, interviews, recordings. "We needed the user to be alive, to meet him in order to define with him his post mortem plan. Because the objective is not to constitute an inert capsule, but that it continues to live, like a digital ghost. We can, for example, imagine that a program activates it in the future, that the capsule contacts its friends on a certain date, or that a loved one will find flowers on the doorstep with a card from someone who died years before." Etoy does not just collect digital data, but simultaneously develops the IT environment that will allow this project to be deployed. They are currently finalizing an open source software, the "Angel-App", which allows easy distribution of the capsules between the "guardian angels" who host them on their computer. Anyone who has a computer and is willing to share at least 50MB of disk space can volunteer for the role of "angel". Free software. The Mission Eternity project raises another major problem: rapid technological obsolescence. "Digital systems for saving memory are very powerful but also opaque, you can always slide an old film roll in front of a light to see what's on it, but a CD will be unreadable for a day." Etoy chose open source and a decentralized peer-to-peer system, the best guarantee that the project can continue. "This is obviously not a commercial project but an artistic one. Mission Eternity is built on free software and public licenses to guarantee the circulation of this data, essential to keep the drivers and the system alive." Under the protection of the thousands of Mission Eternity angels (alive), the pilots (dead) travel through space and time forever. The project is not limited to intangible digital data drifting in cyberspace. It also includes biological remains. "At first, we had not considered that we would have to take care of the body of our pilot, but we did not want it to remain just an abstract concept." Sepp Keiser, a little disconcerted by the request, finally gave them his permission, after asking his wife's opinion. Several high-tech burials are envisaged: in the event of burial, a tombstone equipped with a semacode (a sort of graphic code) readable by a cell phone camera, which will display the contents of the associated capsule. Another option, this one nomadic: mold the ashes in cement and plug the resulting object into a sarcophagus. Pixelated ashes. The development of the Sarcophagus, a mobile cemetery that could contain the ashes of a thousand pilots, is already well advanced. It is a 6-metre-long container whose interior is lined with 17,000 light-emitting diodes (LEDs), as many pixels, forming a screen that displays the contents of the capsules. "When we remember someone, we often see them blurry, remembering also means losing resolution. In the sarcophagus, we have this same crudely pixelated image, if we look closely, we see nothing," explains agent Haefliger. The container, completed between January and June 2006 in Zurich, has already travelled quite a bit, to San Jose in California for the ZeroOne digital art festival, then to Burning Man in Nevada. During their American escapade, the agents on a mission came into contact with the family of Timothy Leary, the LSD pope, who died of cancer in 1996, in the secret hope of recovering the rest of his ashes (let us recall that 7 grams have already been sent into space aboard a rocket with the remains of 24 other people, including those of the creator of Star Trek). "We had read his book Design For Dying, and many of his ideas coincided with ours, in particular his desire to face death joyfully rather than ignoring it." Leary did not ultimately commit suicide live on the Internet as announced, nor did he have himself cryogenically frozen, although he was in contact with two specialized companies, but died peacefully among his loved ones. "Leary was obsessed with death, he collected a huge amount of documentation with 3D scans of his body, his DNA... He would surely have joined our project." Finally, the family was convinced and the rest of Timothy Leary's ashes should be given to them soon during a ceremony in New York. "Mission Eternity is compatible with all religions," the two etoy agents say. "Among us, some are believers, others atheists. The idea was to think about death differently, without being dogmatic on the subject, to invent new rituals." (1) www.etoy.com (2) http://toywar.etoy.com (3)www.etoy.com//files/presentations /m221e\_slideshowoct2006self.mov

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1415

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1416

AUDIO. The tiny iPod Shuffle is now available in colors. Blue, pink, green, orange or silver, it remains at the same price (89 euros) and retains the same characteristics: 1 GB capacity (around 240 songs), featherweight 15 g and battery life of up to 12 hours. With this version, Apple hopes to attract fans of customization, but also consumers tempted to match their MP3 player to their clothes or to certain occasions. EDUCATION. A free mobile office for high school students is what the Ile-de-France region will offer to 175,000 young people next year. In fact, the office is a USB key that contains several free software programs, including the Firefox browser and Thunderbird messaging, an audio and video player and an instant messaging service. Students will thus be able to access their computer environment (documents, address book, Internet favorites) from any computer. VIDEO. Canon is set to launch a consumer HD camcorder with some amazing features. The Canon HV20 HDV1080i features a 2.96-megapixel sensor that can shoot in 1920 x 1080 resolution and an HDMI connector for connecting to a compatible HDTV or computer. It has a 10x optical zoom with image stabilization and an instant autofocus system.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1417

The CRTC may be getting tangled up in telephone wires, but Internet telephony is not limited to four companies. Especially since the free software community is starting to take an interest in this phenomenon. In any case, for a second home phone, for a home office or to cut long-distance charges, solutions exist. Gizmo The Gizmo Project is an instant messaging service combined with a voice service that can communicate with residential and cellular telephone lines. The creators of Gizmo are also the ones who developed the SIP technology for voice over IP (VoIP, for short), on which many other Internet telephony operators are based. The software allows free communication between members of the Gizmo community. It is compatible with computers running Windows, Linux, Mac OS and even several mobile device operating systems. Ultimately, by jumping from one Internet access point to another with any mobile device equipped with a Wi-Fi port, it becomes a particularly affordable alternative to cell phones. Main drawback: it is impossible to buy an unlimited calling plan in the country. Each call to a number that does not belong to the Gizmo community is billed, starting at 1.2 cents per minute. Another problem is that obtaining a telephone number to receive calls on Gizmo is limited to the Canadian area code 204, which is in Manitoba. For a 514 number, you have to obtain it from an independent provider and tinker with everything yourself. Skype It is difficult to talk about IP telephony without talking about Skype. Especially since the software has evolved greatly in recent times. Today, it is a complete telecommunications solution, with instant messaging and video messaging. And once you have tried "video chat" & That said, Skype has recently revised its prices upwards. It's now thirty US dollars per year for an unlimited Canada-US plan (still a good deal), or 2.1 cents per minute per call without a plan, to call people who don't use Skype (otherwise it's free, obviously). Voipbuster The Voipbuster service was launched in Germany a little over a year ago. It's a minimalist service, which only offers IP telephony from a personal computer. The software can redirect the outgoing call to the home phone. This makes it an affordable solution for long distance calls. Calls are free everywhere in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and many other countries. alain.mckenna@lapresse.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1418

A little more and she would have recycled herself. It was in 2002. Marie-Chantale Turgeon had been busy in multimedia for four years. And was moping. "I was going to leave all that behind. Because I found that the Web was becoming the equivalent of what we saw on television. People were sitting there, quite passive. You had a screen, and all you could do was change pages. There wasn't really any room to publish your own content. I found it one-way. I was on the verge of changing direction." Until, while browsing the net, she discovered a blog. Then she decided to emerge in the blogosphere. While staying in Germany, the Montrealer opted for a travel diary, which she sprinkled with comments on the music, films and books that punctuated her exile. At first, her family and friends were her only readership. However, thanks to the magic of search engines, her blog attracts hundreds of Internet users who share her interests and view the photos she has taken with her cell phone. Since she writes in English, her visitors come from all over the world. Delighted with the experience, Marie-Chantale extends it back to Quebec. Two years and hundreds of posts later, she is one of the first in Quebec to broadcast a podcast. Once a week, the music lover puts online a twenty-minute amateur radio show that Internet users can download to their MP3 players. She broadcasts independent artists found on the Web and intersperses the recording with comments on the shows she has seen. By the end of 2005, her podcast had become so popular that it burst onto the prestigious pages of the American magazine Spin. But the young woman was already elsewhere. With her camera, she makes short videos that she posts on her blog, Vu d'ici. With a colleague, she then founded the Meïdia studio, which created the étoiles-du-web.ca website, the first Quebec platform to combine blogs, videos, audio and text. What is Web 2.0? It is Marie-Chantale's. And all those who, like her, are no longer content to visit pages, but want to participate in the content. In the spirit of the "software" that guided the first steps of microcomputing in the 60s and 70s. "What was initially in the area of freedom of source code has gradually migrated to the area of content," summarizes Thierry Bardini, professor in the communications department at the University of Montreal. "That is to say, we have started to apply the same notions not to the codes that make the machine run, but to the content (music, images, text)." This is YouTube, with its 100 million amateur videos downloaded per day. MySpace, the new standard of culture for 12-25 year-olds, which allows its members to have their own page and share their musical tastes. Wikipedia, the online global encyclopedia whose thousands of articles are written and corrected by Mr. and Mrs. Average. Those are the best known. Added to this is a profusion of sites of varying sizes, specialized or not, always built and enhanced by users. The participants By the way, who is participating? People like Pierre Léon, a Montreal taxi driver who writes about his night job, the weird guys he drives, the pink-haired girls who squeegee, who has become one of the most widely read bloggers in the province. Simon Pulsifer, a young unemployed man from Ottawa who has authored two to three thousand articles on Wikipedia, making him the most important contributor to date. Michel Beaudet and his Têtes à claques, which have climbed into the top 10 most visited sites in Quebec, with 2.1 million unique visitors in November 2006. But there are also those who participate in spite of themselves. We think of Lucie Laurier, who had the misfortune of letting a breast slip out during a television interview, before becoming the subject of a national scandal. Of the Star Wars kid, the 15-year-old from Trois-Rivières whose imaginary lightsaber fight has been seen by 900 million people since his classmates posted the video on the Web. Of Fidel Lachance, the country singer from Beauce who became famous on YouTube (60,000 Internet users watched the interview he gave to Anita Lachance) by distilling the witty remarks: "We look for all the hope in our life, and one day or another, we always find it in hope." Web 2.0, it seems, celebrates collective intelligence as much as its stupidity. Regardless, some see it as the advent of "a digital democracy." Like Time Magazine, which recently named "You" its person of the year. Because, it says, "you are leading the information age." But are you really leading it? Thierry Bardini doubts it. "They make me laugh at Time. As if holding a video camera was making history. At the same time, the guy who had the video camera when Rodney King was beaten up made history in a way. (...) In fact, we should say "we," meaning both everyone and no one - or just you because you're there at the right time." Besides, we often forget that behind Web 2.0 there is a great irony. Tim O'Reilly, a businessman from the San Francisco Bay Area, popularized the label in 2003 to help Silicon Valley emerge from its torpor after the bursting of the Internet bubble in the late 1990s, notes The Economist. Now here is the same valley populated by individualistic entrepreneurs glorifying the virtues of participation and collective consciousness. "As if the libertarian bigwigs of new technologies had suddenly become Maoists of the digital age." In any case, in its special issue of Le Monde in 2007, the prestigious British magazine predicted that, this year, blogs, podcasts and wikis will be more accessible to ordinary mortals, like email. So, we will think of Marie-Chantale Turgeon and tell ourselves that after all, she was just a little ahead of us. mallard@lesoleil.com After the bursting of the bubble, the Internet has been experiencing a new lease of life in recent years, Web 2.0. Blogs, podcasts, wikis: a myriad of sites powered directly by Internet users. But are you really leading the information age?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1419

New York - Since yesterday, most new microcomputers sold worldwide are equipped with Vista, Microsoft's new operating system, a major gamble for the group and a change of habit for hundreds of millions of consumers. Microsoft's CEO and founder, Bill Gates, gave a grand opening in New York on Monday evening for the release of Vista, the new version of the Windows system. A system that already runs 95% of the world's 900 million microcomputers. According to the IDC firm, Microsoft should sell 100 million copies of Vista by 2007. Vista, considered by experts to be more practical and more reliable than its predecessor, but not revolutionary, cost Microsoft six billion in five years of development. Compared to Windows XP, released in 2001, it offers a new 3D graphic aspect, additional software (video editing, Internet browsing, e-mail, calendar, games) and more practical menus. The promotion reflects this huge gamble: a marketing campaign (television, Internet, cinema, press) that has started in 20 countries and will provide 6.6 billion "opportunities to see" the new software in 60 days. After New York, Bill Gates went to London to claim that the new system could bring about "a complete change" in the handling of a computer. In Japan, queues of around 300 people formed in front of some hypermarkets in Tokyo. The release of Vista to the general public was, however, less spectacular in this country than that of Windows 95 in 1995, which had brought PCs into Japanese families for good. Promotional events are also planned for the day in several capitals, at the Atomium in Brussels, one of the main emblems of Belgium since its creation in 1958, and in Paris with a fireworks display at La Défense. According to the American magazine Ad Age, the global campaign will cost 500 million, an exceptional budget. Gradually, more than three-quarters of new PCs of all brands, portable or not, will be sold this year with Vista - except for "Macs", the machines of rival Apple. The whole question is to know at what rate individuals and companies will adopt Vista and computers powerful enough to install it. Vista has hardly any other competition than the previous versions of Windows: Apple (Mac OS operating system) has conquered only 3% to 5% of the market and free software, such as Linux, less than 1%, according to the OneStat firm. For Microsoft, the rapid success of Vista is crucial, because Windows software represents 30% of its sales and 60% of its operating profit. Vista should mechanically increase its profits, because if the basic version costs as much as XP ($199), the Premium version, which offers the real new features, costs $239, 20% more. Microsoft hopes that at least 60% of customers will choose the Premium version. Microsoft also put on sale yesterday for the general public Office 2007, a new version of its suite of office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), its other flagship product. Together, the versions of Windows and Office represent two-thirds of its sales and 90% of its profits. Some analysts, however, predict that Vista will be the pinnacle of Microsoft and of the 22-year history of Windows: multiple free software programs, financed by advertising, are indeed flourishing on the Internet. Discreetly, Apple is preparing the launch in the spring of its new operating system "Leopard", which aims to be more innovative than Vista.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1420

New York - Starting today, most new microcomputers sold worldwide will be equipped with Vista, Microsoft's new operating system, a major gamble for the group and a change of habits for hundreds of millions of consumers. Vista, considered by experts to be more practical and reliable, but not revolutionary, was a colossal undertaking: it cost Microsoft $6 billion for its five years of development, Bill Gates revealed in early January. In addition to a new graphic aspect, it includes many software programs: video editing, Internet browsing, e-mail, calendar, etc. Launched at the end of November for businesses, it is the most advanced version of the Windows software series, which drives more than 95% of the world's 900 million microcomputers. In concrete terms, new PCs, whether portable or not, will gradually all be pre-equipped with Vista, regardless of their brand - except Macs, the computers of rival Apple, which run on a different system. The listed price of a computer includes both the machine and the software. The question is how quickly individuals and businesses will adopt Vista and computers powerful enough for it. According to IDC, Microsoft should sell 100 million copies by 2007, equipping nearly 10% of the world's computers. Vista will replace previous versions of Windows, especially XP, released in 2001, which is used by 87% of the world's PCs, according to OneStat. Windows dominates consumer microcomputing: its only rival, Apple (MacOS operating system), has only won 3% to 5% of the market - although it has climbed a little in recent months - and free software, such as Linux, less than 1%. For Microsoft, the stakes are high, because Windows software represents about 30% of its turnover ($13 billion out of $44 billion in 2005-2006) and two-thirds of its operating profit ($10 billion out of $16 billion). Vista should mechanically increase its profits, because if the basic version costs the same as XP ($199), the Premium version, the one that offers the real new features, costs $239, 20% more. Microsoft hopes that at least 60% of customers will choose the Premium version. Some analysts predict that Vista will bring Microsoft an additional $4 billion by 2007 and generate $70 billion for the global IT sector, as well as tens of thousands of jobs. This is "the best $6 billion I've ever spent," Bill Gates told a few journalists in early January. Microsoft, manufacturers like HP and Dell, and retailers are hoping for a major recovery in the sector, slowed down by the price war.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1421

MICROSOFT MICROSOFT equips almost all of the world's 900 million PCs. Its main competitor, Apple, which runs its famous Macs with another operating system, represents no more than 5% of the global personal computer market. As for Linux, the leader in open source that was supposed to challenge its supremacy, it is still tiny at less than 1%. In the crosshairs of the European Union Accused by the European competition authorities of abusing its dominant position, the giant is also in the crosshairs of consumer associations that denounce the impossibility of finding machines on the market that are not equipped with Windows. In France, UFC-Que choisir filed a summons in December against three companies: the computer manufacturer Hewlett-Packard and two distributors, an Auchan store in Bagnolet and a Darty store in Paris. "The choice of these brands is a bit of a coincidence, we could have chosen other distributors or other computer manufacturers, believes a spokesperson for the association. We wanted to launch an action, even if it means extending it to others later." UFC-Que Choisir accuses them of "illegal tied selling". In short, it believes that manufacturers and distributors should offer customers the possibility of equipping themselves with "blank" machines or equipped with systems that compete with Microsoft's. This approach is a first in Europe. But the Trans Atlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD), an organization bringing together European and American consumer associations, could follow. The American giant, like all of the group's employees, believes that this "monopoly" on the market for operating systems and software is not the result of distortion of competition. "We do not do joint sales," insists Didier Burdinat, director of the Windows product line at Microsoft France. "We do not push people to buy a particular antivirus or software with the operating system." Microsoft is not shouting too loudly that the launch of Windows Vista will coincide to the day with that of Office, its office suite, and Windows Live OneCare, its consumer antivirus. "Today, you can buy PCs without a system. Hundreds of thousands of consumers do so," adds Didier Burdinat. He admits that machine manufacturers are reluctant to create smaller production lines for this clientele that is resistant to Microsoft products. "The industrial logic of manufacturers favors volumes. Otherwise, it costs them money," he notes. Ensuring compatibility The "microsofties", the group's employees, believe that they do everything they can to listen to user criticism. For three years, the publisher has set up panels of 12 to 14 people who meet for a day or half a day. "We launch provisional versions of our products. This has been the case for Vista for 24 months. And we are in permanent contact with about 170 user community sites, observes Didier Burdinat. They give us their comments in the most direct way. And among the opponents of Vista, we have managed to convert a few." Microsoft assures that 80% of the software that worked on Windows XP will be able to work with Vista. The remaining 20% will have to wait a little.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1422

Are you looking for an effective FTP client? An instant messaging software compatible with more than one service (Google Talk, Yahoo, AIM, etc.) or a digital calendar application that doesn't cost you several dozen dollars? You'll find them on the Sourceforge site (www.sourceforge.net). This is where the vast majority of free software developed by the community or by developers who want to make the greatest number of applications that are both versatile and free are grouped together. And, often, offered on more than one platform: Windows, Mac and Linux. Thus, free software for transferring files via the FTP protocol, such as FileZilla, and an application for grouping all of your instant messaging contacts, such as Gaim, are offered free of charge on the Sourceforge site. And these are just a few examples: in total, more than 100,000 applications are offered to the community, under a dozen major categories (Security, VoIP, multimedia, etc.). All this under the free software license.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1423

The Internet is one of the leitmotifs of the presidential campaign. Will it be played out partly online? No one is able to answer. Neither is Thierry Crouzet, a computer engineer, journalist and blogger (1), even if his essay is subtitled "How the Internet is shaking up politics". The Web has undoubtedly become a preferred campaign tool. In the United States, Hillary Clinton has just announced her candidacy for the White House in a video broadcast online. In France, the candidates all have a foothold on the Internet, and low blows are also raining down in this universe. The author's only warning, praising the power of the network: "I fear that the Internet is increasingly becoming a tool for denigration." The first part of the essay recalls the major stages of the conquest of the Internet by politics, dating back to the campaign of the American Democrat Howard Dean in 2004, who emerged from anonymity thanks to the visionary Joe Trippi. Then came the European referendum in France and the emergence of Etienne Chouard out of nowhere. Another feat of arms was the video of the Republican senator from Virginia George Allen in which he is seen mocking a young man of Asian origin. This video, broadcast in November 2006, probably destroyed his hopes of one day reaching the highest responsibilities. "Technology gives us the means to unite into a new power: the fifth power, an emerging power, unfinished, still finding its feet but already capable of weighing in political life." As proof, the politicians' flirting with bloggers for their ability to circulate information but also to resonate in the traditional media (the old-fashioned fourth power). Thierry Crouzet is less interested in institutional politics than in the Greek polis, the ability to debate and organize, like farmers who exchange their seeds. How can we describe this fifth power with its blurred contours? Tocqueville or Subcomandante Marcos are summoned as epigraphs. But it is Tolstoy's War and Peace that constitutes the audacious foundation of the argument. The Battle of Borodino, which pitted Napoleon against General Kutuzov on September 7, 1812, saw the death of 70,000 men and had no real winner. Adopting Tolstoy's perspective allows Crouzet to show that there are no heroes. "Tolstoy had anticipated the theory of networks and that each of the links contributed to the whole." The Internet is no more controllable than a battlefield. "Citizens [...] no longer need a party to unite." Unlikely alliances are born (alter and liberals), individuals join forces anonymously and for free, as in the collaborative online encyclopedia project Wikipedia. Ultraliberal or libertarian, Thierry Crouzet's political project borders on utopia, in a decentralized and non-hierarchical but still virtual world. His idea: an open source political program supported by a set of networks. We would like to believe it. (1) blog.tcrouzet.com/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1424

The "client" application of Second Life, the persistent online universe that the characters create themselves, has just been filed under a free license by its creators, the LindenLab company. Under these barbaric terms, it is a first step that could, in time, lead Second Life from a closed universe, and especially from a game, to a "standard" of the Web. At the same time, it could also lead to a new economy: one where you buy a virtual product, made by a real person, for your virtual character or your virtual house, which is also your virtual store but which constitutes your real income... If we don't get lost, we can see the revolution that is underway. All LindenLab needs to do now is to also release the "server" application (which is used to centralize the data) so that Second Life can develop itself, in the same way that the Net was built. If everything is open source, free of rights, then the "standard" will spread. Like a spider's web... Reminder: Second Life, a persistent virtual world in three dimensions, is a game in which three million human beings control, with the tip of their mouse, a virtual character ("avatar") and make him become an entrepreneur, supermarket manager, designer, painter or porn star. This is not a role-playing game, where the goal is to kill the most ogres in ten minutes. Here, there is only a flat piece of land and the possibility of creating anything and everything, selling it or giving it away. In December, around thirty million real dollars were exchanged there. This is one of the staggering figures of Second Life: from the moment when everyone can create objects, houses, land, clothes, they are bought or given away. With real money. But all this is only the beginning. Second Life is not destined to remain a game, a parallel world; it is destined to be your next way of using the Internet. If Second Life ever became what it can become (the new standard of the Web), the invisible entity that is the Internet user would become a character ("avatar") in three dimensions; and, instead of visiting pages by typing their URL address, he would navigate geographically in a virtual world, each website having become a house, a building, a café, a supermarket, a gallery, depending on the intended use. Let us not be mistaken: the fact is that this mode of navigation brings together all the tools that the Web currently uses and offers: direct communication (instant messaging, which becomes more fun and more open to encounters in 3D), information (each house contains documents, as on a website), and any other service that the Web offers today, including commerce. Of course, one can teleport to a place by typing a simple address, so one would not lose speed. Navigation would also be revolutionized in another way: people on the same site would "see" each other and could react directly to information, as if a chat window or forum were instantly registered on every location on the Web. In addition to no longer being an invisible entity, the Internet user would no longer be an anonymous entity: as is done with certain applications, each Internet user would be located, and their path traced... for better (their friends) and for worse (malicious institutions). But all this may be just a gadget compared to the rest. The economy newly created by Second Life is a revolution. Even if the most cautious were frightened by the appearance of the Internet, it has always been a tool for communication and transaction; you access information more quickly, you buy shoes that are sent to you by post, you chat with friends as if on the phone, you send e-mails as if they were letters, only faster. All this was true... until the advent of persistent virtual worlds. Also, remember that your virtual home would be your business site, your personal site, your blog, and, moreover, a place where your friends, clients or strangers could come to see you, chat or exchange objects. This is exactly what happens in Second Life: people come to your home because they know you, or because you have a window with beautiful objects for sale, or because a neon sign announces that you are a designer! They ring the doorbell, chat, trade. Many people have a job, a store; many are looking for one. From a commercial point of view, objects, to sell, buy or give, copy, etc., are thus of three kinds. They can decorate one's home, which is the same as decorating one's website: buying a painting made by an Internet user is equivalent to buying an image from a person to put on their site. Buying hairstyles or clothes is intended to enhance one's avatar, something that is purely fun. Finally, and this is the biggest new thing, the last type of purchase: enjoying a virtual service. Many characters in Second Life, for example, offer themselves the services of a geisha for the evening. And what is important in Second Life is that there are no "bots", fake characters generated by the program; thus, virtual services are necessarily performed by characters embodying real people. And for real dollars. This is how a new economy is created... We are not talking here about Web 2.0, which will be only a gadget compared to what is being prepared, and which is already underway. Thirty million dollars were exchanged in December in Second Life by its three million users; and this, in a currency, the "L$", Linden Dollar, which will inevitably have an international rate that should not be neglected in the long term. And this while the universe is still closed, all servers being managed by LindenLab, since the "server" software has not yet been released. When it is, the propagation of this new standard will be comparable to that of the Web. The playful side of 3D, the individuality offered by the avatar and the personal house, the ease that proximity in 3D provides for discussing and meeting people will make the Internet quickly become like this. All the good and bad sociological and psychological points of this evolution of the Internet user, of our relationships with others, with reality, with property and with work remain to be observed. But let us not be mistaken. Second Life is not a game; it is not surprising because of the eccentricities of its current users; it is not destabilizing because of its demographic and financial size; it is destabilizing because of the revolutions it can create on the Internet and the economy.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1425

Microsoft, symbol of computer imperialism, which wants to pay an Australian blogger to intervene on Wikipedia, a free, open and collaborative online encyclopedia: this sounds like a caricature of a digital scandal. However, this is the story that Rick Jelliffe told on his blog on Monday. Microsoft apparently contacted him by email: "They wanted to secure the services of someone independent and friendly (me) for two days, to provide more objective information on Wikipedia about ODF and OOXML." The two acronyms are in fact at the origin of one of those battles of specialists that computer scientists have the secret. "I think I will accept," adds Jelliffe. On the occasion of the release of the new version of Office (Word, Excel, etc.), Microsoft has in fact developed a standard (OOXML) which directly competes with its free equivalent (ODF). Enough to fuel the guerrilla warfare that has long pitted the proponents of free software against the followers of proprietary computing. And Wikipedia, whose articles can be modified by users, is an ideal terrain for this kind of skirmish. Microsoft regrets the approximations and errors that, according to it, pepper the various articles. And has therefore tried to call on an independent specialist to remedy them. Which is absolutely contrary to the Wikipedia charter. Because, even if Rick Jelliffe is an independent specialist, even if Microsoft has not asked for any proofreading, and even if the errors on Wikipedia are proven, paying a contributor on a specific subject is incompatible with the neutrality of the point of view, a founding principle of the encyclopedia. Jimmy Wales, co-founder of Wikipedia, declared himself "disappointed to hear that Microsoft was adopting this approach". According to him, Microsoft, to correct the inaccuracies, should have produced a document on an external web page, then reported on the pages reserved for discussions on the articles. We can, however, think that it would have been simpler for the American firm to directly ask one of its employees to modify, under a pseudonym, the pages in question. Between an infamous scandal and a big blunder, we are therefore leaning more towards the second interpretation.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1426

COMMUNICATOR. Nokia is launching a new Internet tablet, the N800. Equipped with a high-resolution screen with a virtual touch keyboard, this multifunctional device, compatible with Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, can be used to make Internet calls, communicate via instant messaging and exchange e-mail. As a bonus, it is a digital camera, audio and multimedia player. Developed on a Linux system, the N 800 tablet can be enhanced with new applications from the world of free software. 399 eur. COMMUNITY. MySpace is launching the French version of the leading community portal in the United States, which claims 140 million members worldwide. Created in 2003 and acquired by Fox Interactive Media (NewsCorp) in 2005, this service allows you to open a personal page for free, share images, videos and audio documents, and exchange points of view with other members. So far in test version, the site would record 650,000 user profiles in France. STORAGE. More than 50 GB on a single disk! This is what the new blu-ray burner launched by LaCie allows. Compatible with Mac and Windows, it connects by USB or Firewire and can read, record and erase data on recordable blu-ray disks and on recordable DVDs and CDs. 1,139 eur.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1427

NEUF CEGETEL WHILE Internet "boxes" are at the heart of the fierce battle between telecommunications operators, Neuf Cegetel announced yesterday the launch of its new Neuf Box. Benefiting from a less austere design than the previous one, and designed with sustainable development in mind, the latest Neuf Box "offers the most advanced technical features while being accessible to the most novice users", says Michel Paulin, CEO of Neuf Cegetel. In short, it is entirely Wi-Fi (i.e. wireless) and allows simultaneous use of all the multimedia equipment in the home. For example, a printer connected to the new Neuf Box can be shared by all the personal computers in the home. In addition, it will be able to benefit from contributions from the free software community. Above all, the new Neuf Box is designed to operate on future fiber optic networks as soon as they become available. All the major operators, from Neuf Cegetel, which has just bought the company Médiafibre, to Free and France Télécom, are investing in these networks of the future that will offer consumers ever-increasing speeds. "Scalability" "This scalability gives us a real advantage in terms of cost over our competitors, because we will not have to reinstall new boxes when very high speed arrives," says Michel Paulin. Assembled in China, this new box is developed in France for all its software. It will be offered free of charge to all new customers subscribing to a "100% Neuf Box" offer, those who no longer pay a subscription to France Télécom. From February, existing customers will be able to order it for 49 euros. "The box is really one of the key technological factors differentiating between market players," explains Michel Paulin. It allows us to demonstrate to our customers on a daily basis our mastery of simplicity and ergonomics combined with the best of technology."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1428

1. K3 MP3 player takes on iPod Samsung's MP3 player, called the K3, looks like Apple's iPod nano. Ultra-thin, unlike Microsoft's heavy and very thick Zune, this MP3 music player has a button for listening to live radio. The South Korean group's MP3 player has a built-in wireless connection (Bluetooth) and can be plugged into a speaker to listen to music at home or share it with friends. The previous device in this family, the K5, launched in September, sold 300,000 units, with a tiny stereo speaker. "We have to expand demand. The market should be saturated when it reaches 200 million MP3 players," reveals Dong Soo Jun, general manager of Samsung's audio and video division. The group hopes to launch its website in France, Germany and Great Britain at the end of January, offered in cooperation with Musicnet. A competitor to Apple's iTunes Music Store, this site will allow you to buy music. 2. The card that replaces hard drives Creating even lighter and more secure laptops. This is the goal of memory card manufacturer SanDisk, the world leader in the sector ahead of Japan's Panasonic. The Californian company has combined 16 small memory chips on the same card, controlled by an electronic component. It has created a 4.5-centimeter-wide card that replaces a hard drive, used to store information on a computer, but which remains sensitive to shocks. Its storage capacity is 32 GB, half that of an ordinary microcomputer. The price of this card, much higher than that of a hard drive, and the names of the PC manufacturers that will integrate it have not been revealed. But this innovation will make it possible to reduce the size of microcomputers. SanDisk promises to further increase storage capacity next year. 3. The almost universal DVD player The South Korean group LG, which changed its president on January 1, is undermining the strategy of all its competitors. Its living room player can read the two DVD formats of the future, HD DVD, offered by Toshiba, and Blu-ray Disc, designed by Sony, Philips, Samsung and Panasonic. LG is thus proposing to put an end to the war of standards. But this device, which will be marketed in February in the United States, is sold at a very high price (919 euros) which risks discouraging many consumers. In addition, it is not capable of reading classic DVDs. In order to remedy this problem, LG will offer in the first quarter a universal player that connects to a PC, and which can also burn CDs, DVDs and Blu-ray Discs. 4. A frame for digital photos For a year, Philips has designed a frame for photos of family and friends. Called "PhotoFrame", this electronic frame stores digital photographs. All you have to do is connect it to a microcomputer. A photo appears on the small flat LCD screen. With a simple press of a button, placed behind the frame, the photo can be changed. The border of the frame can be replaced, to adapt the color of the frame to the tones of the photograph. This electronic device exists in two models, 18 cm and 23 cm diagonal. Nokia had tried to market this type of frame for photographs taken with its camera phones. But it was too early. 5. Nokia's N 800 competes with Apple's iPhone The N 800 is undoubtedly the most innovative mobile phone of all the models presented by Nokia in Las Vegas. It includes a small tablet, with a touch screen, designed to connect to the Internet. It allows you to use Skype software, the new Yahoo! Go service and Google programs such as Gmail Talk. Unlike the iPhone, Apple's first mobile phone, the N 800 can connect to third-generation networks (UMTS). Its operating system is the free software Linux. Its Internet browser is Opera. This mobile allows you to watch and take videos that can then be watched on a television. This immediately available device is sold for 400 euros (excluding taxes), excluding operator subsidies. 6. A PC that is always connected While extolling the merits of Vista, Microsoft's operating system whose consumer version is coming out at the end of the month, Bill Gates, the founder of the software empire, also presented the Toshiba Portégé R 400. This 1.7 kg laptop allows you to be connected to the Internet at all times thanks to an HSDPA card (for the advanced version of 3G) and Wi-Fi. Its flat screen, backlit by diodes, improves viewing comfort. Its announced battery life is 8 hours. This microcomputer will be marketed in the spring, or a little later. Everything depends on the availability of a new Intel chip, called Santa Rosa. 7. A low-energy phone Reducing energy consumption has become a major issue for all manufacturers of electronic devices. Motorola has put this strategy into practice for its Motofone, a mobile phone that is only used for making calls. Made of a single block, this device is equipped with a special screen that gives the impression that it is a toy or a fake mobile phone. The traditional screen of mobile phones is replaced by a monochrome screen made of electronic ink. It consumes very little energy. Its standby time is 5 days and more than 7 hours of talk time. The Motofone was first marketed in India last summer. It is very light (68 grams) and very thin (less than a centimeter thick). 8. The Moto ACTV S9 Bluetooth headset These headphones are shaped like a headband. This accessory, available in black and red, is all the more futuristic because it works wirelessly. A Bluetooth connection connects it to the mobile phone. The left earpiece is used, by touching it, to adjust the volume; the right one to take a phone call. 9. The TV that lets you watch videos on the Internet Sony's BraviaS LCD TVs will be able to connect to the Internet and thus allow you to watch videos on demand. Americans will be the first to discover them in July. Consumers will have to buy a small box, sold separately by the Japanese group, called "Internet Video Link". It is connected to the set by a high-definition connection (called HDMI by experts). The sale price of this device has not been set. Families will be able to watch videos for free provided they have a broadband subscription with AOL, Yahoo! or Grouper. The agreement is expected to be extended to other Internet service providers. The menu for accessing the Internet and services from your television is the same as that designed by Sony for its latest video game consoles, the PlayStation Portable and the PS 3. The TV remote control serves as a mouse to navigate the Web and access the content offered by the Tokyo firm. 10. The world's largest flat-screen TV Sharp's president, Toshihiko Fujimoto, personally unveiled the world's largest flat-screen TV with a diagonal of 108 inches (2.74 meters). "This means that liquid crystals can create larger screens than plasma screens," he explained. Long the world's leading manufacturer of LCD flat screens, which it began producing thirty-four years ago, Sharp has been overtaken by other Asian groups. The previous record was held by Panasonic (Matsushita) with a plasma screen with a diagonal of 103 inches, 2.5 centimeters ahead of a television from South Korea's LG. The other major South Korean manufacturer, Samsung, held the previous record, with a 102-inch LCD screen. This feat was made possible by the start of production last August of a new Sharp factory, the most modern in the world, based in Kameyana (Japan). It is manufacturing a new device that is expected to be launched this summer. Its selling price is expected to exceed 100,000 euros per unit.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1429

On the Saclay plateau (Essonne), in the greater Parisian suburbs, world stars of mathematics and computer science, some working for a French public research organization, the National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation (Inria), and others for Microsoft, will now rub shoulders. The joint research center between Inria and the world number one in software was inaugurated on Thursday, January 11. It is directed by Jean-Jacques Lévy, research director at Inria. Thirty researchers, including doctoral students, post-docs and engineers, are already collaborating there. There should eventually be around a hundred of them working on fundamental research subjects, the results of which could take around ten years before being applied in industry. The two partners are providing equivalent resources. "Microsoft will second fewer researchers, but more money. Inria will invest more in infrastructure and the support of non-permanent researchers," explains Michel Cosnard, CEO of Inria. The budget will amount to a few million euros per year. Not to mention the salaries: those of Microsoft employees are much higher than those of Inria. "We would never have been able to afford Leslie Lamport," rejoices Mr. Cosnard. This American computer scientist, a researcher at the Microsoft laboratory in Mountain View (United States), founder of the theory of distributed systems, which allows several computers to execute the same task simultaneously, will be the head of one of the research teams. Georges Gonthier, a Frenchman, former researcher at Inria, now employed by Microsoft Research in Cambridge (England), and Benjamin Werner, a researcher at Inria, both well-known in the community of computer scientists for having demonstrated the four-color theorem, are also joining the center to lead a project there. The results will belong equally to the two partners. The discoveries will be the subject of publications, as is customary in the scientific community, to be made available to everyone free of charge. The software designed will be distributed as "open source", i.e. free of rights. OPEN TO OTHER COLLABORATIONS Inria has already set up partnerships of this type with other companies: France Télécom, Alcatel, Thales, and in the past Bull. Many start-ups have emerged from them, including Trusted Logic and Kelkoo. On the other hand, this agreement is a first for Microsoft. Bill Gates' group already works with public or private research teams. But it has never before participated in a project on a joint basis. The historical relations established between Inria and Microsoft for many years, under the aegis of Gilles Kahn, the previous CEO of Inria, who died in February 2006, are at the origin of this. Inria's reputation also weighed heavily in the balance. This organization is the only European one, along with the Zurich Polytechnic, to appear in the world ranking of the twenty best research centers in computer science, public or private, produced by Thomson Scientific. This ranking is established based on the number of times the researchers' publications are cited by others. "This new research center is a pilot," says Eric Boustouller, CEO of Microsoft France, "which plans to intensify collaborations with other research establishments. Microsoft funds chairs elsewhere in the world. We are thinking about it in France, with Polytechnique, in particular. The Joint Center for Fundamental Research created with Inria will be one point of the network that we will put in place." The center will be very open to other collaborations, insists both Inria and Microsoft. Located in the System@tic competitiveness cluster area, it will also be part of the Digiteo advanced research thematic network (RTRA), which, in addition to Inria, brings together laboratories from the Atomic Energy Commission (CEA), the CNRS, the Ecole Polytechnique, the Ecole Supérieure d'Electricité and the University of Paris-XI (Orsay).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1430

After Cambridge in the United Kingdom, Beijing in China and Bangalore in India, Microsoft inaugurated yesterday, in the suburbs of Paris, its fourth research center outside the United States. A major world first according to the multinational and Inria (National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation), the French co-founder of the center, since never before had Microsoft committed to a 50-50 partnership, especially with a 100% public organization. "A major victory." This laboratory, the idea of which comes from Gilles Kahn (the now deceased former president of Inria who had sold the idea to Bill Gates), will allow around thirty researchers from Inria and Microsoft Research to work on joint programs over the next five years. An investment of 10 to 15 million euros for Microsoft, quite modest compared to the two billion euros in turnover achieved annually in France by the software publisher, but which makes the American the first private partner of Inria 160 million euros of annual budget of which 20% of own resources. "Microsoft is not a patron, insisted Michel Cosnard, president of Inria, this agreement is a great victory and will allow us to have resources and especially to offer researchers attractive conditions." Orsay special envoy The center will give in to research "very upstream and in the long term", according to the two married. It will dig in two directions: formal methods, which aim to advance software design by using mathematics, and the development of computer tools for science. Heavy. A more delicate point, it is planned that the results of the research will give rise to a common intellectual property. Inria and Microsoft Research will have to agree to exploit it. "This will be done on a case-by-case basis," reassures Michel Cosnard, "in exactly the same way as for other partnerships." Researchers will have complete freedom in their work and the publication of their work, they promise. Microsoft will be able to use the research results for its software and they can also be sold to third parties under license. "I don't mind teaming up with people from Microsoft," explains Pierre-Malo Denielou, 24, a PhD student and the youngest member of the lab, "the important thing is to work to advance science." A profitable operation. Others, like free software activist Bernard Lang, research director at Inria and staff representative on the board of directors, are more critical. "It's a good agreement for research but it's not without risk," he says. "Microsoft may take advantage of it to increase its lead in certain areas and poach the best." Fears that make Rick Rashid, the big boss of research at Microsoft, laugh. "When I go to China, people say to me: but what will you gain from co-financing basic research? I answer that it benefits Microsoft as it benefits everyone." In terms of image, the operation is in any case very profitable.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1431

The information and communications technology (ICT) sector is back on track. Global growth for 2006 was 6%. Quebec is following the trend, but in our country, it is more pronounced in the multimedia sector. This is understandable, since over the past three years, the Quebec video game industry has grown from 30 to 70 companies and has reached 9,000 workers. All sectors combined, the ICT industry employs 140,000 people in Quebec. And job offers have tripled since the stock market crash of 2001. The only downside is that experienced candidates are hard to find. There is a shortage on the horizon. Université Laval received only 600 registrations in computer science for the 2006-2007 academic year, whereas it received at least 1,000 five years earlier. Entrepreneurs are worried. The shortage of labour is indeed one of the industry's major concerns, says Jean-François Dumais, an analyst at TechnoCompétences, an employment support organization. Also, promoting careers in ICT is on the agenda in 2007. However, in this field as in others, the capital has shown initiative. Putting aside their rivalries, 10 multimedia companies launched www.macarriere enjeux.com in early November, a website that provides information on careers in IT and multimedia and how to get there. Also with a view to gaining visibility, the same group joined the International Game Developers Association (IGDA) last August and opened a chapter in Quebec City. Université Laval has also contributed to the advancement of ICT by creating the Institut des technologies de l'information et des sociétés (ITIS). The organization has just published its first IT report on Quebec, where we can read that the technology industry has scored points in particular thanks to the rise of the Internet, laptops, the rise of free software and digital storage. Quebec-style success Thanks to technology, Quebec companies stood out in 2006. This is the case of Exfo, - a specialist in optical fiber - which, in early September, launched its FiberFinder technology, a world first, capable of identifying the "right" fiber in an optical network. A major innovation for telecom companies, often faced with network outages attributable to human error. Here, we are talking about considerable savings in time and money. On the software side, Coveo Solutions, unknown two years ago, is now competing with the giants thanks to its Coveo Enterprise Search (CES) software, which has proven its ability to perform a unified and secure search for multimedia content. Result: in 2006, Coveo increased its sales by 400%. Copernic, famous for its metasearch engines, had the brilliant idea of creating a targeted search tool for YouTube. But the most spectacular coup belongs to Industries Rive-Sud, renamed Meubles Rive-Sud, which chose the Web route to modernize. A success! Today, a supplier to Wal-Mart, Meubles Rive Sud continues to manufacture furniture in Quebec, while providing 850 jobs in Sainte-Croix-de-Lotbinière. What should we expect for 2007? Daniel Girard, owner of CTRL and president of Vétiq - the voice of Quebec entrepreneurs - maintains that the expansion of wireless will change the business practices of its members. Today, in IT, expertise counts as much if not more than technology, he says. So we have to adapt. This is a dynamic that benefits customers, who are free to look elsewhere when the formula does not suit them. The imminent end of employment tax credits granted to companies located in centres of excellence such as the Centre national des nouvelles technologies de Québec (CNNTQ) concerns him. According to him, if the credits are cut without any other form of support, dozens of SMEs risk disappearing. This is why discussions are underway with the various levels of government to mitigate the measure. Finally, 2007 will be marked by the seal of marketing. A difficult sector for many Quebec companies, which, while having mature products, do not have the marketing team to sell them. "This is our hobby horse for the months to come," warns Mr. Girard. Quebec products should not remain a secret, due to a lack of means to bring them to market. In the region, the ICT sector represents a turnover of $1.8 billion and some 14,000 jobs, concludes Mr. Girard. lfournier@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1432

- On November 21, Google's stock reached $500 US. It was $85 when it debuted on the NASDAQ Stock Exchange in 2004. - The Internet had more than 110 million registered names at the end of the year. The increase was 7% over the last four months. - Since August, the gaming industry in the greater Quebec City area has been part of the International Game Developers Association (IGDA). - The future of the electronic encyclopedia Wikipedia is compromised. One of its founders wants to reinvent the formula. - YouTube.com - the Internet paradise of video - is all the rage. Laval University has even put its new corporate stripe there. - Free software is gaining popularity. It has broken Microsoft's monopoly and, in doing so, has rebalanced the market. - Laval University marks a first in Quebec with its completely distance learning computer science degree. - Internet radio works. In the spring of 2006, Jeff Fillion launched RadioPirate.com at $6.99/month. - E-paper is on the horizon. Les Échos de France is testing a portable and foldable electronic version of its newspaper. - The electronic puppet theater is coming. The LANTISS research group at Laval University is working hard on it. - The podcast phenomenon, a super seller among young people, could soon invade classrooms. - India is becoming a threat to IT, as more and more research and development is being transferred there.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1433

WWW.GEOPORTAIL.FR, WWW.GEOCATALOGUE.FR LAST JUNE, at the Élysée and the Ministry of Equipment, the Director General of the IGN (National Geographic Institute) presented the Géoportail as the French equivalent of Google Earth. In doing so, Bertrand Lévy gave it considerable visibility. Indeed, a great many French people went to the site to search for their town, their house or their building on aerial photos. The influx of visitors was such that the site www.geoportail.fr was unavailable for several days. But, by adopting this perspective, the institute completely eclipsed its hidden face, the Géocatalogue and its geographic data. The general project of the Géoportail is, in fact, much more "serious" than that of Google Earth which should allow to "fly over the planet like Superman", according to the expression of Chikai Osahama, its manager at Google (1). It aims to gather public geographic data (cadastre, risk zones, urban planning, infrastructure networks, etc.) on a website and to be able to visualize them on aerial images or base maps, in this case those of the IGN. An important project when we know that nearly 80% of political, economic or private decisions are based, directly or indirectly, on geographic information. For the DGME (General Directorate for the Modernization of the State, attached to the Ministry of the Budget), project owner of the Géoportail, there is no ambiguity. "The Géocatalogue is at the heart of the Géoportail approach," says Clément Jaquemet, who has been leading the project since 2005. The structure of the Géoportail is two-headed with two project managers. The IGN provides the visualization tool for the national territory with its aerial photos and maps on the geoportail.fr site, all costs being borne by it. The BRGM (Bureau de recherches géologiques et minières) is responsible for providing access to the description of all digital data provided by the various public stakeholders from the geocatalogue.fr site. The cost, estimated by the BRGM at between 1.5 and 2 million euros over five years, is covered by the State, with the DGME having set aside 705,000 euros for 2006-2007. Search engine This dual design is detrimental to the readability of the site. The first Internet user who comes along will quickly experience this to their cost. The Géocatalogue can be accessed either directly via the www.geocatalogue.fr site or via the geoportail.fr site, but in this case, the path leading to it is difficult to find (click on search). Furthermore, it is not yet possible to view Géocatalogue data on IGN images. It should be in 2007. And yet, the data can already be viewed on other sites such as NASA's World Wind virtual globe or with geographic information software. The DGME assures that the site is to be constantly improved and that the Géocatalogue section is primarily intended for geographic information professionals. The BRGM is aware of the difficulties. The Géocatalogue site opened on November 13. For the time being, among the major data producers, only the BRGM, the IGN and the project's partner ministries (Ecology, Agriculture and Equipment) are present. In the future, the Géocatalogue could reference all geographic data produced by ministries, public bodies or local authorities. The stakes are high, now that all geographic information is digitized. "Immediately after the September 11 attacks, emergency services encountered many difficulties in intervening because the maps from the different services could not be directly used in the same repository," says Jean-Marc Trouillard of BRGM, for example. Referencing the Géocatalogue does not imply any modification of the data, which remains under the control of the producers in their original IT environment. The latter are strongly encouraged to join by the DGME but are in no way obliged to do so. Also designed as a search engine, the Géocatalogue should constitute "the broadest possible entry point for searching for the main geographic data of the State, knowing their characteristics and the means of accessing them and viewing them in the Géoportail," according to the project charter. Joining the Géocatalogue does not require adopting a common IT language but leads to providing a descriptive sheet of its technical data - the metadata - in order to make them visible to all Internet users. The administration should also soon make available free software (Géosource) to facilitate this operation. "Computing produces a great deal of heterogeneity but, at the same time, it allows exchanges between different systems," explains François Robida, who represents the BRGM within the Open Geospatial Consortium. This international organization, bringing together 300 private and public organizations, seeks to promote "the development of open systems, norms and standards" for everything related to geographic information. Reluctance Beyond the technical aspects, the issue of the Géocatalogue is political. "We cannot continue to live in our Gallic village," notes Francis Bertrand, of the BRGM. While we can predict that administrations, ministries and public organizations will play the game, the matter is far from won with local authorities. At the last congress of mayors of France, several of their representatives considered that the creation of the Géoportail revealed, in their eyes, too strong a hold of the State. Those who have made a big effort to be more visible on the Internet also fear that they will no longer be able to control their communication by joining the Géoportail. The possibility of viewing data on aerial photos or IGN base maps via the Géoportail also arouses reluctance. The institute is, in fact, poorly perceived by local authorities, who accuse it of selling its public data at prohibitive prices. In this case, we arrive at a paradox: "The State seems more liberal than its communities", notes Françoise de Blomac, editor-in-chief of SIG la Lettre. (1) SIG la Lettre, September 2006.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1434

THE Wikipedia PROJECT has its roots in the free software movement. Symbol of this affiliation, the user license that governs the operation of this free encyclopedia: this contract is the equivalent, adapted to the production of texts, of the GNU/GPL (General Public License) license to which the Linux operating system, an alternative system to Windows, is subject, for example. When adding a text to Wikipedia, the Internet user assures "everyone the effective freedom to copy or redistribute it, with or without modifications, commercially or not". He also accepts that his text can be modified, provided that the modifications made are subject to the same conditions as the initial content: possibility of copying it, redistributing it, modifying it. This is the principle of "copyleft" - a play on words made from American copyright. In short, it is legal to copy an article from the free encyclopedia and put it online on another site, without being forced to pay reproduction rights. It would even be theoretically possible to sell printed copies of Wikipedia, provided that these copies can be freely copied and distributed for free, or not... Other contracts for the use of digital content are developed in the same spirit by Creative Commons, an American non-profit organization founded in 2002 by Lawrence Lessig, professor of law at Stanford University. Creative Commons has developed six contracts in proper legal form that allow the production of content that can be copied, exploited or not commercially, modified or not, provided that the modifications are subject to the same conditions as the original content. "Around the world, around fifty institutions - universities, research centers, law firms or associations - are now affiliated with Creative Commons and transpose these contracts into their national law," explains Mélanie Dulong de Rosnay, legal manager of the project in France at the Center for Study and Research in Administrative Sciences (CNRS/Université Paris-II).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1435

West coast of Florida, on the eve of the year 2000. Jimmy Wales, 34, leads a hectic life as a stockbroker and owner of the Bomis.com website, a search engine that hosts entertainment content, including erotic photos. But he wants to create the encyclopedia of the new millennium, on the Internet: "I was impressed by the "software" movement based on volunteering, mutual aid and knowledge sharing, which has produced the best software in the world. I wanted to extend this concept beyond computers, and create a general encyclopedia, free and open to all, produced collectively by interested Internet users." Jimmy Wales sets out "non-negotiable" principles: the obligation to write articles in accordance with the rule of "neutrality of point of view" to eliminate militant or biased texts. Nupedia, his project, attracts two programmers; he hired an editor-in-chief, Larry Sanger, 31, a doctor of philosophy. The encyclopedia was hosted on Bomis' servers. A year later, Nupedia had still not taken off. Internet users who sent contributions were rare, and the process of validating texts by groups of experts was slow and complex. Wales and Sanger therefore created a second site operating thanks to a new software that was freely available and popular on the Net, the Wiki ("quickly", in Hawaiian). Unlike traditional sites, a Wiki could be modified at any time and at will by its visitors: the ideal tool for working together. The success of this site, called Wikipedia, was immediate: thousands of teams began to collectively write articles on all subjects, from the most serious to the most trivial. The texts were constantly corrected, rewritten or enriched by enthusiastic volunteers. There were countless frictions between authors, and incessant conflicts, but the encyclopedia took shape. Foreign language versions were born on all continents. In 2002, Nupedia was abandoned in favor of Wikipedia, which Jimmy Wales proudly called "an absolute mess." Larry Sanger, faithful to the principle of a classic encyclopedia run by recognized specialists, left the project and launched several sites rivaling Wikipedia. To date, without success. A year later, the Bomis server was no longer sufficient to manage Wikipedia's traffic, which was equipped with dedicated, and therefore expensive, servers. Jimmy Wales appealed to Internet users: for the project to remain free and independent, they had to send it donations. To comply, Jimmy Wales created a non-profit Foundation called Wikimedia, domiciled in Florida. Overseeing the encyclopedia and related projects, it would own the equipment, funds and brand. Today, Wikipedia is a world-renowned institution, which has established itself as a reference and daily work tool for Internet users in all countries. And Jimmy Wales has just announced, for 2007, the launch of a search engine, Search Wikia, operating on the model of Wikipedia. The latter receives more than 350 million visitors per month, which ranks it among the top ten sites worldwide. 300 dedicated servers are installed in Florida, Amsterdam and South Korea. The English version alone contains 1.5 million articles and is enriched by more than 1,000 articles per day. Wikipedia exists in 249 languages - led by English, German and then French. It still survives thanks to donations from individuals and corporate sponsorship. While it was set at $50,000 in 2004, its budget should reach $6 million in 2007. Over time, Wikipedia has adopted a structure based on the balance and compartmentalization of powers. Some of the most active "Wikipedians" are promoted by their peers to the rank of "administrator" (they edit new articles, monitor changes, identify poorly prepared novice authors or vandals). "For the English version, there are a thousand of them," explains Jimmy Wales. "They are indispensable. They do the boring work and provide logistical support to the authors." There are also the "bureaucrats" who manage small communities around a local project, the "stewards" who resolve organizational and internal policing problems, the "check-users" who track down troublemakers to ban them and the "oversights" who can go as far as the archives to destroy a defamatory article... For the most acute conflicts, Jimmy Wales has created an arbitration committee of a dozen members for the English version. Its decisions are final. Other countries have imitated him, but not all: German Wikipedians submit insoluble conflicts to a vote of the users. To operate this enormous machine, the Foundation has only seven paid employees! Jimmy Wales devotes himself to Wikipedia's public relations (conferences, interviews, meetings with political, economic and scientific leaders)... He dreams of going to China, where Wikipedia is banned: "We have a very active Chinese version, thanks to Taiwan and Hong Kong, and a few authors on the continent. But the authorities of the People's Republic of China block our sites. I'm going to go to Beijing to see the officials, explain to them who we are, understand why they do this." Wales also created Wikia, a commercial company that uses Wiki software to build virtual entertainment communities on the major themes of American popular culture. In September, he handed over the presidency of the Foundation to Florence Devouard, a 38-year-old Frenchwoman who lives near Clermont-Ferrand. An agricultural engineer with a passion for computers, Ms. Devouard devotes herself entirely to her volunteer work for Wikipedia. She discovered Wikipedia in 2002, as a simple user: "I was doing research on biosecurity; The websites were very biased. Wikipedia provided masses of factual information, in a neutral way, and mentioned the various opinions. I was won over, I started writing articles." During the Iraq War, she discovered that American Wikipedians published information that was very different from the French media and undertook to provide them with another view of events. Her role evolved: "I started to talk with authors to teach them neutrality of point of view, not to sort information in a partisan way, to diversify their sources." She quickly established herself as a mediator capable of finding compromises between authors of opposing tendencies: "I encourage them to talk to each other, to understand the logic of the other. It's a constant battle, it's sometimes impossible, for example with sects. But overall, it works." The new president has set herself priorities: "Wikipedia has grown very quickly, it's a mess! We need to establish faster decision-making mechanisms and then streamline financial management. Large IT companies have given us packages of shares, which we will manage to generate revenue." She also wants to strengthen Wikipedia's international aspect: "The new board has three Americans and four Europeans, which is important. We need to open up to Africa, which represents less than 0.1% of our connections." Ms. Devouard also wants to "clean up" the content: "An unknown singer writes an article about himself presenting himself as a big star, providing his personal site as a source, this is not acceptable." For her, Wikipedia must stop hosting a mass of "insignificant" information, which relies on "unreliable" sources, such as blogs. On the other hand, there is no question of going back on volunteering, independence and free services: "In the media, we are often associated with Web 2.0, the new generation of start-ups, and some people imagine that we are going to be bought by Google. They have not understood anything: we are not for sale, we are an international charity, like the Red Cross. "Free" is spreading, everyone will have to deal with it."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1436

The end of the year is a hangover for anti-liberal groups. The breakup of the common front born on the left of the left after the "no" vote in the referendum on the European Constitution Treaty leaves the field open to Marie-George Buffet, general secretary of the PCF, who has decided to launch herself into the presidential battle alone. What will remain of this dynamited dynamic? The 125 proposals of the "draft program", a sort of "precious common heritage to open up a new perspective on the left tomorrow, cannot be sold off", the national group now assures. Many themes were ultimately not developed, due to lack of consensus (such as agriculture) or remain unfinished (such as the passages relating to globalization, development or free software). Nevertheless, there remains what the trade unionist Christophe Aguiton calls "a toolbox", from which "all groups can draw". Starting with a base of economic ideas. Libération has therefore decided to mention five of them. And, in the absence of possible dialogue between the PCF and the anti-liberal collectives, to submit them to two economists from the Socialist Party: Jacques Généreux, advisor to Laurent Fabius, and Eric Besson, MP for Drôme and national secretary for the economy and taxation. Yves Salesse, president of the Copernic Foundation and former candidate for the anti-liberal candidacy, one of the driving forces behind the 125 proposals, responds for his part to the PS's responses. If, on the substance, little diverges between the radical left and the socialist left, the methods for achieving this are not a consensus. A brief overview of the debates that, on the left, will not fail to resurface during the presidential campaign. (1) www.alternativeagauche2007.org 1. Working time: "Immediately make the generalization of the 35-hour week applicable to all companies with the prospect of 32 hours, without loss of salary or worsening of flexibility or working conditions." The Socialist Party's opinion: Jacques Généreux: "Of course, the 35-hour week must be generalized, even if it means considering compensatory measures for SMEs. There is a debate within the PS on the 32-hour week. Within the left wing, we think we must go for it. Because labor productivity in France is one of the highest in the world. Because reducing working hours reduces absenteeism. Because it must allow for the creation of jobs, such as the 250,000 created with the 35-hour week." Eric Besson: "The PS does not have the 32-hour week as a perspective, even if, in the long term, no subject is taboo. The generalization of the 35-hour week is in the PS's program and it is even in the interest of SMEs not to have two-speed companies. On the methods of application, we refer to social negotiation. We would be criticized for giving the conclusions before it takes place." Yves Salesse's response: "Besson agrees on the generalization of the 35-hour week: it's a shame that the PS didn't do it when it had the opportunity. And we are opening up the prospect of the 32-hour week for the reasons that Généreux gives." Public services: "Immediately, we will stop all privatization and all opening up of the capital of public service companies. Public network services essential for access to fundamental rights (energy, railways, telecoms, postal activities, etc.) must be part of a national public service mission with a return to the public monopoly when conditions make it possible." The Socialist Party's opinion: JG: "We agree. Knowing that control can also be done by majority control of the State. Knowing also that the return of the State must be imposed in certain delegations of public services left to the private sector, as shown by the catastrophic management of water in France, the Post Office in Sweden, electricity in the United States or rail in Great Britain. Like the collectives, we also think that new missions must be created for the public service, such as early childhood. We can clearly see, in France, like the Post Office, that productivity gains are reflected, for example, in a desertification of staff at the counters in large cities and a closure of offices in the countryside." EB: "This is not the point on which there can be the most divergence. We have made a "freeze frame" on privatizations. We are very attached to maintaining large public services, and we are introducing the idea of an energy center. On the objectives, we agree. This also depends on France's ability to convince on a European scale." Yves Salesse's response: "Eric Besson does not see any divergence. So much the better. He does not explain to us why the left privatized and accepted European liberalizations. And for us it is not a question of a "freeze frame" (before the film continues?) of privatizations. The stop is essential, but not enough. We must go back on previous privatizations, improve existing public services and create new ones. In addition to the improvement in the standard of living that this allows, public money thus ensures the creation of jobs that cannot be relocated." Low wages: "The minimum wage will be immediately increased to 1500 euros gross and quickly to 1500 euros net [...]. The indexation of wages on prices will be reestablished." The opinion of the Socialist Party: JG: "I agree on the principle, not necessarily on the terms. Our plan is to reach 1500 euros (100 euros immediately) during the legislature. The problem does not concern large companies given their profit margins which are not used for productive investment but SMEs. They need to be helped in the form of exemption by recovering part of the 25 billion euros in aid. As for the indexation of salaries on prices, proposed by the anti-liberals, it is... rather timid! Such a mechanism already exists de facto today and inflation is very low. The real issue is the loss of purchasing power linked to the boom in housing and transport prices, which cause an anti-wealth effect for the lowest salaries without assets." EB: "The minimum wage is not the only tool by which the purchasing power of modest salaries must be addressed. We must not outbid the minimum wage. It is easy to say that we are more left-wing by asking for a higher minimum wage. We must find a balance between purchasing power and the risks of relocations or company departures." Yves Salesse's response: "Salaries are not the only way to improve the standard of living. We can also improve and develop public services. But the inadequacy of low wages must be corrected immediately. The public authorities do not control wage policy, but they must act on the minimum wage. Eric Besson's objection on offshoring does not hold. The wage gap with China or even Hungary is such that the proposed increase does not change anything. The only thing left is the difficulty for SMEs. Be careful: this objection leads to ruling out any improvement in social conditions at the expense of companies. With such reasoning, there would have been neither paid holidays nor Social Security. In addition, the SME category is not relevant. Some are very profitable, others only survive thanks to low wages and precariousness. The latter would succumb to the first market shock on raw materials or outlets. They must be helped by a credit policy from the public financial center and a loosening of the grip on subcontracting. As for indexation, Jacques Généreux himself answers his objection: the price index must be revised so that it more accurately reflects the situation." Stock market layoffs: "Stock options will be eliminated [...]. Layoffs will be prohibited for companies that make profits." The Socialist Party's opinion: JG: "Stock options must be limited and regulated. They can be used in one case only: to help develop new companies and mobilize the human capital needed to take risks. But there is no question of them inflating the income of senior executives in large companies because they encourage stock prices to be boosted for shareholders alone. A rise in prices that, perversely, involves stock market layoffs. Wanting to prohibit these by law alone is complicated and almost impossible for the courts to manage. On the other hand, we need to multiply mixed interventions to limit them as much as possible: by surtaxing up to 100% the stock market capital gains of firms that lay off workers, by surtaxing profits via corporate tax, by vigorously increasing severance pay for employees." EB: "This is wishful thinking, even if it corresponds to a real expectation. In the era of the global economy and companies with subsidiaries everywhere, it is easy to relocate profits. What to do? Give the administration the power to audit a company's global profits? This is well-intentioned, but it is inapplicable. We probably need to increase the costs of offshoring or layoffs for economic reasons, discourage windfall effects, and be more demanding on reindustrialization. But unless we leave the market economy, which the PS is not proposing, it is inapplicable." Yves Salesse's response: "This measure is only intended to respond to the most egregious cases. The new intervention powers of employees and regional development commissions as well as the new status of employees complete it. The increase in the cost of relocations or layoffs and the penalizing surcharges can be part of the panoply. But they authorize stock market layoffs for groups that can afford them, like the purchase of pollution permits. Or else we tax at such a level that it amounts to a ban. I don't see how this is unmanageable by the courts. The only objection is that groups can organize the relocation of profits. We know that. That does not mean giving up tax on profits, for example. And the conclusion to be drawn is that the measure will eventually have to be interpreted as a ban on layoffs in groups that make profits." ECB and Stability Pact: "Challenge the status of independence of the European Central Bank (ECB) from all political control, transform its missions and place it under parliamentary control, in order to reorient European monetary policy [...]. Challenging the Stability Pact that we will not apply in any case if it hinders our action." The opinion of the Socialist Party: JG: "On this, I find the collectives, as on other economic subjects, almost timid! Because yes, the Stability Pact hinders our action! It must be challenged because it is stupid and [it] prohibits fiscal and monetary political cooperation. In the past, the left of the PS was mocked when it advocated abandoning the Pact and reforming the statutes of the ECB. Today, within the European socialists, a consensus is emerging to say that it must be reviewed. The question remains, here again, how we go about it. And here again, if we agree on most of the anti-liberals' objectives, we can disagree on the means of achieving them." EB: "The question is not to call into question the independence of the ECB. There must be a balance between its autonomy and the existence of a democratic body with which there is dialogue and cooperation for us, this would be the European economic government. This involves introducing growth and employment into the ECB's mandate, and not just inflation. This is already the case in other countries, notably the United States." Yves Salesse's response: "Eric Besson is making proposals that were not in the draft European constitution that he defended and which were not the subject of a battle when the PS led the government. Is it a habit of only proposing things once the opportunity has passed? Basically, we prefer control by Parliament to the "economic government" that Jacques Delors has been talking about for a long time and which has never seen the light of day because governments never represent a united force capable of counterbalancing the ECB. Généreux finds us timid. So much the better. This is already a sign that we have not given in to the bidding war. We say three things about the means of our European policy. We must carry out work of conviction. And not limit ourselves to diplomatic negotiation: we must conduct battles with all the forces that exist in other countries and [that] want to challenge liberal policies. We must block new regressions as the current institutional system allows. Finally, we must refuse to apply what stifles political action. The right here and Schröder in Germany did not apply the Stability Pact. Without drama. The plural left did not dare."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1437

In the weekend edition, my colleague Paul Cauchon returned, in an article entitled Internet, new mirror, to the crowning of millions of Internet users by the American magazine Time, which last week awarded them the title of personality of the year. People whose main quality is to contribute, day after day, to the addition of content and knowledge (for some) in the vast universe of the Internet. As in most analyses on the subject, and I include mine at the beginning of the week on Radio-Canada, we all talk about bloggers, "Youtubers" and people who participate in the development of this great universal online encyclopedia that is Wikipedia. But someone is missing in the portrait. I am thinking here of this community of people who often invest dozens if not hundreds of hours voluntarily for a cause, the free digital world. That is to say, these tools that allow us to access, create, learn and entertain ourselves freely on the Internet. Of course there are Apple and Microsoft and their dozens of software programs that make life easier for Internet users. But at the same time, there is this community of "developers" here and elsewhere in the world who work to create free tools that people are free to use often for free, to modify, to redistribute to their friends and colleagues without stealing from anyone and without having to ask permission. The world of free software also has its share of impact on the evolution of the Internet. Without necessarily having to use one of the many operating platforms of the Linux family, millions of Internet users have embraced, in some cases without even knowing it, the world of free software this year. I am thinking of the millions of users of the Firefox browser, the Thunderbird email software or the OpenOffice office suite. So congratulations also to these thousands of people who work in the field of free software and protocols who, through their work, have participated in making the Internet bigger and more welcoming. To these people, thank you, and especially congratulations on your title of Time magazine's 2006 personality of the year! \*\*\* Last week, the French General Commission on Terminology and Neology officially issued a notice to Internet users and communicators strongly recommending that they no longer use the term "podcast" and its derivatives, the theme "podcaster" being an example of a derivative. The organization instead suggests using the term "diffusion pour baladeur" to replace "podcast" and "diffuser pour baladeur" for "podcaster". Seeing this, we can only applaud the OQLF's initiative to have initiated the use of the term baladodiffusion in our country a few years ago. The French Commission on Terminology explains that the use of the terms podcast and podcasting is a source of confusion because they are very close to the name of Apple's iPod device. The organization also takes the opportunity to point out that the iPod is actually a "digital music player" and strongly encourages people to use this word to describe these devices. Speaking of language, have you heard of "Petit Bettina Soulez"? It is the initiative of a French blogger, communications consultant and, above all, lover of the French language. She created a lexicon of fictitious words related to the world of blogs. Take a moment to read the definition of a few words. The full text can be found on the website of French notebook writer Bettina Soulez (http://aubonsens.typepad.com). - Blog: a space for creation and freedom offered to everyone on the Internet. - Blogosphere: an environment in which blogging is carried out. - Blogotomy: a surgical operation attempting to separate the blogger from his keyboard, and therefore from his blog. - Blogomania, blogomania: a strange habit or taste for blogging that can irritate those around the blogger. - Blogomaniac: who manifests an obsession with blogging. - Bloguesque: relating to blogging. - Blogubuotesque: which appears ridiculous on a blog. - Blogaillerie: blogged mockery. - Blogorrhea: speech disorder manifested by an excess of words on the blog. Currently incurable disease leading to exhaustion. - Blogologue: blogging specialist seeking to alleviate the torments of the compulsive blogger. - Blogology: scientific study of blogging facts. - Blogger: person who blogs, often misunderstood by non-bloggers. - Blogasm: high point of blogging pleasure. - Bloguerie: similar to a chat which, come autumn, could be had by the fireside... in France, Canada or Belgium. - Emblogué: said of a person embarked, stuck or enlisted in a blogging current. - Désemblogué: said of a poor blogger, lost outside the blogosphere. - Inéblogable: said of an inimitable and incomparable blog. - Néoblogophyte: blogger recently converted to the art of blogging. bguglielminetti@ledevoir.com Contributor to Le Devoir Bruno Guglielminetti is a producer and new technology columnist for Radio-Canada's Première chaîne. He is also the editor of Carnet techno (www.radio-canada.ca/techno).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1438

Major U.S. indices ended the session lower yesterday as investors took profits ahead of the long Christmas weekend in a very quiet session. The Dow Jones closed down 0.63% at 12,343.22 and the Nasdaq lost 0.61% to 2,401.18. Among the day's indicators, household consumption spending rose 0.5% in November from October and household incomes increased 0.3%. On the inflation front, the index measuring prices related to consumer spending was flat in November, while analysts had expected a 0.2% increase. Media group News Corp. fell 0.23% to $21.53. Canadian Research in Motion, maker of the BlackBerry, lost 2.77% to $130.00. Finally, the Red Hat group, one of the main distributors of free Linux software, ended stable at 16.16 dollars, after the announcement of quarterly results above expectations.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1439

Software startups are a new force. In the age of online teamwork, Zimbra is taking on Microsoft with its low-cost e-mail software. In late 2003, in a Palo Alto, Calif., diner, three friends tired of working for Silicon Valley companies decided to design e-mail software. Over the course of a weekend, they cobbled together a simple prototype. Then they searched the Web for free software. Within months, they had assembled more than 40 blocks of free programming into a basic system. They named it Zimbra—after a Talking Heads song—put it online, and invited suggestions from people on the Internet. Teamwork From a dorm room with so many computers that the air conditioner runs even in the winter, a young college student from Rochester, N.Y., has been poring over the code to identify potential bugs. A Denver-area computer expert worked to improve the software's anti-spam feature while watching episodes of Lost on TV. And a nuclear engineer translated the software into French from his chalet in the Alps. The employees were paid T-shirts and caps for their pay. In February, the three men launched their product at a discount, which quickly irked Microsoft's franchise, the market leader. Like Microsoft's Exchange software, Zimbra lets office workers send, receive, store and scan the thousands of e-mails their companies receive each day. Today, about four million people use Zimbra. Alternatives Zimbra is a speck of dust compared to Microsoft, which boasts that it offers Exchange to 140 million users. But the specks of dust are growing. The Web is full of alternatives to Microsoft, from the Firefox browser to the SugarCRM sales software. Even Google has gotten into the fray, buying up startups including a spreadsheet program and the small maker of the free word-processing software Writely.com. Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates says he has looked at Zimbra and admits "they've done a good job." But he says the product "doesn't come close to offering all the benefits of Exchange." Exchange, the messaging software of choice for thousands of large global companies, combines conference calls with instant messaging. The latest version makes it even easier to use the service using cell phones and other mobile devices. But Exchange, despite its many features, is complicated and can be more expensive than Zimbra because of a complex pricing structure. Developing the latest version of Exchange took years of work by more than 400 Microsoft employees. Big Changes The emergence of new companies like Zimbra comes as Microsoft struggles to adapt to the big changes brought by the Internet. The company built its wealth by dominating the personal computer software market. But more and more of the basic tasks once done by Microsoft software can be done on the Web - or on phones, handheld computers and other devices that don't require Microsoft software. That's forcing Microsoft to find ways to sell software as a service on the Web while maintaining its stronghold in the computer software industry. While Microsoft is still growing at a healthy rate in both revenue and profit, it appears that its Windows operating system and Office software, which grew by about 30 percent a year in the 1990s, will never again be as successful as they once were. Microsoft's stock, though up since last summer, has been flat for the past six years. Three Friends Zimbra was the brainchild of three programmers led by Mr. Dharmaraj. Mr. Dharmaraj befriended Ross Dargahi and Roland Schemers while working at Sun Microsystems. The three joined forces in a software startup in 1997 before resigning in 2003. Meeting at a pub in late 2003, the three friends agreed that there was a need for a new enterprise e-mail software that could serve business customers more simply and cheaply than Exchange. They thought they could hastily build it by rummaging through free software on the Web. The programmers had been collaborating informally on the Web for decades. But in the early 1990s, they coalesced into a grassroots movement known as "open source." Through this network, Dharmaraj and his team found software that they worked to assemble into a single program. They added fancy features called "Zimlets," which let users perform tasks within an e-mail, such as searching Amazon.com or getting a Yahoo map by hovering over a street address. By the spring of 2004, the three partners had accumulated $4 million in seed money. They spent it sparingly, housing their modest contingent of 10 employees in a rented office in Silicon Valley. They eventually raised a total of $30.5 million in venture capital. In August 2005, in keeping with the rites of passage of the open-source world, Zimbra posted a prototype of its software on the Web and invited suggestions.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1440

It is forbidden to practice the tied sale of a saucepan with pasta, so why allow that of computers with software? It is to denounce this very common method that the consumer association UFC-Que choisir sued yesterday morning the PC manufacturer Hewlett-Packard and two distributors, the Auchan store in Bagnolet (93) and the Darty des Halles, in Paris. "Free choice". With a simple observation: it is almost impossible today for a consumer to buy a computer without acquiring at the same time an operating system, Microsoft Windows in the vast majority of cases, and very often several other software (antivirus, games, etc.). "This is not an anti-Microsoft crusade, indicates Julien Dourgnon, the head of studies at UFC. We are arguing for free choice: it is still incredible that most consumers have never paid a cent directly to Microsoft and that it is one of the richest firms in the world." According to the association, 10% to 20% of the price of a computer is due to pre-installed software, and it would be desirable to let the consumer decide whether or not they want these programs. This legal action echoes the campaign led for several years by supporters of free software at war with "racketeering" and multiplying letters to the fraud department to complain about not being able to buy a "bare" computer or, at least, to be able to get a refund for the software they do not want. "Free software like Linux [an operating system competing with Windows, editor's note] is now easy to install and runs well, so there is no reason to force the sale of Windows," believes Bernard Lang, president of the French Association of Free Software Users (Aful), while recalling that tied sales practices "maintain Microsoft's monopoly." "Trust." On the Hewlett-Packard France side, the legal affairs director, Alain Spitzmuller, claims to have "confidence in justice" and "to act solely in the consumer's interest". According to him, this is in no way an illegal tied sale, because "this does not exist when there is a legitimate reason to link two components. However, the computer and the software are not separate products, because a computer without an operating system cannot function", and, according to him, the choice of Windows is essential because "Linux is still a specialist matter".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1441

Since the start of the 2003 school year, parents of children attending the Pilâtre-de-Rozier secondary school in Ars-sur-Moselle (Moselle) have been able to view their children's grades on the Internet, their timetable, the list of homework they have to do, etc. All they have to do is log in to a secure, personalized web portal using a username and password. "It's very practical for us families who are outside the school," explains Eric Marion, head of the Federation of Parents' Councils (FCPE) for the secondary school. "We can monitor our children's schooling without waiting for their school reports, check that a teacher is absent, and read teachers' comments in real time." Passionate about new technologies, Olivier Pallez, principal of the secondary school from 2000 to 2006, is behind the implementation of what is called a digital work environment (ENT). "The initial objective was to make students and their parents responsible for academic results," he explains. To set up his project, he requested funding from the college's recruiting municipalities and the Moselle department. This small technological revolution has taken over national education in recent years. Already, more than 9% of middle schools, 17% of general and technological high schools, and 12% of vocational high schools have made academic results available on the Web, as well as other information such as timetables or student absences - systematically announced by SMS. Faced with the emergence of disparate and more or less substantial initiatives, the Ministry of National Education launched, in 2003, with the Caisse des Dépôts, a call for projects from departments, regions and academies to develop digital work environments. Objective: to harmonize the different systems, offer access to a range of services from a single portal and give a strong boost to the development of the Net in schools. "We have developed a series of common rules valid throughout France," explains Benoît Sillard, delegate for Internet usage at the ministry. "We want 80% of middle and high schools to be equipped by 2010." To date, there are approximately 200 middle and high schools equipped with digital work environments that meet the ministry's recommendations. These ENTs are developed at the initiative of 8 regions, 22 departments and 14 academies. Lorraine is one of the pioneers. Ten school groups (middle and high schools) are equipped with digital environments. Generalization to the entire region remains an objective, but the complexity of the project requires constant adjustments. "In use, some tools prove to be used more than others. The main education advisors ultimately prefer to call the parents of absent students directly rather than send a text message. On the other hand, discussion forums are very popular," analyzes Pascal Faure, information and communication technology advisor at the Nancy-Metz rectorate. The Ile-de-France region has 12 pilot establishments equipped with ENT, including the René-Auffray high school in Clichy (Hauts-de-Seine). "It's a fabulous tool," enthuses the high school principal, Jean-Pierre Vast. When I receive parents in my office, I have access to all the grades and assessments concerning their children instead of running after the teachers." During class councils, Mr. Vast projects each student's report cards and enters the teachers' assessments directly into the computer. The software also allows teachers to put educational documents (lessons, maps, illustrations) online for students. Teachers can reserve equipment online and communicate with their colleagues, students or parents using the internal messaging system. Absent high school students can consult the teachers' notebook from home, which contains the questions covered in each class as well as the homework to be done. They can also chat with their classmates on a forum, do homework or exercises online, alone or with others... Frédéric Bonvoisin, a mathematics and science teacher, was the driving force behind the operation. An experiment was first launched in February on three classes before expanding the ENT in September to all 1,600 students and staff. Teachers benefited from short training sessions. The students did not need them. "Compared to us, they are at least a generation ahead," assures Mr. Bonvoisin, who, on the other hand, regularly receives messages from his colleagues in need of explanations. The Ile-de-France region, which is currently testing the portals of four private companies, is trying to develop a free software solution. "This would allow you to be in control of your product and your investments," they believe in the region.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1442

More than 400 million cell phones in India, more than half a billion in China, almost 100 million in Brazil Hasn't the "cell" become the preferred communication tool for the youth and the new middle classes of these immense emerging markets? Hasn't it even become the tool par excellence for the consumption of audiovisual content? Many believe so. However, many could soon change their minds: a laptop computer for more or less $100 is coming, designed essentially to be established in developing countries. With the consequences that one can imagine. Implemented at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a humanitarian project launched by the eminent Nicholas Negroponte (great theoretician of the Web), One Laptop Per Child targets developing countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Libya, Nigeria and Thailand. The very low cost of this new laptop is due to the manufacturing processes of its screen, the replacement of the hard drive with Flash memory and the spectacular reduction in its energy consumption, 80% lower than that of a normal laptop. According to the latest news, the price of the One Laptop per Child project would be a little higher than expected, closer to $150, which is still revolutionary. Speaking to the New York Times a few days ago, Nicholas Negroponte assured that his little machine would fall below the $100 mark by 2008. It is interesting to note that this computer would not come with a Windows operating system. Instead, it would feature "open source" applications, free as we know Linux, etc. Which obviously does not suit software manufacturers, starting with Microsoft and Intel. We know that the latter company has developed a $400 laptop intended for the school market based on a Windows operating system. It weighs just over 1 kg and is about half the size of a regular laptop. This has prompted Intel to also manufacture a laptop at a cost comparable to that of the One Laptop per Child project, as has the company Mobilis, which is promoting a similar project. Intel, for its part, is trying to introduce its low-cost model in Brazil. The company plans to provide a thousand of them free of charge to the Brazilian government in order to conduct a pilot experiment in schools. Of course, Microsoft hopes to be in on the rise of the laptop, which could prove phenomenal in the near future. We also imagine that the computer giant will put pressure on the managers of the One Laptop per Child project to at least make their small computer compatible with Windows products. To do this, Microsoft will have to make a clear effort to adapt to these computers without hard drives. Mobile telephony In the extremely competitive mobile telephony market, the best growth opportunities are also to be found in the supply side adapted to emerging markets. In this regard, the two largest players in the sector, Nokia and Motorola, have succeeded in their first attempts. Samsung, the world number 3, also wants to develop cell phones accessible to Asian, Latin American and other markets. Initially launched for humanitarian reasons, this announced invasion of the laptop at more or less $100 is therefore added to the massive implementation of wireless telephony in emerging markets. Imagine what will happen when hundreds of millions of computers flood India, China, Brazil and more! When this happens, that is to say in the fairly near future, audiovisual content will circulate with much more intensity with or without authorization! Can you imagine the confusion over the notion of piracy? Didn't the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), an association that defends the interests of Hollywood giants, indicate (last Thursday) that film piracy in China had caused the film industry to lose $2.7 billion in revenue in 2005? Hollywood hasn't finished complaining! One thing is certain: the remuneration models for creators of digital content will also have to adapt to the economic reality of these huge markets. Cheaper machines, cheaper connections, cheaper content. And long live the $100 laptop! For more information: www.laptop.org/index.fr.html www.olpcnews.com To contact our journalist: alain.brunet@lapresse.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1443

ADVICE. The mc2i group, which specializes in information systems consulting, is looking for 60 consultants for 2007. Whether they are recent graduates or experienced consultants, the positions concern specialists in human resources information systems, capital markets and retail banking, as well as consultants in business intelligence or technical. net, Java or Opensource. (Photo Maxppp)

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1444

MICROSOFT Since November 30, five years after Windows XP and two years late, Windows Vista, the new operating system for PCs (Personal Computers), has been available to businesses. Accompanied by the simultaneous launches of new versions of Office (office automation) and Exchange Server (internet messaging), the release of Vista represents a major event for the computer giant, Microsoft. 90% of the world's PCs run on Windows. Thus, Microsoft makes 90% of its profits thanks to the Windows-Office pair. In addition, according to the research firm IDC, each euro invested in Windows Vista should generate 14 euros of additional revenue for partners specializing in the sale of hardware, software and services. Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, mentions a total of 250 billion dollars in global revenue over the next twelve months. When it was released in 2001, the previous Windows XP operating system took a year to equip 10% of business PCs. Vista's task could prove more laborious. While Microsoft has communicated at length on the progress of its security strategy, the visible improvements remain unspectacular. We will note a new graphical interface with a 3D display (already seen in Apple's Mac OSX), an improved internal search (similar to Google Desktop), a more efficient "firewall", a daily backup system, voice recognition... Tools that can now be found for free on the Internet. Office is also facing competition from Google's free office suite or Open Office. Coming from the world of free software, this program has already been adopted by a number of French administrations. However, Microsoft's most serious competitor remains... itself. Windows XP (and the same goes for Office) is a good product. According to Gartner, the adoption rate of Vista will not exceed 10% in 2007. The firm even recommends that companies wait eighteen months before upgrading their fleet. The migration of a large company's complex IT system could cause more malfunctions than benefits. The growth of Vista would then depend on the renewal of machines, helped by the purchase of PCs for individuals (from January 30, 2007). However, the uncertainty only concerns the speed at which Vista will spread. When Windows XP support is no longer assured and new programs will only run under Vista, users will have to comply with the new rules. In the end, the Microsoft steamroller will overcome the last reluctance.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1445

JEAN-PIERRE JOUYET, MAURICE LEVY "MAKE the work of the Lévy-Jouyet mission on the intangible (...) an essential fuel to fuel the program of my political family." Five months before the presidential elections, the Minister of Finance, Thierry Breton, is now officially playing on both sides, political and economic. Tasked last March with reflecting on the role of the intangible economy, the president of Publicis - Maurice Lévy - and the head of the Inspectorate of Finance - Jean-Pierre Jouyet -, who submitted their report yesterday, have indirectly paid the price. While they define this new form of economy as "having no physical foundation" but placing "intellectual capacity, knowledge, imagination, innovation and research at the heart of value creation", Thierry Breton, for his part, sees it more simply as the "economy of the future", copying the slogan "The France of the future" of the president of the UMP, Nicolas Sarkozy... The mission's report is, however, not at all anecdotal, nor even - contrary to appearances - theoretical. Far from it. According to the Lévy-Jouyet mission, intangible services already account for around 20% of the added value produced in France and nearly 15% of employment, as much as the automobile industry. But, above all, they offer formidable prospects: if it gives itself the means to promote and develop it, France could derive an additional point of growth from it in the coming years to bring its potential growth to between 3 and 4% and thus catch up with its neighbours. The 70 recommendations made by the report revolve around three axes: strengthening human capital ("Marshall Plan" for higher education, new policy of support for creation); increased development of innovative SMEs (financing of the protection of ideas, public-private partnerships in research); finally, total redefinition of the scope of State assets, invited to better promote its cultural brands, its intangible assets, or to reconsider all the rents and rights that it attributes. It is in this area that the Lévy-Jouyet report presents the most innovative ideas, such as the creation of an "agency of intangible assets", which would be responsible for identifying and managing the real value of the State's heritage; Museums could also be authorized to manage their works directly or to open branches abroad, like the Guggenheim Foundation... "We have not been able to assess all the avenues and a lot of work still needs to be done," admits a member of the commission. Thierry Breton wants to decline several of these proposals in the coming weeks. He already announced yesterday the launch of a working group to modernize the Made in France label and the creation of a new competitiveness cluster dedicated to "free software and open source." But since he does not have time to initiate the other, more structural recommendations, he intends to take the report to the political sphere. Example? "With the Internet, people consume and buy online at any time of the day or night, including weekends," explains Maurice Lévy, for whom this is a revolution to be taken into account in the organization of work. For Thierry Breton, "this shows that we can work more and for longer."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1446

"Here is the result," announced Publicis CEO Maurice Levy, handing a USB key to the Minister of the Economy, Thierry Breton. Before adding, not a little proud of his effect, that those who "have not yet moved to the era of the immaterial" will be able to consult the paper version of the voluminous report on this "economy of the immaterial," which he produced in the company of the head of the Finance Inspectorate, Jean-Pierre Jouyet, and around twenty public and private sector players. Commissioned in March by Bercy, this 168-page tome, as rich as it is confusing by dint of wanting to embrace too much, proposes 70 measures to boost this economy which "has no physical foundation" and which depends "less on factories than on imagination." This is a sector present to varying degrees in software, perfumes, culture or education, and which already represents 15 to 20% of jobs in France and constitutes, in the words of the minister, "the most promising growth factor" in the era of all "post" (demographic transition, oil and industry). "Dynamize". The objective is not small since it involves raising the country's potential growth to 3% or 4% instead of the 2 to 2.5% today, by banking on this lever of the intangible. A perfectly achievable objective by 2010 according to the report, as long as we follow the various and varied recipes, consisting essentially of "dynamiting to redynamize", as Levy explains and not "to please one camp or another on the political level". The main tool for moving towards this new economy "of innovation and no longer of rent", taxation. The report recommends in particular aligning corporate tax in France with the European average, paying more attention to "human capital" by increasing financial incentives for training expenses, not taxing "new sources of wealth" and considering a reform of VAT, etc. The other very big project concerns education and research, in order to make France one of the great "educational superpowers of tomorrow". More money will be needed (half a point of GDP more), but also more autonomy, selection and public-private partnerships in universities so that France can align more than two names in the top 100 of the best teaching centers established by the University of Shanghai. Mediator. A very French tradition, the report finally recommends the creation of several structures in order to ensure the proper development of this economy of the intangible. First, an artistic rights mediator responsible for ensuring that the collective management of copyright by organizations such as Sacem is carried out in complete transparency. Then a "high council for growth through immateriality", under the presidency of the Prime Minister. Thierry Breton, who compared this work to that accomplished at the end of the 70s by Simon Nora and Alain Minc on the computerization of French society, promised to draw on it extensively in the coming months to fuel the presidential debates. As the first concrete translations, he announced the establishment of a reflection on a label no longer "made in France", but "designed in France" and a competitiveness cluster on free software.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1447

San Francisco - BitTorrent, the maker of one of the most popular file-sharing programs on the Internet, has partnered with several major movie and television studios to sell movies and TV shows for download, BitTorrent announced Wednesday. BitTorrent, whose software launched in 2001 is the mainstay of the online pirated movie exchange, says it plans to launch a platform for legal, paid downloads of movies and TV shows in February 2007. For the past year, BitTorrent has clearly opted for legality. Last year, the California-based company decided to eliminate from its website links to pirated content from the seven major studios that are members of the Motion Picture Association of America. In May, it reached an initial agreement with Warner Studios to sell more than 200 Warner films and TV shows, including titles such as Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire. The much broader deal announced Wednesday included Paramount Studios (Viacom), 20th Century Fox (News Corp), MTV and G4, Palm Pictures and the cable channel Starz Media. It provides for BitTorrent to sell series and films on its site, generally on the day of the DVD release, protected against piracy: the films can only be watched on a computer or portable player, but not burned onto a DVD or watched on a home DVD player. The new deal will include titles such as "Mission Impossible \*\*\*", "Ghost in the Shell", and series such as "24". BitTorrent was until recently the nightmare of the film industry, which estimates that it lost more than $6 billion in 2005 because of pirated films circulating on the Internet. In May, BitTorrent CEO Ashwin Navin said that even if some Internet users refused to pay, this would be largely offset by "the potential for converting 5 to 10 percent of BitTorrent users," an estimated 65 million, to legality. The open-source software, BT, allows downloads from multiple sources, each of which provides only a small portion of the total. This allows for quick and easy downloads, including very large files such as movies. Traffic from systems based on BT technology accounts for up to 40 percent of total Internet traffic, according to BitTorrent. The company believes that its BitTorrent.com site could become "the ideal platform for distributing digital content on the Internet." It will also offer music and games. Pricing will be announced in February. BitTorrent also believes that its platform could also be used "by thousands of websites, including those of content creators."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1448

IMPOSING yourself against Microsoft Windows requires time and patience. It took fifteen years for the Linux operating system to become a credible alternative to the flagship program of the company founded by Bill Gates, betting from the start, in 1991, on a philosophy opposed to that followed by the Redmond giant. While Microsoft has succeeded in imposing a proprietary system, Linux promotes free software by allowing everyone to make their contribution. The goal is not to make money, but to bring total freedom to users, by giving them the keys to the Linux universe. However, Linux almost never left the labs. When Linus Torvalds, one of the men who contributed to its advent, published the results of his work on Internet forums in the early 1990s, the reputation of this computer system was more than confidential. But, over the years, Windows' major competitor has made a breakthrough among professionals. It has even just made its entry into the French administration, notably in the National Assembly. The national gendarmerie recently decided to migrate its IT to a Linux software-based solution. The Île-de-France region has also been won over. In this, France is only imitating examples from abroad. In the United States, many administrations have abandoned Microsoft for a range of applications from Linux. Across the Rhine, the German Parliament has decided to equip itself with Linux. More surprisingly, part of the Chinese counter-espionage services have preferred to link their future to free software... In companies, Linux, on the other hand, is fighting neck and neck with Microsoft for the administration of internal networks, Web servers or database management. According to specialist research firms, Linux servers hold nearly 30% of the global market in their category. On the other hand, Linux has not conquered the personal computer of Mr. Everyman. Its market share is limited to 3.5%. Few amateurs dare to install it on their machine. However, Linux has not been reserved for microcomputer experts for a long time. Companies such as Mandriva or Redhat have developed turnkey solutions for several years allowing anyone to install a Linux system on a PC or Mac.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1449

Disgruntled merchants closing shop, residents protesting and calling for a boycott, a currency marking time... The 1.6 million residents of Second Life, the best-known 3D virtual universe on the Internet, have had some troubled days in their parallel online world. At the root of the troubles is an open-source program called CopyBot, which facilitates the cloning of avatars or characters and various objects and accessories in this game. In other words, a potentially devastating copying software for this nascent online economy, based on the real trade of 100% virtual goods. Objects (clothing, haircuts, jewelry, etc.) that proliferate as this universe grows (36% per month), and that their creators, individuals or companies, spend hours designing with their computers. This activity is not philanthropic: it is used to equip their own avatars or those of others to whom they sell them. Success. "A real-world scourge is coming into our second lives: counterfeiting," summarizes Wolkam Winger, editor-in-chief of SLObserver, a French blog dedicated to Second Life (SL), and also a designer and seller of virtual living rooms within the game. Of course, the number of complaints remains limited (around a hundred out of more than 200,000 players likely to have been victims of CopyBot). But avatars now know that they can fear for the "uniqueness" of their skin. And Linden Labs, the Californian publisher and project manager of Second Life, is well aware that its growing success makes it increasingly vulnerable to the pitfalls of the real world. Originally, the creators of CopyBot had no intention of harming the harmony of their online community. The free software developer group "libsecondlife" had developed this application with the aim of reverse engineering, that is, allowing players to correct bugs in their creations by means of temporary copies. But, like Frankenstein, the cloning machine ended up escaping its creators. Famous avatars of Second Life, like Adam Reuters, the permanent special correspondent of the agency of the same name, or Hamlet Au, the most famous of SL reporters, voluntarily let themselves be duplicated in order to test the tool. Others were duplicated at their expense. CopyBot ended up trading around 3,000 Linden dollars (271 Linden dollars to the dollar). Thanks to it, its buyers can wildly duplicate an avatar and its texture, a dress, a car, etc. in a few seconds. "It's a real pain, clearly a lot of people have used this script to get as many items as possible," explains Yoko Xiao, a clothing designer inside Second Life. "It seems that all the merchants have seen a drop in their sales." Like Tommy Fairplay, owner of the DragonFly shopping mall, various influential figures in SL have urged residents to close up shop, denouncing a "Black Friday" on their community. A wave of panic that was initially underestimated by the publisher: in the first few days, Linden Labs' reaction was limited to promising anti-copy solutions while advising those who felt cheated to file a complaint under the DMCA, the American copyright law. Since then, the publisher has corrected the situation, promising to exclude any player who owns a CopyBot. Tests. If this virtual cloning alert has caused such a stir within the community, to the point that its residents have rushed to buy anti-CopyBot protections, it is because Second Life is already much more than a game for many of its fans. Tens of thousands of residents have developed small businesses there, particularly in fashion design. If their objects can be copied and then resold, their activity collapses. This reasoning is valid for the very real companies (read below) that come to test their products there. "In the same way that Second Life partly prefigures the Web of tomorrow, the CopyBot prefigures new forms of diversion and piracy, concludes Wolkam Winger, it is unfortunately inevitable."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1450

It is a clever cocktail composed of multiple ingredients. A little technology, a lot of new uses, a big ladle of sharing, exchanges and participation, networking and a pinch of mobility. Web 2.0: the expression is fashionable, but it has no well-defined limits. It means above all that the Internet has changed a lot. Yesterday, we consulted a site. Today, we participate in it. We pick, we link, we connect, we edit, we add... On Web 2.0, information and data are no longer fixed, they no longer belong to anyone and are enriched by circulating. Look at blogs. At the time of the first version of the Web, or Web 1.0, we built our personal page. Internet users consulted it and could recommend it to others. Now, the content of a blog is commented on, corrected, taken up in whole or in part on other blogs and other sites. With the personal page, the format itself was imposed. In Web 2.0, some see a revolution, a takeover of Internet users, or even a "putsch of users". It is the subject of many controversies. "Web 2.0 is the latest trendy thing," writes Tristan Nitot, president of Mozilla Europe, an association dedicated to the development of free software (standblog.org/blog/), on his blog. What is fascinating is that no one knows how to define it correctly. For my part, I would be careful not to give a definition of Web 2.0... Especially since I find the name lamentable, because it ignores an essential point: the Web has been constantly evolving since its birth!" Web 2.0 arrived without warning, little by little, and has settled into our habits click by click. "Google is perhaps the first Web 2.0 application," says Didier Rappaport, co-founder of the Dailymotion site (www.dailymotion.com), one of the jewels of the new French Web. Explanation: Google prioritizes its responses, taking into account the number of links to a given page. In other words, it is the users who enrich the site, which typically corresponds to the modalities of Web 2.0. "BROADCAST YOURSELF" "The Internet user has gone from being a simple consumer to being a contributor," explains Didier Rappaport. Dailymotion certainly relies on somewhat innovative technologies, but it is above all the users who constitute its business and ensure its success. The principle is simple: on Dailymotion, you post your videos and watch those posted by other Internet users. Better still: in a few manipulations, you can make any video appear on your own site or blog. The more videos there are, the more there are others and the more Internet users there are... This inflationary system explains the rapid success of sharing sites. YouTube (www.youtube.com), the American equivalent of Dailymotion, created in February 2005, has just been bought by Google for the sum of 1.65 billion dollars. YouTube's slogan alone sums up the Web 2.0 program: "broadcast yourself". Another symbolic site of this second generation of the Web is the participatory encyclopedia "Wikipedia" (fr. wikipedia.org). Written by Internet users themselves, it presents itself as a "freely distributable" work. Each visitor can create new pages, new articles and modify the content of existing pages. It is therefore the Internet user who now provides the content of the Web and who chooses its form. It creates and feeds content: written content with blogs or participatory sites, audio with podcasts in particular, video on exchange sites like YouTube, or even photos with Flickr. In all cases, we don't just exchange data and information. We build communities, groups. One of the other major trends of this revised and corrected Web is that we create networks, preferably social networks. We group together by interests, we exchange, we communicate, we help each other. CONSTANT LINKS Thanks to instant messaging, such as Windows Live Messenger (ex-MSN), we can permanently check who is online and who is not. With a mobile phone, we can update our blog, send photos, enhance our personal space with videos. And we stay in touch with our community, anywhere and at any time. Version after version, publishers are accustomed to numbering their software. Microsoft recently unveiled the seventh version of its famous Internet browser Microsoft Internet Explorer, called Microsoft Internet Explorer 7.0. In October 2004, Dale Daugherty, the inventor of the term Web 2.0, was inspired by this usage. The CEO of O'Reilly Media, an American publisher of computer manuals, a specialist in information and systems management, and a former lecturer at the University of Berkeley, was looking to define in a simple formula all the changes he was observing on the Web. To translate this movement and be able to talk about it, he simply used the nomenclature he knew best: that of the computer universe.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1451

All over the world, open source software, the type of software that can be shared or modified for free, is on the rise. A study by the Forrester group published last September revealed that 40% of European companies and 35% of American companies use one or more open source software programs. In Canada, the trend is moving in the same direction, even if we feel that we are lagging behind the rest of the world. "It's not the other countries that are ahead; it's us who are behind," summarizes Cyrille Béraud, president of Savoir-Faire Linux, a Montreal company that develops "open source" solutions, such as the Internet telephony software SFLPhone, which can be downloaded for free. According to Mr. Béraud, this is a significant delay that could cost Canada and Quebec dearly. "In a knowledge economy, open source software is the only software that allows a company's information system to evolve quickly enough to keep up with market developments," he says. Open source software is like a big box of mechanical parts offered for free. Free software is the assembly of some of these parts to make a tool that suits a company's mission. Between two companies that offer the same product, the one that can adapt more quickly to the needs of its customers has a competitive advantage over its rival. "That's the advantage of free software," says Mr. Béraud. "We only change the components that need to be changed." 200 companies in Quebec FACIL, an organization for the collective appropriation of free computing (the F is recursive, it's computer humour), is behind the Semaine québécoise de l'informatique libre, which took place last week. It is also a group where local free software developers meet. "The Week was quieter this year, but our developer directory still contains more than 200 company names," notes Robin Millette, outgoing president of FACIL. And as Mr. Millette points out, these companies are diverse. "Savoir-Faire Linux is a good example, as is the organization Ile-sans-fil, which offers free Wi-Fi access wherever it can in Montreal, Koumbit, which develops tools to manage websites, and TC2L, a computer consulting firm," he says. Most of the time, free software developers will offer their solutions at low cost, to take advantage of the revenue generated by technical support and customer service. "In this form, free software is interesting because it is the real way the software industry has always worked," believes Antoine Beaupré, who heads Koumbit, a non-profit organization that develops websites strictly using "free" tools. Moreover, Koumbit uses some free software that demonstrates the extent of this movement: Drupal, a website content manager, and Decisions, an online decision-making support module, which could be seen as an "open source" and more reliable version of the electronic voting system that experienced failures in Montreal last year. "That's another advantage of free software," Mr. Beaupré recalls. "They are transparent, while proprietary software is like a black box: we see what goes in and what goes out, but we don't know how it works." In an economy where information is the main commodity, there is no doubt that a company does not want to lose sight of it. At least that is what free software allows, by giving companies full control over this information. email To contact our collaborator: alain.mckenna@lapresse.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1452

MICROSOFT MICROSOFT is seeking to become the champion of interoperability, a technical term for the ability of two systems or two computer applications to communicate. This strategy is not without its spice, because the computer giant is being sued by the European Commission, which accuses it of blocking its competitors with incompatible systems and applications. Particularly unhappy with the attitude of the world's number one software company, which she accuses of not respecting Brussels' requirements, Nellie Kroes, European Commissioner for Competition, risks imposing new sanctions tomorrow on the empire founded by Bill Gates. The Commission's graduated response provides that the fine, set this summer at 280 million euros, could increase to 350 million euros. "We are wondering what more we could provide to the Commission," exclaims Bernard Ourghanlian, technical director of Microsoft France. Clever, the world's number one software company has announced its "commitment to connecting users, data and systems." The French subsidiary has also just opened a website for IT developers and information systems directors in companies. "Every two weeks, a debate on a major topic will be accessible to all," explains Bernard Ourghanlian. The group has also undertaken to standardize data formats on Open XML, the Office System platform. Microsoft is highlighting its cooperation with Cegid and Ilog, two French publishers among some sixty French partners. It is working with them to ensure that their professional applications can communicate with each other. At the beginning of the month, Microsoft created a surprise by signing an agreement with a big name in free software, Novell. Pragmatic, it is seeking to ally itself with its former enemies and to bring people together. Will the inflexible Nellie Kroes be susceptible to this new charm offensive?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1453

New York - Free software, which gained a new recruit of choice last Monday with the Java programming language, is gradually gaining ground in companies, replacing the protected software that makes the fortune of groups like Microsoft. The American group Sun Microsystems announced last week the opening of the source codes of its famous Java language, which can thus be distributed and modified by third parties, as long as the modifications are also distributed. This is a small revolution for computer developers and a major contribution to the world of free software, called "open source", whose leader is the Linux operating system, challenger for 15 years to Microsoft's Windows system. Long confined to IT professionals who are militant anti-Microsoft, the world of free software has won several victories in recent months that illustrate its expansion to the general public and especially to large companies. Two weeks ago, even Microsoft reached out to free software users by allying itself with the Novell group, which distributes an operating system derived from Linux, Suse Linux. Microsoft and Novell will make their operating systems compatible, each will distribute both systems and they will jointly release common solutions. "Sun's decision was long-awaited and does not represent a fundamental change, because the company will retain control over the Java language, but there is a general trend towards the development of free software," commented Forrester analyst Michael Goulde, "even at Microsoft." "More and more companies in the world are adopting free software, especially in Europe," he stressed. A Forrester study last September of 600 large American companies and 300 European companies showed that 39% of companies in Europe use one or more free software, and 35% in the United States. Respectively 8% and 5% consider doing so in the two regions, and only a third say they are opposed. The most open are telecoms, media and entertainment companies (43% to 54% of free software users), financial services companies (36% to 41% of users) as well as 50% of European public administrations and 35% of American ones. Free software offers access to its source code (its "kernel") which allows everyone to use it and especially to transform it. Contributors can be freelance computer scientists who work from home in the four corners of the world, but also associations or companies such as Oracle, Hewlett-Packard, Oracle, Sun and IBM. Free software is not necessarily free. Any company can develop and market its version. Another source of profit is that of maintenance and user assistance, as offered by the Red Hat group, leader in Linux maintenance. Proof that this market is increasingly coveted, the Oracle group has just announced that it is launching into Linux maintenance and wants to offer prices half those of Red Hat. Among the most widely used free software are the Open Office suite, which competes with Microsoft's Office software, the MySQL database software, the OpenSSL encryption and secure Internet communications software, the Apache web request software (web server) and the Mozilla browser, a competitor to Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Free software is also at the heart of devices such as the Freebox modem from the French Internet service provider Free, Sharp personal assistants and DivX video players.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1454

Internet users' confidence in the system's ability to secure data has always been relative. It could well collapse if the microprocessor industry and encryption software providers prove incapable of responding to a new type of attack, fearsomely effective, discovered by a team led by German cryptologist Jean-Pierre Seifert (Universities of Haifa and Innsbruck). Online commerce would then be threatened, but also, more broadly, everything that allows the dematerialization of exchanges, based on applications using so-called asymmetric secret codes, whether it is to encrypt, sign or guarantee the integrity of digital data. In a still confidential article, the researcher and his colleagues describe how they were able, in a single attempt - a few milliseconds - to recover almost the entirety of a 512-bit encryption key (a sequence of as many 0s or 1s). For comparison, the largest public key broken to date was 640 bits, and its decomposition, announced in November 2005, had mobilized, for three months, 80 microprocessors clocked at 2.2 GHz. Since the announcement, this summer, on the server of the International Association for Cryptologic Research (IACR), of the theoretical feasibility of such an attack, microprocessor producers have been on edge: the chips of almost the entire computer fleet are in fact vulnerable. To the point that the head of security at Intel, the world number one in microprocessors, asked about the question, replied that he would be "unavailable for several weeks". This is because the defense against classic attacks on public key systems - namely extending the size of the keys - is ineffective in this case. Jean-Pierre Seifert has in fact taken these systems the wrong way. While their robustness is based on the great difficulty in mathematically deducing the private, secret key from its public complement, he was interested in how the microprocessor read this confidential data internally. However, it turns out that the very operating mode of the chip, optimized to speed up calculations, makes it vulnerable. "Security has been sacrificed for the benefit of performance," the researcher believes. The principle of the attack can be summarized as follows: to go ever faster, the processor works in parallel and has a system for predicting the result of the operation in progress. If the prediction is correct, the process is significantly accelerated. If it is wrong, it is necessary to go back and start the elementary operation again. It "suffices" to measure the calculation time when the processor runs through the string of 0s and 1s that constitute the encryption key to deduce it. This threat, called "branch prediction analysis" (BPA), was already known, but it required a large number of tests to statistically deduce the encryption key. Which made it impractical. Jean-Pierre Seifert's breakthrough is that only one listening is now necessary. And its strength lies in the fact that the prediction process, which is fundamental to accelerating the processor's performance, is not protected. A small "mole" software could therefore listen to the chip discreetly, and send the key to hackers, intelligence services or spies in the pay of competitors. "A MATTER OF WEEKS" We are not quite there yet. "We have not developed a turnkey application that would be available online," defends Jean-Pierre Seifert. But he believes that once his method is unveiled in early 2007 at the next RSA conference - named after the most popular encryption system - the development of such attack software will be "a matter of weeks". Cryptography specialists confirm the seriousness of the threat. On condition of anonymity, one of the world's leading experts on public key systems sums up the situation bluntly: "The real solution is to review the very design of our microprocessors - a very long and difficult process. A short-term solution would be to not allow sensitive applications to run in parallel with standard operations on the same computer, which is easier said than done in a traditional working environment. There are still partial remedies, but they involve slowing down the PC considerably." Jean-Jacques Quisquater (Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium) points out that American military standards have long warned against attacks based on the analysis of calculation times. For him, the future lies in processors specialized in security functions. "But we won't get there for several years," he notes. "INTEL MUST BE DESPERATE" "We know very well that the only undefinedundefinedvery secure operations are those conducted in a protected enclosure, on the server side, with a specific module," confirms Jacques Stern, director of the computer science laboratory at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris. A radical prophylaxis, impractical for the average Internet user. David Naccache (Paris-II University) acknowledges that "there is no open-heart surgery possible": touching the prediction module system could affect essential functions. On the front line, Intel limits itself to specifying laconically that the next version of OpenSSL, a free data security software, will respond to the threat, if necessary by disabling the prediction module. "Such a measure would slow down the microprocessor by four times," assures Jean-Pierre Seifert, which proves how desperate Intel must be. » A former employee of Intel and its competitor Infineon, he himself returned to university and is now looking for ways to fix the flaw he discovered. But since research in this area is recent, he warns, "it will take some time before we see clearly." Of course, the attack he has designed is more difficult to implement than the countless stratagems imagined by hackers, who force the industry to produce "patches" constantly. In his case, a simple patch would not be enough.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1455

Trois-Rivières - Your caller ID is insulting you. You're getting calls from people who claim they never called you. Your phone is probably going haywire because of a hacker who's having fun at your expense. No, this isn't a science fiction scenario. According to Mr. Sylvain Juteau, Vice President of Business Development at Xittel Telecommunications, it's entirely possible to take control of a phone using a computer. You just need the right tools. "Now with IP telephony, you can make calls over the Internet. (...) There are definitely some people who are resourceful. They can set up a phone server with open source software like Linux and they use it to make calls." "Anyone can have their own telephone exchange on a small PC. Joe Blo can do that at home in his basement with software and a server," adds Mr. Juteau. Yesterday, it was not possible to get confirmation from Bell Canada that it is indeed a hacker who is involved in the case of the Trois-Rivières restaurateurs. But according to Mr. Juteau, it is very likely that the individual is calling his victims from a computer. It would not be necessary to be a computer specialist to do it. "A teenager who types and sets up a Linux server can do pretty much whatever he wants. You don't need a bachelor's degree in programming to do it." Thus, thanks to appropriate software, a little computer whiz can write what he wants on a display. "People are used to trusting what is written on the display. They think it can't be wrong. But with the Internet, that is no longer true," notes Mr. Juteau. This software is easy to find. "They're all free and you can find them on the Internet. And on the Internet, you can find help. These kinds of tools are becoming easier and more accessible." Mr. Juteau believes that with good will, Bell will be able to track down the guy who is currently making some Trois-Rivières restaurateurs sweat. "Yes, it's possible. But you have to put in a lot of effort." Despite the few pirates who use IP telephony to do dirty work, Mr. Juteau is convinced that this technology has many more advantages than disadvantages. "The advantage is that it democratizes (telephony). It lowers prices. If long-distance calls now cost almost nothing, it's thanks to the advent of the Internet, which is removing the monopoly from traditional companies. But it's certain that there's always a plus and a minus with the arrival of a new technology."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1456

The Quebec Chamber of Commerce paid tribute to immigrant entrepreneurs in the region as well as to companies that encourage the hiring of immigrant workers during its 2006 Un monde à faire evening. The event took place at the Théâtre Impérial in the presence of the Minister of Immigration and Cultural Communities, Lise Thériault. On this occasion, four awards were presented: the Immigrant du monde award was given to Quân Triêu Trân, from Vietnam, founder of Norbati Consultants Trân & Associés inc.; the Entreprise en urgence award was given to Techno Centre LogicielsLibres; the Entreprise du monde, 30 employees and less award went to CO2 Solution, an engineering consulting firm active in the environmental sector; and the Entreprise du monde, 30 employees and more award was given to Momentum Technologies inc., a consulting firm specializing in information technology. Hélène Savard presents her new collection > Hélène Savard will present her 2007 collection tomorrow, November 16, from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., in her jewelry store at 2485, chemin Saint-Louis. You will be able to see exclusive pieces. This year again, the emphasis is on originality and creation. In addition to the 2007 collection, you will be able to see more than 325 pieces of jewelry made by her jewelers on display. The collection will be on display together until the end of November. Ms. Savard is a designer, a GIA graduate and a qualified appraiser. Michel Pigeon to chair Fidéides After having vigilantly and meticulously chaired the jury committees in recent years, Michel Pigeon, Rector of Université Laval, will serve as Honorary President of the 24th prestigious event of excellence of the Chambre de commerce des entrepreneurs de Québec, Fidéides 2007, which will be held at the Québec City Convention Centre on March 15. Izba Spa to offer training For eight years, Michelle Piuze and the professionals at the Izba Spa health and beauty centre have been providing exceptional quality body care. Today, Izba Spa is offering its hands in a different way, by creating the Izba Spa Training Institute and its exclusive Diplomas in Hands program. Builders honoured Nearly 200 people gathered at the Hôtel des Commandants in Gaspé a few days ago to salute the commitment and dedication of three families of entrepreneurs from Gaspé: the Adams, the Dumaresqs and the McCallums. Mélissa Plourde, president of the Gaspé Chamber of Commerce, delivered a message of admiration for these families, but at the same time a message of recognition. "You are the symbol of economic prosperity, the image of success and development. You have forged the image of the accomplished entrepreneur and we thank you for that," she said. pchampagne@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1457

VIDEO GAMES. Nintendo will use Sonic Solutions' program to watch movies on its future Wii console. Nintendo will launch this version of the Wii in the second half of next year. TELECOMS. Spanish Telefonica is taking 8% of PCCW, Hong Kong's largest telecommunications operator, for around 323 million euros. It is carrying out this operation with the operator China Netcom, of which it owns 5%. SOFTWARE. Sun announced yesterday that its Java language is becoming "free" software, the source code of which will be accessible if the user signs a GPL V2 license. Java is already integrated into more than 500 million objects. TRANSPORT. SNCF and a consortium including AXA and the Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec have signed a memorandum of understanding under the terms of which the consortium has agreed to take 55% of Keolis on an equal footing. TRANSPORT. THE CLERMONT-FERRAND TRAMWAY ON TIRES MANUFACTURED BY LOHR INDUSTRIE, WHOSE COMMISSIONING HAD BEEN POSTPONED FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT DURING TESTING, WAS OBTAINED PERMIT TO OPERATE YESTERDAY. REAL ESTATE. Luis del Rivero, CEO of the Spanish construction group Sacyr Vallehermoso, yesterday ruled out any withdrawal of capital from the French group Eiffage to finance its increase in the capital of the oil company Repsol.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1458

"Just one last word: yes, things are happening on the Web." François Bayrou doesn't have time to say more. The end credits of the show Arrêt sur images force him to be silent. A missed opportunity for the UDF leader to push himself. Because, in the blogosphere, the UDF candidate for the Elysée is a star. It must be said that the MP for Pyrénées-Atlantiques is working hard. An unrepentant "practitioner", he connects nearly two hours a day, writes comments on other people's blogs himself, gives notable interviews, for example to PoliTIC'Show on AgoraVox or to the journalist John-Paul Lepers for his blog. Posted on Dailymotion a month ago, the webcam interview was seen by 11,850 curious people. On October 25, Bayrou attended the meeting organized at the Baltard pavilion by the Republic of Blogs, a meeting place for political cybercommentators. On the Internet, his popularity rating was boosted after his position in favor of free software at the time of the copyright law. According to the online "poll" by AgoraVox (1), 33% of participating Internet users would vote for Bayrou in the first round of the presidential election, compared to 18% in favor of Ségolène Royal and 15% for Nicolas Sarkozy. A score that is not really "scientific," but has been steadily increasing since the beginning of the year. "We are not drawing any conclusions from this, except perhaps that Internet users are more sensitive than the electorate to François Bayrou's ideas," explains Frédéric Lefebvre-Naré, a specialist polling service provider called in by Bayrou as reinforcements at the beginning of the year. Nevertheless, the attitude of those connected may be indicative of what will happen during the campaign." Bayrou measured the "revolutionary" potential of this "alternative media" very early on. Under his leadership, the UDF converted to video chats and other "tupperweb meetings", anchoring the movement very early on in the world of the "connected". In the centrist ranks, active Internet users are proliferating: in addition to the party's two official sites (2), more than 150 activists and almost as many sympathisers now keep a blog. Since his outburst against the "collusion" between audiovisual media and power, Bayrou's cyber audience has exploded. "The frequency of e-mails received on our official site has doubled", indicates the UDF's Web manager, Béatrice Pouyès. "During the vote on the motion of censure in May, we had already observed a surge, but the phenomenon quickly subsided. Today, what is striking is that it is not going down." The same observation is made with online memberships, which have gone from 50 to 500 per month. "Last weekend, I couldn't believe my eyes: I saw online memberships arriving from all over France by the dozens," says Béatrice Pouyès. "However, nothing was happening: it was Sunday, the school holidays, and Bayrou was in Polynesia..." (1) 4,807 voters on November 10. (2) www.udf.org and www.udf-europe.net

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1459

FORTY years after its creation, Microsoft has maintained a quasi-monopoly on operating systems. Bill Gates' company has resisted everything. The most virulent - and well-founded - criticism of the quality of its software, lawsuits, competitors, free software, piracy... Does its strength lie in its extraordinary technological mastery and creativity? In a superior strategic vision? Outside the company, few people put forward such explanations. Many experts argue the opposite. Microsoft's secret lies elsewhere. In its realism that borders on cynicism and its insatiable appetite. These qualities have been revealed over the course of trials and tribulations, with, initially, a stroke of luck that was probably unique in the annals of the industry. In 1981, Microsoft obtained a contract from IBM, which at the time did not believe in personal computers, to supply the operating system for its brand new PCs. All of Bill Gates' skill consisted in never losing the benefit of this boost and always amplifying its effects. To achieve this, he had the intelligence to never give in to the temptation... of genius. His resided in a remarkable ability to take advantage of that of others. With methods often on the borderline between legality and illegality. The Microsoft machine behaved like a suction pump for the surrounding intelligence. Gradually, the MS-DOS operating system was enriched by the inventions of Apple, with Windows 95 and 98, or of Netscape and Firefox with Internet Explorer. Bill Gates has also demonstrated his ability to quickly detect his errors, as with MSN, the Internet service provider tempted by the closed model of AOL but quickly converted to the open standard of the emerging World Wide Web in 1995. The technical and commercial agreement with Novell, the publisher of the free software Linux, unveiled very recently (Le Monde, November 6) is based on the same logic. The agglomeration of innovations has often generated operating systems of disproportionate size and complexity. Never mind. Microsoft had already acquired, thanks to IBM, a position beyond the reach of its competitors, whether IBM itself, Sun or Apple. BUY OUT OR MARGINALIZE Bill Gates has also demonstrated an incomparable perception of the market. And has never hesitated to eliminate, buy out or marginalize his competitors. By imposing his operating systems via computer vendors. By gradually integrating different software into them. The only misstep in this progression was the lawsuit filed in the United States and taken up again in Europe for the merger of Internet Explorer and Windows. A sin that could have led to the company being split up. Microsoft, after years of legal battles, got away with fines. After XP in 2001, Vista today marks a new stage for the Redmond company. That of integrating security, a three-dimensional graphical interface and the connection with the multimedia world of home cinema into the operating system. This strategy continues to reduce the field left to competitors. The only danger for the giant: the emergence of brilliant innovators like the creators of Google. But Microsoft will fight the battle, let us have no doubt, with the determination that has kept it at the top until now.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1460

In this Japanese online store, you can buy a miniature cell phone to hang on your cell phone. Either it's cell phone idolatry taken to the extreme, or it's a technological homage to Russian dolls, or it's a highly artistic concept of telephone mise en abyme. In any case, it will be of great interest to your psychoanalyst. http://item.rakuten.co.jp/keitai/134-mobileau2/ Windows VistaCopy of Mac OS X! At least that's what the very clever Internet user who posted a montage on YouTube adding images of Mac OS X to the soundtrack of a public presentation of Windows Vista suggests. Microsoft's future operating system thus seems to "borrow" many features from Apple's, even if the speaker insists on their originality. It's true that the comparison is troubling (and amusing), and is part of the tradition that has lasted for more than 20 years among Apple fans: systematically accusing Microsoft of plagiarism. That said, critical minds will point out that Mac OS X itself borrowed many of its qualities from the Unix-Linux universe, and that in any case, it's all the better for us if good ideas circulate between systems. www.youtube.com Search for "Vista first of a kind features". Contribute to Firefox 3.0 When a software comes out in stores, its creators are already working on the next one. In the case of Firefox, the now famous open-source browser, all Internet users are invited to participate in this brainstorming. Version 2.0 has barely been released and you can already publish your proposals for version 3.0 on the "wiki" site of the Mozilla Foundation, which oversees this non-profit project. Among the ideas already put forward: an even greater role for "tabs," which could extend up to two rows at the top of the window and be grouped by addresses or common themes; the ability to associate "tags" (personal keywords) with Web pages; or a "stripped" option that would leave only the basic tools to improve performance on portable systems. The most daring among you can already download an "alpha" version of Firefox 3.0, on the ftp.mozilla.org server. At your own risk, of course. http://wiki.mozilla.org/Firefox:Home\_Page Edit your photos like Tom Cruise In the film Minority Report, Tom Cruise manipulated his computer with break-dancing gestures, which made all fans of futuristic interfaces drool. We don't know if it was the cinema that influenced the research or the other way around, but the interface in question now exists in prototype form. It was Jef Han, a mathematician at New York University, who presented it at the TED conference, which brings together every year in Monterey the visionaries of technology and interactive design (as well as curious people like Al Gore, Bono and Peter Gabriel). In his filmed demonstration, we can see him controlling a photo editing software on a translucent screen, only with the movements and pressure of his fingertips. With such sporty interfaces, the stereotype of the potbellied computer scientist will not last long! www.ted.com/tedtalksSearch for the keyword "Han".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1461

NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT - By concluding an unexpected technical and commercial agreement with the publisher Novell, Microsoft is making a strategic U-turn. It is bowing to the desire of its customers to also use the free Linux operating system and will allow the version marketed by Novell (Suse) to work harmoniously with its own Windows system. The two companies will create a joint research center. This alliance unveiled Thursday, November 2 in San Francisco by Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer and Novell CEO Ron Hovsepian, will last at least until 2012. Until now, the firm founded by Bill Gates has been fiercely fighting Linux for years without succeeding in preventing it from winning, thanks to its reliability and flexibility, a significant share of the computer server market. Many companies have long wanted to be able to use both this technology and that of the world's number one software company. They will soon be able to do so easily by running Suse Linux Enterprise Server under Windows Longhorn in virtual environments or vice versa. Neither company will market its partner's product. "This agreement will really help bridge the divide between open source and proprietary software. I recognize that Linux plays an important role in the technology mix that our customers use," Ballmer said. He added that Microsoft still intends to promote Windows over Linux, providing compatibility with Suse only if its customers request it. "This agreement provides both interoperability and peace of mind for consumers," Hovsepian said. NOT AN ADMISSION OF WEAKNESS Analysts say Microsoft's decision should not be interpreted as an admission of weakness for a company that is struggling to establish itself on the Internet against Google, in music against Apple, and is even threatened in its stronghold of office software by a Google-Sun-Oracle alliance. The Novell deal should be a big boost to Microsoft's server software by assuring companies that they can invest safely in both Linux and Windows. Both systems have been steadily taking market share, not so much from each other, but mostly from mini- and even mainframes that run on Unix. Microsoft's server software sales are now $10 billion (€7.9 billion) a year, and they were growing 17 percent in the last quarter. However, some Linux advocates are concerned about the implications of the deal. Microsoft has pledged not to sue developers and users of Suse Linux for intellectual property infringement, but reserves the right to do so for other versions of the free operating system. "That's very dangerous," says Bruce Perens, a Linux expert and advocate. "There's an implicit threat: You buy Microsoft Novell licenses or you're going to end up in court." The clear beneficiary of the deal is Novell. More than a decade ago, the publisher tried to position itself as a rival to the Bill Gates-founded company, notably by buying the Borland and WordPerfect office software and marrying them to its own operating system. The strategy had completely failed. The alliance with its old enemy will give Novell a considerable advantage over its competitor Red Hat, the leading distributor of Linux. "Novell has just taken a huge leap in credibility," said Stephen O'Grady, an analyst at RedMonk. Matthew Szulik, Red Hat's CEO, reacted immediately: "Linux is now a critical component of the information technology infrastructure," he said, also calling Novell a "weakened and vulnerable company." Also weakened by the new distribution strategy of Oracle, the world's second largest software company, Red Hat has lost nearly 15% on Wall Street over the past ten days. At the same time, Novell shares have gained more than 14%.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1462

If communism was the Soviets plus electricity, free software is the cooperative plus stock options. The agreement signed Thursday evening between Microsoft and Novell demonstrates this once again: the software industry is undergoing a profound change with the success of free software, designed in cooperation and copyable for free, unlike the model supported by the firm founded by Bill Gates. And the historic enemy, Microsoft, finds itself obliged to negotiate. "It's incredible that after years of denigration, Microsoft is forced to compromise with free software," says Thierry Noisette, co-author with Perline Noisette of the Battle of Free Software (1). Coming from the counterculture. This alliance seems paradoxical at first glance because these programs, of which GNU/Linux is the most emblematic, are indeed coming from the counterculture. At the origin of this phenomenon, we find a bearded man with a hippie look, Richard Stallman, who decided in the mid-80s to build an alternative to so-called "proprietary" software, whose manufacturing secrets are jealously kept hidden and copying or modification is forbidden. Microsoft is obviously the symbol of this software economy which, according to the American computer scientist, deprives the user of his freedom. Stallman proposes another path, free software: programs can be copied for free, anyone can adapt them to their own needs and modify them. On condition that they pay their own contributions into the common pot. Rather than relying on the moral sense of the participants to ensure compliance with these rules, a legal contract is founded to guarantee the cooperation of all, this is the General Public License (GPL). In a few years, this curious model with its utopian appearance takes off: thousands of developers, coordinating via the Internet, offer dozens of software of this type. In the 90s, the GNU/Linux operating system, a direct competitor to Microsoft's omnipresent Windows, even began to eat into the company's market share. The phenomenon grew large enough to attract firms hoping to profit from this model. Because nothing prevents the sale of free software, provided that its nature as a "common good" is respected. Companies like Red Hat or Suse (now owned by Novell) sell specific versions of Linux, with boxes, documentation and support. Everyone is nonetheless free to copy these versions for free. The phenomenon accelerated with IBM's conversion to "free" in 1999: the multinational put several billion dollars on the table and contributed men and money to Linux. Other firms followed: Sun Microsystems, Novell, then hundreds of start-ups. All are betting on sources of income other than pure sales: custom adaptation, maintenance, consulting services, etc. Today, the free software ecosystem is very diverse: each large-scale project involves volunteers, company employees, or researchers, spread across the world. Coordination is ensured by very different structures: the Firefox web browser is piloted by a foundation, the OpenOffice office suite (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.) by the Sun company, and the version of Linux, called Debian, by volunteers. "This is the characteristic of free software, an alliance between a cooperative and voluntary economy, the contribution of States and local authorities with researchers, and companies, without which it would not exist, or at least to a lesser extent," judges Thierry Noisette. Online agit-prop. This large-scale cooperation does not happen without problems. Companies are often tempted to privatize part of the community developments for their own profit or not to make their own work public. But free software activists, scattered across hundreds of associations, experienced in online agit-prop and communication, do not hesitate to fight back. A few days ago, the FreeSoftwareFoundation association attacked Free, an Internet access provider that uses free software, accusing the company of not respecting the terms of the GPL. The company's founder, Xavier Niel, had to publicly fight back. Could free software collapse under the weight of tensions or the massive influx of money? "I don't think so; on the other hand, certain specific projects could be threatened, because, in the event of conflict, companies, with a lot of money, will have more weight than free electrons," believes Perline Noisette. The emergence of Microsoft in the free software world will undoubtedly serve as a crash test for the solidity of the model. (1) Editions la Découverte, 2006.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1463

Free Software To be "free", software must meet several conditions: its source code (trade secret) must be public, and users can copy it for free and modify it to adapt it to their needs. The modifications must be made public so that the "community" can benefit from them. GNU/Linux GNU/Linux, often called Linux, is the most symbolic of free software: resulting from the work of Richard Stallman and the Finn Linus Torvalds, it is an operating system, competing with Microsoft Windows. The Firefox web browser is another widely used free project, as is the OpenOffice office suite. Windows Microsoft's operating system holds more than 90% of the market share on individual computers and has often taken advantage of this ultra-dominant position to fight against competition. This attitude earned it a condemnation from the European Commission. Richard Stallman This American computer scientist is at the origin of the definition of free software, in the mid-80s. At the head of the FreeSoftwareFoundation, he wants to be the guarantor of the founding principles of "free". 15% The Linux operating system, non-existent in the 90s, is used by 15% of servers (large computers used by companies). On personal computers, on the other hand, Microsoft still dominates.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1464

Free software has spawned a large number of descendants: its principles of the widest possible circulation of creation, modifications open to all have raised questions since the end of the 90s. What if this model were applicable to other forms of innovation? With varying degrees of success and in significantly different ways, projects inspired by the free software model have flourished: the collaborative and free online encyclopedia Wikipedia, but also certain scientific works and even cultural projects for the dissemination of music or audiovisual content. Sharing. "The teaching of free software is that we can imagine systems that encourage the rapid dissemination of knowledge without this penalizing innovation," notes Dominique Foray, an economist at the Ecole Polytechnique de Lausanne. The success of "free" is not insignificant: until then, the dominant policies favored a logic that was the opposite of that of sharing. Through patents (on inventions) or copyright (for works or software), the law guarantees companies that their creations must not be copied. And that they can therefore make a financial profit from them and thus continue to innovate. This is the model applied by Microsoft: to obtain Windows, you have to pay a license. With free software, it is the opposite: it is about encouraging copying and cooperation between individuals connected by the Net. The case of the online encyclopedia Wikipedia is emblematic. This service, managed by a foundation financed by donations, is open to contributions from all. Anyone can therefore create or enrich an article on subjects in which they consider themselves competent. Despite recurring controversies over the reliability of the information available, Wikipedia has established itself as one of the most visited sites on the planet. In biotechnology, some researchers similarly advocate sharing their innovations rather than protecting them by patents. And there are defenders of "free music", for example in France with the site Dogmazic. Pitfall. The political motivation of the promoters of these mechanisms is often a powerful driving force. As Thierry Noisette, co-author of a book on free software, says, "each political camp finds something in it. People on the left, the values of sharing, and economic liberals, a model of competition". One pitfall remains: the "free" economic model, applied to areas other than software, is still groping. Pharmaceutical laboratories rely largely on the defense of their patents to survive, and almost all cultural industries, music and cinema in the lead, are based on a model based on the prohibition of copying.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1465

First there was indifference and anathema. And now a half-hearted embrace. For the second time in a little over ten years, Microsoft is rallying behind a technological innovation that eludes it and that ends up threatening its supremacy. In late 1995, Bill Gates, belatedly, wrote a note entitled "The Internet Tidal Wave" and shook up its strategy. Today, Microsoft is officially taking a step towards Linux, a software that has established itself as a formidable competitor to Windows, its flagship product. Once again, the computer giant is adopting this adage: if you can't beat them, join them. Research center. The comparison ends there. Just as ten years ago Microsoft embraced the Internet, the agreement with the firm Novell, which coordinates the development of one of the main versions of Linux, looks more like a peaceful coexistence. The two companies will cooperate to allow their products to coexist better within businesses and administrations. The agreement, announced Thursday, provides for the creation of a joint research center and ends a patent dispute. Microsoft, moreover, will recommend the Suse version of Linux to its customers who want to use both systems. New York from our correspondent It is therefore not a question of converting Windows to the Linux model, which is opposed in every way. The first is based on the protection of manufacturing secrets. On the contrary, the free software model allows any user to tinker with the programming codes to adapt the software to their needs. More flexible and more economical, this operating principle has ended up seducing businesses and administrations. Many IT companies such as Novell and IBM have understood the revenue they could get from it (read opposite). In 2001, Microsoft boss Steve Ballmer fought Linux, which he defined in an interview with the Chicago Sun-Times as "a cancer that affects the intellectual property of everything it touches." Since then, the reality principle has gradually prevailed. Microsoft does not hide the fact that it is primarily a question of responding to the demand of its customers who want the two systems to coexist. The risk of inaction was to give up even more ground to its competitor. "Scepticism". The agreement has been greeted with circumspection by Linux promoters. "Microsoft has always been hostile to free software, it is natural to be skeptical," believes Daniel Ravicher, legal director of the Software Freedom Law Center which helps free software developers. According to him, it will be necessary to ensure that Microsoft respects the rules of a game to which it has always been a stranger.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1466

The software industry is like religion. When the Microsoft "Church" makes a pact with the rival chapel of free software, there are bound to be purists who cry heresy. There is, in this much-discussed agreement between Microsoft and Novell, a strong symbolic dimension that marks a stage in the brief history of global computing. Here then is the giant Microsoft, whose CEO, Steve Ballmer, once spoke of a "cancer" when he spoke of the free software Linux of the Finn Linus Torvalds, forced to deal with this absolute evil that has successfully spread throughout the world. However, the time has not come for "conversion", to stick with religious vocabulary, but for peaceful coexistence, or, to reintegrate technical language, for "interoperability". The "free software" advocates, that is to say, the free software enthusiasts, should be delighted by this recognition coming from the Redmond firm, often accused, particularly in Europe, of seeking dominant positions and stifling competition. It is an implicit tribute to the success of this idea, a priori far-fetched in our world which places profit at the heart of the dominant values, of free access, sharing, and gratuity. The philosophy which presided over the birth of free software paved the way for a family which counts among its distant descendants Wikipedia, the cooperative online encyclopedia for free use, or Firefox, the independent Internet browser managed by a foundation. However, business is business, and companies born in the free software movement also need a viable and sustainable economic model. The agreement between Microsoft and Novell is therefore the pragmatic recognition of these two worlds which, despite appearances, have every interest in becoming compatible rather than engaging in a "war of religions" of which the user would undoubtedly be the first victim.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1467

JUST LAST WEEK, Oracle, the second largest independent software publisher, announced its intention to join a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting Linux. With this announcement, Microsoft's most formidable competitor in computer programs is also trying to create a solution to compete with Windows. Before the firm headed by Larry Ellison, Sun Microsystems and IBM tried to lead the revolt. Without much success with individuals. In the business world, Linux has really established itself. This program brings intelligence to a computer equipped with a "chip" from Intel, AMD or IBM. The main use of this program is to run applications on servers, machines that control a network of computers. Many companies use this program, in particular to manage e-mail and Internet applications. This software is more stable and reputed to be more secure than Microsoft's Windows. In fact, its "safety" is linked to the fact that all the developers in the world have access to the source code of the program, that is to say, they have all the manufacturing secrets, and can ensure that no listening and encryption measures have been installed without the user's knowledge. And the program, available on the Internet, can be enriched by users from all over the world. This is how Linux has gained its reputation as a community program! In fact, there are many commercial versions of Linux, symbolized by a little penguin who answers to the sweet name of Tux. The best known is that of the American company Red Hat which has added, to the Linux kernel, graphical interfaces for the presentation of programs and small software programs which are used to copy files, control a printer, etc. There are as many versions of Linux as there are distributors. One of the most advanced is that developed by Mark Shuttleworth - who made a fortune by selling his company. This young man is trying to promote, with his own money, his version of Linux, called Ubuntu. But no version of Linux is yet easy to use for ordinary mortals. The program is already used, in rare mobile phones and all the "boxes" to connect to the Internet.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1468

Linux, like OpenOffice, which replaces the Word and Excel office applications, or the mySQL database, are called "free" software. This term indicates that these programs can be downloaded freely on the Internet. Their content is entirely available: the source code, the manufacturing secret, is accessible to all Internet users. These programs can be copied, exchanged and even modified. But some changes are not always authorized, especially if a company adds modifications to then resell its solution. This is the case of the Swedish company mySQL which is paid through license agreements granted to companies that modify its database. One of the most widely used free software in the world is the Internet browsing program Firefox which has several tens of millions of users.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1469

MICROSOFT and Novell, which distributes a version of the Linux operating system, entered into a five-year alliance on Thursday evening. The two competitors will create a bridge between two worlds that are complete opposites: proprietary computer programs, symbolized by Windows, and free software, such as Linux. For many years, Steve Ballmer, the CEO of the Redmond firm, had been multiplying attacks on Linux defenders. But, faced with pressure from customers, particularly local authorities and governments that are increasingly leaning toward the competing program, Microsoft has opened the window to an adversary it knows well. Two years ago, the software leader paid $536 million to stop its competitor from pursuing legal action. Coincidentally, this alliance comes a week after Microsoft's main adversary, Oracle, decided to promote the competing operating system. Page 21

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1470

There is free software in all areas, from word processing to image editing and games. To download on the Net: The Framasoft site offers files and links to download hundreds of software. In particular, you will find OpenOffice (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.) or Gimp (for image editing). All of these software programs work with Windows, the most common operating system on PC computers. www.framasoft.net Replacing Windows with Linux: It is possible to replace the Windows operating system with the Linux system. The process requires a minimum of computer dexterity on the part of the user. Among the most common versions of Linux, we can mention Red Hat, Mandriva or Suse (which can also be found in stores with documentation and a support service).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1471

MICROSOFT and Novell, which distributes a version of the Linux operating system, entered into a five-year alliance on Thursday evening. The two competitors will create a bridge between two worlds that are complete opposites: proprietary computer programs, symbolized by Windows, and free software, such as Linux. For many years, Steve Ballmer, the CEO of the Redmond firm, had been multiplying attacks on Linux defenders. But, faced with pressure from customers, particularly local authorities and governments that are increasingly leaning toward the competing program, Microsoft has opened the window to an adversary it knows well. Two years ago, the software leader paid $536 million to stop its competitor from pursuing legal action. Coincidentally, this alliance comes a week after Microsoft's main adversary, Oracle, decided to promote the competing operating system. Page 21

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1472

Benedict XVI wants to promote the Latin Mass. My priest among the Latinists. The bishops of France, who are entering a plenary assembly in Lourdes this Saturday, are opposed to this opening to traditionalists. Pages 2 to 3 Software makes peace. The giant Microsoft and its rival Novell, a developer of free software, have concluded an interoperability agreement that constitutes a turning point for Bill Gates' company. Pages 4 and 5.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1473

MICROSOFT, NOVELL Yesterday's enemies can become friends. This is the summary of the strategic alliance formed for five years between Microsoft and Novell in software. Steve Ballmer, the CEO of the Seattle giant, and Ron Hovsepian, the president of the American publisher from Utah, announced a surprising partnership Thursday evening in San Francisco. The Windows operating system, used by more than 90% of the world's microcomputers, and a version of the competing program Linux will become "interoperable". That is to say, software from both worlds, those sold under license and so-called "free" programs, will be able to communicate with each other. For many years, however, Microsoft had been waging war against Linux. In Seattle, in 2000, Steve Ballmer had even vilified its followers, accusing them of loving communism! And there was a heavy legal dispute between Microsoft and Novell. In 2004, to end the lawsuits brought by the latter, the Redmond giant paid it 536 million dollars. Three years ago, after going through a difficult financial period, Novell bought Suse Linux. This program is now driving its sales. Nevertheless, the new ally occupies "second place in Linux operating systems, behind Red Hat. But the agreement could perhaps change our position. Microsoft will suggest to its customers to acquire SuseLinux", affirms Tom Francese, sales director of Novell. For its part, the firm founded by Bill Gates has changed its tune under pressure from the market. "Microsoft saw its market share eroding in server operating systems and in office applications", analyzes Tritan Nitot, the president of Mozilla Europe, which advocates the use of free software. Many customers, particularly in public services, opt for Linux, reputed to be less expensive to purchase, to the detriment of Windows and Word and Excel programs. "This is a legal and technical guarantee for our customers," says Bernard Ourghanlian, technical director of Microsoft France. Above all, the alliance was formed because the president of Novell knows the deputy general director of Microsoft well, at the time when he was its supplier for the Wal-Mart distribution group.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1474

YESTERDAY enemies, Microsoft and Novell, one of the publishers of Linux software, are on the way to becoming the best of friends. On Thursday evening, the two IT groups signed a strategic partnership. And buried a fifteen-year ideological war. Symbol of resistance to Microsoft hegemony, Linux was indeed the icon of "free" software, in other words of the technological independence of users. But customers were tired of this hopeless guerrilla war. They were heard.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1475

FIREFOX Faster and more ergonomic, safer and smarter, the new Firefox should definitely convince Internet users looking for an efficient navigation software. Available for Windows, Mac and Linux, Firefox 2.0 stands out with a faster display of Web pages, blocking of pop-up windows, tabbed navigation, an integrated search area entrusted to Google or other search tools (Yahoo, Exalead, Wikipedia, etc.), advanced security settings and customization possibilities. Main new features: each tab now has its own close button. And if you close one of them inadvertently, you can recover it using a special command. Better still: if your computer crashes, Firefox will automatically restore the configuration you lost the next time you launch it. The software designers have also thought about new uses of the Web, with an integrated dictionary allowing you to check spelling before publishing a blog article or reacting on a forum, or even sending a message on a Webmail. Along the same lines, when you use the search box, a list of suggestions appears as you type in the word you want to find. Just as practical: dynamic bookmarks that let you know immediately when information has been updated on a website. Already praised for its security measures, Firefox now offers protection against "phishing" and warns Internet users who might be led to visit a dubious site. Better still: the software prevents websites from installing a program on your computer without your permission. Developed by the Mozilla Foundation, Firefox belongs to the category of free software. This means very high responsiveness in the event of a problem and very rapid corrections. An update system automatically checks that the user has the most recent version and offers to download security patches. Finally, Firefox's customization possibilities are impressive: block ads, compare prices, monitor the weather or listen to music, not to mention the modules to completely change the appearance of the browser. Faced with the innovations of Internet Explorer 7, launched a few days ago, Firefox must continue to prove that it remains a credible alternative. It claims 70 million users worldwide and today exceeds 20% of market share in Europe. - www.mozilla-europe.org/fr/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1476

THE SMARTPHONE MARKET IS SO SOPHISTICATED THAT MANUFACTURERS NOW PREFER TO TALK ABOUT "COMMUNICATING POCKET COMPUTERS". IT'S ALL THERE: OFFICE, ENTERTAINMENT AND COMMUNICATION. THE DEVICES, THEMSELVES, ARE NO BIGGER THAN A SET OF CARDS. WILL CONVERGENCE FOOLISHERS FINALLY FIND THE RARE PEARL? RESEARCH INMOTION (RIM) BLACKBERRY PEARL Research in Motion made no secret of its intention to add multimedia functions to the already rather loaded arsenal of applications contained in the Blackberry range of devices. The 8100, also called the "Blackberry Pearl", is the first to inherit them. On the menu, a 1.3 megapixel camera, which only takes photos, and software applications that allow you to play music and video clips on the small screen of the wireless phone. Added to this is a memory card port, of the MicroSD type, useful, but particularly poorly housed behind the battery of the device. In addition to office functions, "push e-mail" (OLF) and these multimedia functions, RIM adds to the Pearl the Blackberry Maps application, which allows it to be paired with an optional GPS receiver, via the Bluetooth wireless protocol. You get compact and useful satellite guidance, abroad. At the front, the heart of this Blackberry gives it its name: the illuminated control key shines a matte white that rightly recalls a pearl. It is very, very sensitive to touch, a characteristic that you have to get used to gradually. The rest of the keyboard, meanwhile, is made up of a minimum of keys and uses the SureType algorithm to guess manually composed words. Here too, it's a little strange at first, but you eventually get used to it, especially since the word recognition is close to perfect. As you might expect, it's on the multimedia side that things go wrong. RIM is new to this, which translates into limited functions. There's nothing on the Pearl that you haven't already seen elsewhere. To do it properly, it would have been necessary to add physical keys to operate the multimedia player, and the ability to make videos. Another item on the wish list, why not Wi-Fi access, too? If we had had all that the first time, we would have cried genius. Here, it's far from impressive. RIM Blackberry 8100 Pearl \*\*\* Between $250 and $450 www.rim.com + RIM adds multimedia features to its workhorse: portable music player, camera and MicroSD memory card slot. - No video recording, memory card is housed behind the battery and no physical controls for music playback. In short, poorly designed multimedia features. PALM TREO 700WX Palm will gradually abandon its Palm OS in favor of an open-source Linux platform. In the meantime, we have the Treo 700wx, a versatile device that combines the user-friendliness of the Treo phone format with Microsoft's Windows Mobile 5 operating system. But a low-resolution screen and high retail price make it less attractive than some other models. Palm Treo 700wx \*\*\* $400-$550 www.palm.com/ca + The Treo 700wx allows for dialing by contact name (voice or not) and instant retrieval of pushed emails. - The screen resolution is disappointing. The retail price is unattractive, especially if you have to commit to a three-year contract. NOKIA E62 Nokia has a wide range of smart devices, but one of the few that is sold by Canadian vendors is the E62, which looks suspiciously like an old-generation Blackberry. Powered by the amazing Symbian operating system, its processor struggles to switch between applications. Fortunately, its basic functions (telephone and messaging) are of excellent quality, despite the lack of a camera sensor, a trend that is more than widespread in the industry. Nokia E62 \* 1/2 Between $250 and $450 www.nokia.ca + Business people eyeing the smartphone market will get an efficient work companion. - The operating system is slow. The device does not have a camera. Overall, it is expensive for nothing. Network Blackberry Pearl: Rogers E62: Rogers Treo 700wx: Bell Operating Syst. Blackberry Pearl: Blackberry E62: Symbian Treo 700wx: Windows Mobile Photo/Video Blackberry Pearl: 1.3 MP (photo only) E62: none Treo 700wx: 1.3 MP (photo), VGA (video) Memory Blackberry Pearl: MicroSD E62: MiniSD Treo 700wx: SD/MMC Other Blackberry Pearl: Bluetooth GPS Navigator (opt.) E62: Bluetooth Music Player Treo 700wx: Bluetooth THERE'S WIRELESS AND WIRELESS More and more manufacturers are going to include compatibility with Wi-Fi type wireless networks on their high-end phones. Does the cost of transferring data via cellular waves make you cringe? Maybe it's better to look this way. alain.mckenna@lapresse.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1477

THE BROWSER Firefox, from the Mozilla Foundation - a community of developers of free, open and free software - intends to continue to shake up the monopoly exercised by Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) and to gain market share. An update has just been released: Firefox 2. It includes in particular a spell checker and a system to warn the user that he is about to enter a website deemed dubious. Created in 2004 by an international community of contributors, Firefox was launched in the fall of 2004. It immediately won over Internet users thanks to many innovations. "Faced with the supremacy of Internet Explorer, Firefox represented an important technical alternative," explains Mathieu Llorens, from the Xiti analysis firm. Among the innovations brought by Firefox 1: tabbed browsing which allows you to open several sites without restarting the browser each time; a search bar allowing direct access to Google, for example, without having to type the address of the site; the possibility for the Internet user, subscribed to a site, to retrieve article titles on their computer automatically and in real time without having to go to the site in question. RESPONSE FROM THE WORLD LEADER "After the initial media hype, we have seen over the months that Firefox's progress has not slowed down," acknowledges Mr. Llorens. According to Tristan Nitot, president and founder of Mozilla Europe, Firefox holds 15% of the global market. In Europe, the market share is around 22%, compared to 77% for Microsoft. In some countries, such as Slovakia and Poland, the 30% mark has been exceeded. In France, it has reached almost 20% according to Xiti figures from September. This breakthrough has led Microsoft to react. "Firefox has been a good spur," acknowledges Eric Boustouller, CEO of Microsoft France. A week ago, the world leader in software released Internet Explorer 7. "We have brought a lot of innovation and we will not stop there," warns Mr. Boustouller. Microsoft's browser now also integrates tabbed browsing, more security, as well as the ability to open all open sites on a single page. It remains to be seen whether Microsoft will recover the lost market share or whether Firefox will continue on its momentum.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1478

As part of the FNC, OpenSource events offer to explore the world of cinema through workshops, discussions and meetings at the Musée juste pour rire. On the program, luncheon talks (October 19, 20 and 23), interactive exhibitions and screenings, etc. Not to mention the first video iPod battle, a Montreal and world premiere, on Friday, October 20 starting at 10 p.m. at the Musée juste pour rire. Q Where did you get the idea to organize an iPod battle? A It's an idea that came from Paris, where it was invented by TekiLatex, the leader of TTC (Present at the last iPod Battle on October 4, Editor's note). A friend from Montreal had participated as a spectator in one of the Parisian competitions, at Paris Paris, and brought the concept back to Montreal. The Fly is on the Wall collective organized the iPod battles in Montreal. I had the idea in mind to do it with a video iPod. Q How does an iPod video battle take place? A The designers have to prepare their ammunition. They download videos (on Youtube, for example), on iPod videos that are lent to them. Each team has its iPod well loaded, and it is up to the crowd to decide the winner. Some plan to shoot their clips themselves. There is a lot of preparation to be done, because you have to anticipate what the other is going to play. Q How is it different from a "traditional" battle? A This is a world first. Here we add the video element. The participants have carte blanche to choose their material, but it has to be music. What I find interesting is that there is the clip aspect and the more difficult path of creating your own images. Q Who will participate in this video battle? A These are groups of short films that are invited to come and fight. The organization took care of finding the teams. Participants come from the world of media, short films or music videos: Urbania, Kino, Prends ça court, Mange ta ville or the Grondin brothers. Q Will there be other battles of this type? A For the Festival du nouveau cinéma, this remains occasional. But for the Fly Is on the Wall collective, it could be interesting to do again. Even if the iPod video is less accessible than the iPod audio. iPod video battle, Just for Laughs Museum, Friday, October 20 starting at 10 p.m. Free admission. Information: www.nouveaucinema.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1479

After two difficult years, marked by the festival war that shook it like a plum tree, it was a well-established, regenerated Festival du nouveau cinéma (FNC) that announced the colours of its edition yesterday at a press conference at the Just for Laughs Museum in Montreal. With the Digimart market for new technologies this year in its fold, as well as the Möbius Festival dedicated to multimedia, it has created new networks. Institutions have stopped giving it the cold shoulder for refusing to partner with the defunct FIFM. Patron Daniel Langlois has wiped out his deficit. The new members of the board of directors, including producer Denise Robert, are fulfilling their role with fervour. In short, the swords of Damocles no longer hang over the FNC's head. The distributors who defected last year in favour of the new festival run by Spectra are back, except for Alliance Atlantis Viva Film (which was also absent from the FFM). Programming director Claude Chamberlan says that two heartbreaking films escaped him because of Alliance's rejection. As for FNC general director Bruno Jobin, he assures us that the event is continuing its development plan and that the challenge in the future will be to recruit a wider audience by expanding through a network of larger theaters. For the 35th edition of the FNC, which will take place from October 18 to 28, 189 films from 39 countries, including 12 world premieres, are on the menu. Claude Chamberlan, still at the helm of the feature film selection, announces, as he does every year, his best program. At first glance, it really seems very good. Between the interesting Congorama by Quebecer Philippe Falardeau as the opening track and the delicious Volver by Pedro Almodóvar as the closing, the 35th FNC has concocted an anniversary edition that is both festive and cinephile. The most anticipated film of this 35th edition is undoubtedly The Boss of It All, by Lars von Trier, but Ten Canoes by the Australian Rolf de Heer, Citadelle by Atom Egoyan, The Island by Pavel Lounguine, Belle toujours by Manoel de Oliveira also tempt the cinephile. Among the artists expected at the FNC, Olivier Gourmet, favorite actor of the Dardenne brothers, who plays one of the heroes of Congoroma, Atom Egoyan and Arsinée Khanjian for Citadelle, Robert Guédiguian for Le Voyage en Arménie, the veteran Kenneth Anger for Anger Me, Francisco Vargas for The Violin, etc. The FNC, which intends above all to present the cream of world cinema, is less interested in scoops than some competing events and inherits juicy pieces already awarded elsewhere. Hence the presence in the program of the Cannes Palme d'Or, The Wind that Shakes the Barley by Ken Loach, the Babel directing prize by Inarritu, the Grand Jury Prize Flanders by Bruno Dumont, the Golden Camera 12:08 East of Bucharest by Corneliu Porumboiu. Not to mention the Golden Bear of the Berlin Festival Grbavica by Jasmila Zbanic. These last two feature films land in the race for the Golden Wolf (first, second or third film), alongside Red Road by Andrea Arnold (Jury Prize at Cannes), Recherche Victor Pellerin by Quebecer Sophie Deraspe, in particular. Of note, in the International Panorama section: the haunting Man Push Cart by Ramin Bahrani and the provocative Shortbus by John Cameron Mitchell. Focus Québec/Canada brings together a very large number of national works, including La Belle Bête by Karim Hussain, based on the novel by Marie-Claire Blais, Dans les villes by Catherine Martin, Le Fugitif ou les vérités d'Hassan by Jean-Daniel Lafond, Rêves de poussière by Laurent Salgues, Sur la trace d'Igor Rizzi by Noël Mitrani. The Temps 0 section directed by Julien Fonfrède will deliver several UFOs, including the opening film in Canadian premiere, apparently very wild: Paprika, by the Japanese Satosjhi Kon. Sisters, by Douglas Buck, offers a remake of the film by Brian De Palma and Taxidermia, by György Palfi, a collection of horrors for lovers of strong emotions. Among the short films selected: Les Yeux de ma mère by the Quebecer Michel Lemieux, Workbooks by the Canadian Guy Maddin, Histoire tragédie avec fin heureuse by the Portuguese Miranda Pessoa, etc. Retrospectives are part of the celebration, including two in collaboration with the Cinémathèque québécoise: the complete works of Norman McLaren restored by the NFB as well as Carlos Saura - Première époque: 16 films by the Spanish filmmaker made between 1956 and 1979. Also a tribute to Guy Debord. The complete works of the French filmmaker and philosopher are presented for the first time in North America. And a tip of the hat to Swiss filmmaker Daniel Schmid. Three of his films are on the schedule, including La Paloma. The 35th FNC also includes exhibitions at the Just for Laughs Museum, including the interactive Rejouer à pong, a nod to the cult game. The events in the OpenSource section take the form of speeches, discussion platforms, etc.: luncheon talks offered by INIS, McLaren OOF, Wapikoni Mobile, etc. In addition, Kenneth Anger, the cult director of Scorpio Rising, will come to meet the public and students at Concordia University. And then the team promises a giant party to celebrate this 35th anniversary in style. After the turmoil of the last few years, it could, in short, have never happened.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1480

"The Best of the Best!" Programming director Claude Chamberlan summed up the content of the 35th Festival du nouveau cinéma de Montréal program. During the 10 days of festivities, from October 18 to 28, film buffs will be able to feast on a hearty menu, composed of productions that have already been noticed at the biggest international film festivals. Congorama by Philippe Falardeau will open on October 18, and Volver by Pedro Almodovar will close the festivities on the 28th. Between these two poles, 187 other films and 38 events will have been presented, grouped into eight different sections: "International Selection - Louve d'or", "Special Presentation", "International Panorama", "Focus Québec/Canada", "Temps 0", "Short Films", "Tribute and Retrospective", as well as "Events and OpenSource". After a year of "complex transition", the FNC is thus repositioning itself as an unmissable event. As for the feature films entered in the international selection, no fewer than 18 productions will compete for the Louve d'or. This will be awarded by a jury composed of Natacha de la Fouchardière, projectionist/archivist at the Cinémathèque de Toulouse, Barbra Shrier, producer, and filmmaker Denis Villeneuve. These include 12:08 East of Bucarest by Corneliu Porumboiu, 13 Tzameti by Gela Babluani, Away from Her by Sarah Polley, Grbavica by Jasmila Zbanic (Golden Bear at the Berlin Festival), Red Road by Andrea Arnold, The Violin by Francisco Vargas and Recherche Victor Pellerin by Sophie Deraspe. In the "Special Presentation" section, Lars von Trier's new film, The Boss of it All, will be screened in North America. The 20 other titles selected in this category evoke a veritable who's who of world cinema. The Wind that Shakes the Barley by Ken Loach (Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival) is notably part of this program, as are Babel by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, Belle toujours by Manoel de Oliveira, Ces filles-là by Tahani Rached and Citadelle by Atom Egoyan. Effervescence To highlight the "effervescence" of Quebec and Canadian cinema, a section is also entirely devoted to independent cinema produced north of the 49th parallel. It includes titles such as Sur la trace d'Igor Rizzi by Noël Mitrani (winner of the award for best Canadian first film at the Toronto Film Festival), La belle bête by Karim Hussain, Dans les villes by Catherine Martin, Le fugitif ou les vérités d'Hassan by Jean-Daniel Lafond and Masturbation libre - le manifeste by François Gourd. The film-loving public will also have the opportunity to view the complete works of Norman McLaren and to discover, for the first time in North America, the complete works of the filmmaker and philosopher of the "international situationist" Guy Debord. After the now famous "saga" of the Montreal festivals, the FNC team was visibly happy to work this year in a calmer context. "We can now rebuild on more solid foundations," commented René Malo, the chairman of the board of directors. The 35th FNC will take place from October 18 to 28 at Ex-Centris, the Imperial Cinema, the Cinémathèque québécoise and the Just for Laughs Museum. Info: 514-844-2172, or www.nouveaucinema.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1481

Montreal - The Best of the Best! Programming director Claude Chamberlan summarized the content of the 35th Festival du nouveau cinéma de Montréal program. Over the 10 days, from October 18 to 28, film buffs will be able to feast on a hefty menu, composed of productions that have already been noticed at the biggest international film festivals. Congorama by Philippe Falardeau will open on October 18, and Volver by Pedro Almodovar will close the festivities on the 28th. Between these two poles, some 187 other films and 38 events will have been presented, grouped into eight different sections: Louve d'or International Selection, Special Presentation, International Panorama, Focus Québec-Canada, Temps 0, Short Films, Tribute and Retrospective, as well as Events and OpenSource. After a year of "complex transition," the FNC is repositioning itself as an unmissable event. As for the feature films entered in the international selection, no fewer than 18 productions will compete for the Golden Wolf. Among them, 12: 08 East of Bucharest by Corneliu Porumboiu, 13 Tzameti by Gela Babluani, Away from Her by Sarah Polley, Grbavica by Jasmila Zbanic (Golden Bear at the Berlin Festival), Red Road by Andrea Arnold, The Violin by Francisco Vargas and Recherche Victor Pellerin by Sophie Deraspe. The Special Presentation section brings together the most prestigious productions, directed by renowned creators. Of course, the new film by Lars von Trier, The Boss of it All, will be presented in North America at the top of the list. The 20 other titles selected in this category evoke a veritable who's who of world cinema. The Wind that Shakes the Barley by Ken Loach (Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival) is part of this program, as are Babel by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, Belle toujours by Manoel de Oliveira, Ces filles-là by Tahani Rached and Citadelle by Atom Egoyan. To highlight the "effervescence" of Quebec and Canadian cinema, a section is also entirely devoted to independent cinema produced north of the 49th parallel.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1482

The word wiki comes from the Hawaiian expression "wiki wiki", commonly translated as "quickly". In the Internet world, it refers to a site written by several people whose pages can be modified quickly and freely. Any visitor who appreciates the articles can join the community that edits it. n The best-known wiki, the Wikipedia encyclopedia (www.wikipedia.fr), is the most visited in the world. But in the world of "wikis", we also find educational content (a teacher, for example, who enriches his courses with his colleagues), information and technical documentation sites (very popular with computer enthusiasts)... n Depending on the case, visitors can contribute directly, or only after registering, so as to be identified when they make an addition or modification. They then have the possibility of intervening on the content of the pages, but in no way on the technical aspect of the site. n To create or edit an article, the visitor connects to the "wiki" editing area with their web browser. They then access a form containing the text they want to edit. "Wiki" articles follow a syntax that ensures the correct formatting of the document on the Internet, creates links and places images. Depending on the tool offered, the corresponding codes must be indicated in the text or special icons must be used. n The principle of links is at the heart of the "wiki": each document must allow the visitor, by simply clicking on a keyword, to consult other documents. The author of an article can even create a link that will lead... to an empty page, and it is then up to the visitor to write the corresponding article, if they feel like it. In addition, on most "wikis", a link or tab titled "Edit" provides direct access to the editing tools. n As contributions are made, the pages are enriched. It is possible to follow their evolution and even to revert to a previous version. This requires administrative management of the "wiki". In most cases, this is ensured by a committee of users who monitor the smooth running of operations and can correct or block an article. Only users with the necessary privileges have the ability to delete a page or exclude unwanted visitors. n The authors of a modified page can also check and complete the information added. This mode of operation also allows attempts at falsification, defamation or misinformation to be detected and immediately cancelled. One regret, however: by erasing banalities, approximations, propaganda and questionable arguments, the content often tends towards consensus. n The texts of a "wiki" must of course be original, free of rights and not violate any copyright. Once published, they are subject to a license that is generally inspired by those governing free software: the content can be freely copied and modified, but any copy or modification must meet the same conditions of freedom. DS

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1483

A nice move. This is what the leaders of the association Sauvons la recherche (SLR) achieved last weekend in Fleurance (Gers), by bringing together several certain or potential candidates (François Bayrou, Dominique Voynet, Laurent Fabius, Marie-George Buffet, Olivier Besancenot, Christiane Taubira, France Gamerre) for the presidential election (1) at its autumn university. Scissors. Press articles and radio debates kept the flame lit in 2004: scientific research must be one of the strong subjects of political debate. Beyond the one-off success, SLR confirmed that it could continue, while its disappearance seemed programmed after the vote on the research program law in the spring. A stroke of luck, given the need for a place for discussion between scientists, politicians and citizens, on the means of research and higher education as well as on its organization or the economic, social and cultural future of its discoveries. Scientists have vigorously contested the idea that the problems raised have been resolved (see below). They point to a devastating scissor effect between the massive retirements that are looming and the fall in the number of people enrolled in science courses at university. "In 1995, 68,000 new high school graduates enrolled in science faculties. There were only 43,000 left in 2005." To the point that small universities are considering closing their physics courses after the second year. Contradiction. A report from the General Inspectorate (2) quantifies this enormous contradiction. A young doctor in life sciences has only a 10% chance of being recruited as a researcher or academic. The system is therefore over-selective, eliminating 90% of possible candidates. Young researchers doing postdoctoral work abroad still have no prospects of returning to France in public research or business. The stagnation or reduction in the number of theses will lead in a few years to the opposite situation: it will be almost enough for the new doctor to be a candidate to be recruited as a lecturer in chemistry, earth sciences or life sciences. Recruiting massively, well beyond immediate needs, by taking advantage of the current pool of young people, constitutes the only solution to this contradiction. It is still necessary to have the political courage to implement it without delay. The questions raised by Voynet on the use of GMOs and nuclear power, or the proposal made by Buffet of "citizen forums" to discuss the use of discoveries, did not take scientists by surprise. "In twenty years," explained the historian Dominique Pestre during a debate, "the cursor that separates science as a public good from science as a private good has been brutally shifted in favor of the latter. The patentability of life, and sometimes even genes, the emergence of public-private conflicts of interest in laboratories, the collapse of funding for the human and social sciences... all this requires that we open up new spaces for knowledge as a public good, through public forms of intellectual property, such as free software." Hence the need, he stressed, to break with a condescending vision of the public: "We just need to explain it better and they will accept." And to denounce illusions: "Politicians dangle the prospect of money coming into universities or public labs through patenting, you should know that in the United States Stanford is practically the only one to make money in this way, all the others lose it." Theorem. At the same time, the economist Pierre Larrouturou brilliantly demonstrated that, if a strong ambition for research was necessary, its justification by the theorem "research equals jobs" was simply not true; it was precisely this theorem that Fabius took up in front of the scientists. The risk, Larrouturou suggests, "is that in ten years we will be told that there is no point in increasing the research effort since we will not have solved the problem of the four million unemployed people in this way." (1) Libération, September 30 and October 1, 2006. (2) IGAENR 2003 Report.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1484

"Defeating DRM means becoming aware," say the people behind the website DefectiveByDesign.org, who are orchestrating a campaign to abolish Digital Rights Management, the protection and digital rights management measures that, in short, limit the use that can be made of a song, whether it was purchased on physical media (CD) or in an online store using such processes. These informed Internet users have therefore unilaterally declared that tomorrow (October 3) will now be World Anti-DRM Day. Taking a Disney executive (not named on the DbyD website) at his word, who declared that "if consumers learn what DRM is and how it works, we will have already lost," users are invited to inform their peers of the "dangers" of this practice on the freedom of creation and circulation of cultural works. Demonstrations in preparation for October 3 began last Saturday in New York and London. The New York University chapter of the national student organization Free Culture, which focuses on the future of culture, technology, and copyright (as explained on their wiki), held a demonstration in front of the imposing Apple Store in Manhattan, distributing information about the majors' evil plans and their secret weapon, DRM. A similar demonstration, organized by the FreeSoftwareFoundation Europe (FSFE), took place in front of the Apple Store in London. In both demonstrations, participants wore orange-yellow protective suits, like those worn by responders in bacteriological disasters! On the DefectiveByDesign website, we learn that about 200 events or demonstrations are already planned around the world, but none in Montreal for the moment. Let us recall that the debate around protection measures and digital rights management has been at the center of many debates and disputes since the hemorrhage of music and video files on the Web. Sony, for example, had to face justice for having contaminated the computers of millions of music lovers around the world who had the misfortune to import the content of an album into their computer with, without their knowledge, malicious software. In Canada, artists like Avril Lavigne and Broken Social Scene have joined together in a coalition that campaigns, among other things, against the use of DRM. The question of DRM will be the subject of a discussion as part of the important Future of Music Policy Summit, which will be held Thursday at McGill University, as part of the Pop Montréal festival. http://defectivebydesign.org/en/nodehttp://www.freeculturenyu.org/http://www.futureofmusic.org/events/summit06/index.cfm Palmarès.ca A new Quebec player in the online music file sales market appeared on the web last Thursday. Palmarès.ca, a platform jointly founded by Puretracks.ca and Astral Media, is looking to steal a share of an ever-growing market from iTunes and Archambaultzik.ca, with the ambition of becoming the number 1 online store in Quebec. Beautiful, easy-to-use interface, catalog of 1.1 million songs (including a lot of Quebec repertoire, but don't look for the new Jean Leloup since neither Palmares.ca, nor Archambaultzik, nor iTunes offer it!), prices comparable to those of competitors, simplified search by musical categorization - sometimes approximate: what is Daft Punk doing in the "trip hop" subcategory? Caroline Néron's album featured in the hip hop section? Another fun detail: in the site's help section, it is specified that the files are sold with WMA digital rights management technology, theoretically unreadable by iPod players. However, in its general information, Palmarès.ca gives you the procedure, as simple as ABC, to be able to buy their files and then transfer them to your iPod, without worries: "When Palmares.ca files are burned to a CD using Windows Media Player 10, these CDs will be recognized and can be ripped by iTunes," we are informed. Ah, those DRMs, what we wouldn't do without them! www.palmares.ca In bulk... > To follow up on our column from last week, Apple quickly put online a correction to the seventh version of its iTunes software. Version 7.0.1 of iTunes can be downloaded here: www.apple.com/itunes/download/ > The Pop Montréal festival website offers plenty of good content to get you in the spirit of the event that begins Wednesday. First, a podcast (PopCast, which already has 38 episodes!), created by André Péloquin, who also manages the festival's French-language blog. You can consult and download from www.popmontreal.com. For its part, the Montreal (and bilingual) blog Midnight Poutine also has its own podcast on the orgy of concerts that Pop Montreal brings: www.midnightpoutine.ca/ > Microsoft announced in a press release that its Zune digital music player would be available in the United States on November 14. The 30 GB model would be sold for US$249.99, a price similar to that of an iPod of the same capacity, and, above all, much less than the 400 or so initially planned... The holiday season will be competitive!

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1485

Is knowledge sharing a utopia, a new buzz word of the international community? We do not think so. A few examples will speak better than ten analyses. In 1965, Singapore was covered in slums and its economy was underdeveloped. Since then, the government has implemented resolute policies aimed at investing in education, improving skills and productivity and attracting high value-added industries. Singapore's GDP per capita now exceeds that of many countries in the North. An economy based on sharing and disseminating knowledge is an opportunity for emerging countries and the well-being of their populations. Thus, despite its poverty, the Indian state of Kerala now has a level of human development close to that of countries in the North: life expectancy is 73 years and the school enrollment rate exceeds 90%. Kerala contributes greatly to making India the eighth nation in the world in terms of scientific publications. In 1971, a few thousand migrants settled in a deserted plain 20 km from Lima and created Villa El Salvador. Relying on their own strength, its inhabitants set up education centres and created associations. A courageous participatory and community development initiative, which relied on women, transformed this shanty town into an organised city. Recognised as a municipality in 1983, Villa El Salvador created its university in 1987. Today, 98% of children are educated there and the adult illiteracy rate (4.5%) is the lowest in the country. The city now has 400,000 inhabitants, including 15,000 students. The municipality offers computer access points to citizens, who give their opinions on the subjects under discussion within the community. Shared knowledge is therefore a powerful lever in the fight against poverty. It is also now the key to the production of wealth. Finland, which was hit by a severe economic crisis after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, is today held up as an example: it invests almost 4% of its GDP in research, its education system is ranked top of industrialized countries by the OECD, and the variation in performance between students and schools is surprisingly small, which shows that success on the scale of knowledge societies and economic success can very well be combined with equity. These examples are far from isolated. In all regions of the world, a number of countries are inventing new styles of development, based on knowledge and intelligence. For the development potential of a society will depend less in the future on its natural resources than on its capacity to create, disseminate and use knowledge. Can we say, however, that the 21st century will see the rise of societies of shared knowledge? Since shared knowledge is a public good that must be accessible to all, there should be no exclusions in a knowledge society. But knowledge sharing cannot be reduced to a division of knowledge or the exchange of a rare resource that nations, societies and individuals would fight over. In network societies, creativity and the possibilities for exchange or sharing are multiplied. These societies create an environment that is particularly conducive to knowledge, innovation, training and research. The new forms of networked sociability that are developing on the Internet are horizontal and non-hierarchical, encouraging cooperation, as is well illustrated by the models of the "collaboratory" in research or "open source" software in IT. The emergence of network societies and the accompanying drop in transaction costs encourage the rise of new forms of productive organization, based on exchange and collaboration within the same sharing community. This is particularly essential in the face of the temptation of economic warfare: these new practices allow us to hope that we will be able to find a fair balance between the protection of intellectual property rights, necessary for innovation, and the promotion of knowledge in the public domain. However, sharing knowledge cannot be limited to the creation of new knowledge, the promotion of knowledge in the public domain or the reduction of the cognitive divide. It implies not only universal access to knowledge, but also the active participation of each individual. It will therefore be the key to the democracies of the future, which should be based on a new type of public space, where genuine democratic meetings and deliberations involving civil society will make it possible to address societal problems conceived in prospective terms. The "hybrid forums" and citizens' conferences offer a prefiguration of this in some respects. Of course, there are many obstacles to sharing knowledge! Just as much as the solutions we are putting forward, they are at the heart of UNESCO's global report "Towards Knowledge Societies" directed by Jérôme Bindé and published a few months ago. The 21st Century Talk that we have just organized at UNESCO on the theme of knowledge sharing has undoubtedly allowed us to better identify them: polarization, digital divide and, even more serious, knowledge divide and inequality between men and women, these are the main obstacles to knowledge sharing. To overcome these obstacles, societies will have to invest massively in lifelong education for all, research, information development, and the rise of "learning societies", and better respect the diversity of cognitive cultures and local, traditional and indigenous knowledge. Knowledge sharing will not always be for tomorrow: because it is not the problem, it is the solution. Knowledge sharing does not divide knowledge: it makes it grow and multiply. \*Director-General of UNESCO

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1486

Have you heard of Lulu? It is a self-publishing service created by Bob Young. This Canadian reinvented the software industry by breaking the monopoly of operating systems and then founding "Red Hat", today the largest "Open Source" software company. Lulu uses the Internet to reduce costs and change the way books are produced and sold. Every week 1300 new works are published on Lulu. Lulu's goal is to become a place of exchange for all digital works: "While other sites let you sell everything in your attic, Lulu will allow you to sell everything on your hard drive, whether it is a book, a song, a photograph, a calendar or even software". A million people visit lulu.com every month. dfessou@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1487

This week the Web helps me Transform my old bathtub into a designer piece of furniture Recycling is in fashion, and here is a tip for recovering one of the most unsightly wastes from landfills: used bathtubs. The Spanish artist collective Trash Formaciones had the idea of cutting bathtubs into two symmetrical pieces, then gluing them back to back to create armchairs (cut widthwise) or benches (cut lengthwise). The cutting should be done properly by a professional, unless your tools allow you to do it if the bathtub is made of plastic, it is easy. In addition to their elegant design, the furniture obtained is unbreakable, difficult to steal and resistant to rain; an ideal choice for outdoors. Quality of explanations: 3/5 Cool factor: 5/5 http://cocolico.info/2006/06/18/reuse-bathtub NEW MEDIA, NEW ARTISTS Have you ever heard of "pixel art"? This technique, which consists of drawing point by point with your computer, was the only one that existed in the early days of computer graphics, and was used in particular by video game creators in the 80s. In the age of Photoshop, where anyone can add a hat to their dog or a moustache to their sister in three clicks of the mouse, artists continue to use this extremely long and complex method. It must be said that it gives a unique touch to the drawing, halfway between a child's sketch and an architect's drawing. The Taiwanese who created the site lovepixel.idv.tw is undoubtedly one of the most impressive pixel artists on the entire Internet. A simple visit to its home page presents you with a bustling city entirely drawn in pixels, which is 10 times the size of your screen (you will have to use your scroll bars, because the work is huge!). In any case, this guy is not idle: he drew each point one by one, each time calculating the proportions necessary to create his "false curves". www.lovepixel.idv.tw/ (REALLY) FREE SOFTWARE You probably know the Firefox browser and have heard of Open Office, the free competitor to Microsoft Office. But they are only the tip of the iceberg that is the open-source movement. This movement, which brings together an army of volunteer programmers around the world, offers more and more free software for Windows and Mac OS X, the quality of which is often comparable, and sometimes superior, to that of their paid competitors. The problem is that they don't have the same marketing budgets, and it's hard to get information on what's out there. Two sites have come up with the idea of bringing together the best open-source software in one place, for Windows and Mac OS X respectively. There are some really little-known software programs that have a lot of potential, like the Shiira browser or Blender, a cutting-edge 3D modeling software. www.opensourcemac.org www.opensourcewindows.org THE AUCTION Britney Spears has eyes bigger than her stomach, which is itself growing visibly these days. She didn't finish the egg sandwich and the pogo stick she had started at a music industry reception in Los Angeles. A waiter even rushed to sell these precious leftovers on eBay, specifying that if Kevin Federline was the real owner of the pogo stick, it was Britney-the-greedy one who bit into it. Sold vacuum-packed, these two glorious pieces of trash sold for $520 US. Moral: never forget to pick up every cigarette butt behind your favorite star, there will always be someone who will buy it at full price!

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1488

Tera-10 is one of the "massively parallel computers", whose power comes from the very high-speed interconnection of thousands of processors backed by a very large central memory. Made up of 544 computing nodes, each with 8 Intel Itanium-2 processors, it uses a central memory of 30 terabytes and can, with a gigantic storage memory (one petabyte, or one million billion bytes), exchange at a rate of 100 gigabytes per second. It is assembled by Bull, which provided the software platform, a million lines of code, under Linux, an open-source operating system. A surprising return of the Frenchman among the greats of computing where IBM and HP reign supreme.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1489

(special correspondent in Linz) He must have been pedaling on the spot for an hour, sweating in his cycling suit. Next to this sporty old man, a dandy, cigarette in mouth, does the same, although at a slower speed, a dilettante in a skirt is content with a turn of the wheel. The watts rise to the rhythm of the cheeks that turn pink under the effort, a final thrust of the hips and, at 10 p.m., the moon floating above the central square of Linz lights up, thanks to the energy accumulated by the strength of the calves of the hundreds of cyclists who took turns all afternoon. A large human battery that made it possible to light up the square for... an hour. Needless to say, it would have taken a lot of people to supply electricity to the entire Ars Electronica, the oldest electronic arts festival that is taking place until this evening in every corner of the Austrian city, including the most unexpected. On Friday evening, a commando action led by the New Yorkers from the Graffiti Research Lab (1) transformed the tram into a multi-coloured garland. An overexcited crowd threw handfuls of light-emitting diodes (LEDs) attached to batteries and magnets that stuck to the metal carriages. The GRL hacktivists are proposing an extension of street art through new technologies (LED Throwies, electrograf, mobile urban projection): a "graffiti 2.0" to compete with commercial signs and reclaim public space. The approach is "open source", encouraging everyone to make their own tools. A simple and participatory approach in line with the paradoxical title of this edition, "Simplicity - the art of complexity". "Isn't it strange that we are constantly developing new technologies that are supposed to simplify our lives and work, and that in the end we have the impression that everything has become so much more complicated?" asks Gerfried Stocker, director of the festival. For twenty-seven years, he has been examining the impact of technologies on the arts, culture and society, echoing a growing technophobia, and more generally the nostalgia for a simpler life. In this society dominated by technical revolutions and global networks, and drowning in information, a certain discouragement is growing, the desire to let go. Or even pounding a hammer on the computer keyboard in anger, an option also available at the festival with the Sledgehammer Keyboard installation, where you could literally hit your frustrating experiences on a giant latex keyboard connected to a screen (2). “Paradox.” To guide the novice on the complex path to simplicity, the Ars had invited the American guru of digital design, John Maeda, professor at the prestigious Media Lab of MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). The artist, who also presented his soothing abstract digital paintings, Nature, has just released a book, The Laws of Simplicity, compiling his observations (3). “We are trapped in this paradox, wanting something that is easy to use, but that does every complex thing imaginable.” His first commandment is “reduce.” A recipe that has been successfully applied by the iPod and Google, as well as Walter Bender, who initiated the "One laptop per child" project, which aims to design a robust and inexpensive computer (less than $100), but equipped with all the essential functions in order to equip the billion school-age children in developing countries. "The goal is not to eliminate the complexity of the world, but to create a tool that allows us to confront it more simply," he noted during the symposium. Complexity is often a question of point of view. In the basement of the Brucknerhaus, it does not seem to put off the young people who come to participate in the various workshops, handling the soldering iron, electronic components and computer code to create interactive musical instruments or program software for mobile phones. "We need to constantly update our knowledge. The "Do it yourself" philosophy, inherited from hacker culture, is spreading across the Internet and is providing a number of online guides that are as easy to apply as cooking recipes," says workshop organizer David Cuartielles. Simplicity of access was the dominant feature of most of the installations presented at the festival. Visitors could lie down and shiver in Kaffe Mathews' bed, massaged by sound vibrations, creating intense sensations and a unique listening experience. Exonemo combines the ancestral art of folding and the latest geolocation techniques in his poetic Roadmovie. The same purity is found in Paul DeMarinis, who revisits the archaeology of communication through a subtle metaphor in The Messenger, an installation connected to the Internet that is inspired by the electric telegraph. Emails from all four corners of the planet are dissected letter by letter by three fanciful receivers. One consists of 26 chamber pots that spell out the letters in as many different voices, the second of 26 skeletons hanging from gibbets wearing ponchos stamped A to Z and who quiver in a grotesque danse macabre each time a letter is activated. Finally, 26 bottles each containing a metal letter that make bubbles when the current passes. Impossible to reconstruct or understand the message transmitted that comes to die here. An ironic reference to the thousands of insignificant messages that have become our daily lot. Goldfish. This unenviable fate is also illustrated by the hysterical installation of the Techart Group, Office Live, which delivers a sarcastic commentary on repetitive office life. A high-tech "domino effect" where the entire production line is automated and activated by... a goldfish. To help festival-goers find peace, Ars Electronica organized a pastoral trip to the sumptuous baroque monastery of St Florian. Between a Japanese archery session, an origami workshop and a concert on a stunning 14-string instrument 10 meters long, the audience gave a rock star welcome to Toshio Iwai, the father of the cult musical game Electroplankton, a digital magician who presented his new optical illusion machine Morphovision (4). (1) www.graffitiresearchlab. com (2) www.taylorhokanson.com (3) www.lawsofsimplicity.com (4) www.nhk.or.jp/strl/ morphovision www.aec.at/en/festival2006

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1490

Do you remember Fort Boyard, the French TV show adapted for Quebec with local stars? Yes! So with the Fort Boyard game on CD-Rom, there are all the tests, puzzles and duels that made the show a success. In each game, you never know which candidate will be chosen for a given test, which can play tricks when a stronger or more skilled player is needed and the host has not chosen the one. And that's without counting Father Fouras' puzzles, which are not very simple or obvious. You can take your time to answer, but there are limits. Among the tests, you have to cross a room while balancing on a barrel, move a barrel from one square to another while avoiding being trapped, have the best legs at the capstan, pull up the stones using a pulley, find the three keys according to their respective shape to open the chest, pass through a wall by rushing at the right time, cross the room using the strength of your arms, unbolt a plate while avoiding being hit. So, by winning four or five tests and answering Father Fouras' question, the team will obtain the five keys to access the treasure. But, you still have to thwart the tests of the master of Darkness to get your friends out of prison or gain time to collect the treasure. It's not always easy. There is a memory game with colored marbles, a test of strength with cannonballs to hold at arm's length, succeed in hammering in the last nail, compose the word Boyard by drawing the right cards, find the boyard hiding under one of the three cups. Then you have to collect clues in other tests that require strength and skill such as the test of crossing the fort on a wire, swinging at the right time to catch the clue, climbing a climbing wall by the right path, climbing a pole by grabbing cleats. With the clues, you can then compose the word that will unlock the vault to collect boyards. You have to think carefully otherwise, not a boyard in your pockets. These boyards allow you to buy access to quick games to replay the tests that the players have gone through during the game. This allows you to replay certain more difficult activities if you want to win the game. As in the real game, losing a challenge or not leaving the room quickly enough will result in the participant being imprisoned. Overall, the activities represent interesting challenges that require skill, thinking, and speed of execution. The images are interesting. However, the transition between the game portions is slow and the many black screens can make you grumpy because of the time lost. These transitions lack fluidity and speed. However, it remains an interesting game. RATING: \*\*\* PC disk. Minimum configuration: Pentium 1 GHz, Windows XP Service Pack 2, 256 MB RAM, 3D graphics card with 64 MB memory, 20 X reader. Publisher: Mindscape. Suggested price: $20. Distributor: PMD Logisoft. Reading for the holidays Computers are not just about software and the machine, there is also a bit of reading. Here are some suggestions for the coming weeks. Hacking Forbidden Who hasn't heard of "pirates", cybervandals? Nobody. At least, nobody who surfs the Web. Just think of all the spam, the thousands of viruses and the vicious attacks of all kinds. If you want to know the techniques that these pirates and evildoers use and have the means to counter them, you should get your hands on the volume Hacking Forbidden. It will even allow you to do some exercises on your computer to check the security, but also to beat the hackers at their own game. Interesting, but for the exercises, it is better not to be a computer neophyte. Gomes Urbina, Author Alexandro; Publisher: Micro Application; 816 Pages; Suggested Price: $35 Digital Photography Before going on vacation, you may have bought a digital camera. This fourth edition of the title Digital Photography could well provide you with useful tips for taking better photos and for processing them properly with your computer. The book, very well illustrated, covers the main tips, pitfalls and solutions to use with a digital camera. It also talks about software and the possibilities of modifying an image to make it more interesting. To put in the hands of any budding photographer. By authors, Collective; Publisher: First Interactive - Poche Visuel; 396 Pages; Suggested Price: $25 Dark net - Hollywood's war against the digital generation This book will appear on shelves in August. It is a long analysis of the stakes of the media in the historic turning point of the digital era, of mass diffusion, but also of personal interventions in blogs that are changing the role of traditional media. We are in a battlefield where the technological advent is confronted with the established order and its immobility. The stakes are high between piracy and legal copying, between data exchange (P2P), free software and the holy of holies copyright. A very interesting portrait of what is happening and could happen in the digital age. D Lasica, Author J; Publisher: M 2 (Métamorphose Du Xxie Siècle); 316 Pages; Suggested Price: $30 In a few clicks In this low-cost collection ($15) from the publisher Micro Application, you will discover a series of useful titles for using your computer and certain software. Each 160-page booklet includes a disk that contains either free software, shareware or freeware, or even projects to carry out related to your reading. Here are a few titles: OpenOffice.org 2, Windows XP, Music and MP3, Troubleshooting and Optimizing Your PC, Your Word 2003 Documents. NOTE: This column will be on hiatus for the next few weeks. Back on Monday, September 11. ytherrien@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1491

Yesterday's rustic, today's chic//The trendy picnic//The packet of crisps on the grass becomes a political act. In the series, yesterday's rustic becomes today's chic, the fashion for ecology restores its letters of nobility to gardening, hiking and all those activities that fill our little lungs with air that we would like to be pure. Thus the picnic, far from the image of Reiser's cong'pé munching on his sausage sandwich on his checkered tablecloth, which is becoming very fashionable again. Decoration stores offer delightful wicker baskets where ultra-design plastic plates are stored, Sagaform has developed a clever suitcase that transforms into a table, Starck has designed its line of disposable tableware and Ruinart has just launched a beautiful case to taste blanc de blanc according to the rules of the art. Once the accessories have been purchased, all that's left to do is click on the Pique-nique.info website, the first to indicate all the good places to unwrap your salad in style. And we haven't deprived ourselves of it in recent weeks! Because these lunches on the grass offer a new way to shake spoons: nearly 22,000 party-goers will have toasted their 46,270 glasses of rosé during the twelve garden parties organized in France by "fooding", these events that have become essential for a new, more modern, simpler art of living, which also allow for raising some funds for those who can't afford to pay the price and must make do with humanitarian associations. The strikers at the Desmazières group warehouse in Lesquin also chose this lovely way to protest against repeated layoffs and the supporters of undocumented immigrants organised a "solidarity picnic" in Strasbourg for Fatoumada, a Guinean mother of three, while Parinux, an association promoting Linux and free software, brought together its supporters in Paris for its two traditional summer picnics, in the name of freedom and culture for all. Getting out the packet of crisps on the green grass would almost become a political act and, since nearly 3 million people gathered for the "incredible picnic" in the year 2000, the organiser, VVM Evénements, wants to make it an event, entitled "The Republic is going to picnic on 14 July". Its goal: to bring together the 36,000 French municipalities of all persuasions around the idea of a large popular meeting based on exchange and sharing, in order to transcend parties and biases. The idea of Gad Weil, creator of the concept, is that "everyone will come with food and drink, planning an extra portion for those who cannot afford to bring something, and we will sit around a tablecloth decorated in blue, white and red, with the motto of France, the first verse of La Marseillaise and the first article of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen written on it." This year, a hundred cities participated in this first, from Paris to Ajaccio, to toast their inhabitants to the health of the Republic and show that we are well on our plate in this beautiful country that is France.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1492

Piracy. Your conscience says no, but your wallet says yes. What if you didn't have to choose? For Pierre Bouchard, IT consultant at DMR Conseil, free software combines the best of both worlds. Less expensive (or even free) than so-called "proprietary" software, such as the Microsoft Office suite, it is also legal. This software is part of a philosophy of knowledge sharing. It is the result of the work of a community of developers who pool their knowledge, as in the case of the Linux operating system. Since free software does not belong to anyone, it can therefore be copied and even modified by users. "For basic functions, open source software is more than enough," believes Mr. Bouchard. He adds, however, that you need to have some computer knowledge and know how to navigate the Internet. But you don't need to be a genius. One small problem: sometimes some programs are not compatible. And what about security? These software programs would be as secure, if not more secure, than the most widely used proprietary software (under Windows), Mr. Bouchard suggests. Why? Precisely because they are less popular: those who create viruses seek to infect as many users as possible. For more information: www. opensource.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1493

The day he received $575 million from the sale of his company, he immediately spent about twenty of it to go into space aboard a Soyuz with the Russian Yuri Gidzenko and the Italian Roberto Vittori. Two short trips around the Earth and then to the International Space Station (ISS). That was in 2002. South African Mark Shuttleworth, 28 at the time, became the second space tourist, after the American Dennis Tito. Although the word tourist triggered protests in him, followed by multiple anecdotes about his months of training in Star City, Moscow, the centrifuges, the abuse of the doctors who had "taken care of Gagarin"... He says: "It was really hard. One morning, I arrived after a sleepless night spent drinking. The nurse yelled at me and gave me a beating." Today, Shuttleworth is 32 years old and has short hair, wears a T-shirt and a Brazilian bracelet, but he certainly does not want to be seen as a young, super-rich wanker. He bombards his interlocutor with the words "challenge", "will", "effort" and "boundaries". A multimillionaire from the barge years of the new economy before heading for the stars, he is now piloting the design of a version of the free software Linux, called Ubuntu, a Bantu word evoking humanity and sharing. From a micro-office apartment in London, he employs 55 people in 17 countries and has invested a wheelbarrow of millions. With the idea not of inflating an already overflowing bank account, but of realizing a "dream": good software distributed free of charge throughout the world as a "common good". And a "reasonable" levy on the trade in services and aid to businesses to ensure the balance of the project. Shuttleworth does not skimp on maxims. In a serious tone, he says: "Opulence creates responsibility." He is reluctant to mention his only real outward sign of money: a private plane that he "had trouble using until [he] worked hard." And he conveniently calls on his parents, who "taught him the value of effort," to justify this side of his struggle to enjoy wealth. He was born in Welkom, a mining town in the heart of the goldfields of the Orange Free State in South Africa. His father is a surgeon, his mother a teacher. His childhood and adolescence were spent in a white suburb of Cape Town, with no politics at the family meal. It was on the rugby fields that Shuttleworth would experience the end of apartheid: enrolled in a private school where he encountered a few blacks from wealthy families, he would see it transform into an entrenched camp of whites, at the rate at which they fled the public schools that had become mixed. "Every year, we played rugby with the same schools, and the team colours changed," he says, recalling an "extraordinary" period. He avoided politics and devoted himself to his studies, without brilliance. In the family garage, he began to develop software for the security of transactions via the Internet. "Around the sewing machines, it was very comfortable. I had my mother's dishes and her love." Four years later, the American Verisign approached him and put up $575 million to take over the business. "A strange experience", in the middle of the Internet bubble, "which I never believed in". "I knew it was a unique moment", he says. Shuttleworth launched a foundation to help computerise schools in Africa. He opened a venture capital fund. Then this boy with the strangely predestined name ("worth the shuttle", in French) flew to Moscow, a few months after Dennis Tito, to find a return ticket to space. "I did three weeks of medical tests in old Russian military hospitals. It was horrible. But I put myself in a position to become an astronaut: if it meant spending hours in a dingy room, I would do it." He got his ticket to space for "an official price of 20 million" dollars. In Star City, he learned Russian, worked on flight techniques ("I had a real role to play"), and met Belgian astronaut Franck De Winne and future French minister Claudie Haigneré. He made friends with some of the astronauts, but was hostile to others who did not appreciate "this little 28-year-old shit who thinks he can do what [they] spent 20 years learning." Shuttleworth does not see this as a debate about privatizing space travel, but simply an opposition to "change." A term that punctuates his speech and that he uses as a synonym for the triumph of individual initiative and globalization, as others chant the word "reform" to evoke the disappearance of social protections. At the end of April 2002, in Baikonur (Kazakhstan), he discovers the half-collapsed buildings, 300 people crowded "haphazardly on the launch pad", this "immense" rocket. Takeoff. "It's violent, it's noisy. But you see the Earth through the window and you realize that it's real," he says. Two Earth orbits, and he floats in the cabin. Before joining the space station and three other exiles from the cosmos for eight days of scientific work. When he talks about his space fix, Shuttleworth changes his tone. He sits up in his chair, stops looking at his watch. Then lowers his voice at the end of the story: "Afterwards, I did nothing for several months. I had to get space out of my mind. Everyone defined me by this trip. It took me a while to wash away this experience that changed my view of the world." But not his bursts of pride, or even omnipotence. Shuttleworth defines himself as "fundamentally unmarriageable, because I can't devote myself to more than one thing at a time, and all my heroes have been terrible fathers." His pocket pantheon includes Mandela and Clinton, "for their exceptional leadership." He has just finished a biography of Atatürk, to understand "how people in charge behave in times of great change." Obsessed with destiny, he once found the ideas of Ayn Rand, an American theorist of radical individualism and the abolition of the State, "very seductive." In France, where the adjective "ultraliberal" is easily used, Rand could be described as overliberal. But Shuttleworth claims to have come back from it having "learned tolerance for people who don't want to change." He says he understood, especially while traveling across Africa for his foundation, that "a purely individualistic society is a very aggressive society." And now rejects this political philosophy that speaks "only of performance and excitement." And never of happiness. photo Michael Grieve Mark Shuttleworth in 5 dates September 1973: Born in Welkom (South Africa). 1995: Founds Thawte. 1999: Sells Thawte to Verisign for $575 million. April 25, 2002: Takes off for the ISS aboard a Soyuz. June 2006: Latest version of the free software Ubuntu.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1494

Life science companies Monsanto, Syngenta, Bayer, Pioneer, etc. have been saying for years that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) represent the next great scientific and technological revolution in agriculture and are the only effective and cheap way to feed the ever-expanding population of an ever-shrinking planet. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), starting with my own, The Foundation on Economic Trends, are presented as the "villains" in this agricultural drama: by opposing GMOs, these new Luddites would constantly hinder progress. Today, in a rather ironic reversal of the situation, the newest technologies are making genetic manipulation and transgenic crops appear as outdated techniques, obstacles to scientific progress. This new horizon of research is called "genomics," and the new biotechnology is called marker-assisted selection (MAS). It is a complex method that allows for the acceleration of traditional selective breeding. A growing number of researchers believe that this MAS, which has already been introduced on the market, will ultimately replace GMOs. Environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, which have long opposed GMO crops, have given cautious support to MAS technology. Rapidly increasing information about plant genomes allows scientists to identify the genetic determinants of interesting agronomic traits and the varieties that carry these genes. Instead of resorting to manipulation to transfer a gene between two unrelated species to increase yield, disease resistance, or nutritional capacity, scientists use marker-assisted selection to identify desired traits in other varieties (or in wild plants of the same family) before crossing them with commercial varieties to improve them. With MAS, reproduction remains within the same species, which, at the same time, greatly reduces the ecological or health risks associated with transgenic research. While MAS is emerging as a promising agricultural technology with enormous potential benefits, the limitations of transgenic technology are becoming increasingly apparent. Most transgenic crops introduced into the field meet only two objectives: insect resistance and herbicide tolerance. They often rely on the expression of a single gene: this is far from the great agricultural revolution that life science companies promised at the beginning of the GMO era. Of course, MAS researchers insist that much work remains to be done before we understand all the interactions between single genetic markers, complex genetic phenomena and environmental factors: all of which impact plant development and can produce interesting results in terms of yield or drought resistance. Enthusiasm must be accompanied by caution. MAS will only be of value if it is used as part of a broader agroecological approach. The introduction of new varieties must be integrated into a set of environmental, economic and social considerations: it is the set that will determine the "sustainability" of agriculture. The problem is that the continuation of GMOs risks contaminating existing plant varieties and making the use of MAS technology more difficult. A major study conducted in 2004 by the Union of Concerned Scientists showed that non-GMO crops of three of the major US crops - corn, soybeans and canola - have already been "largely contaminated" by other genetically modified varieties. "Cleaning up" these contaminated crops is likely to be as difficult and expensive as cleaning up computer software from viruses. Over the next decade, MAS technology will become increasingly cheaper and easier to use; knowledge of genomics will become more widespread. Plant breeders around the world will be able to share more and more information and democratize the technology. Already they are talking about open-source genomics: they envision sharing genes in the same way that Linux and other information technology companies share software. The battle between a young generation of sustainable agriculture enthusiasts willing to share their genetic information and entrenched scientists determined to maintain control over the world's seed stock through patent protection will be tough, especially in the developing world. In this battle, marker-assisted breeding, if used wisely, may be the technology that comes at the right time. Jeremy Rifkin, economist, president of the Foundation on Economic Trends in Washington, DC. Author of The End of Work (1996) and The Biotech Century (1998).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1495

By shelving the theme of the "social divide" to replace it with the more high-tech one of the "digital divide", Chirac's hobby horse since 2002, the government is allowing itself the luxury of some nice announcements. We remember the "student micro-portable" scheme launched by the Raffarin government. The slogan "a computer for the price of a coffee a day" had hit the mark. And produced some results (see below). Now, for the relaunch, Dominique de Villepin, who will emerge from his hood, at the beginning of 2007, a computer, a high-speed Internet connection and hours of training, all for one euro a day for three years. Offer reserved for families on low incomes, whose loans will be guaranteed by the State. Only the broad outlines of this formula were revealed at an interministerial committee for the information society on Tuesday. Is this offer worth the cost? One euro per day for three years, the calculation is quick: households attracted by the formula will borrow 1,095 euros from partner banks. Knowing that the Internet connection will not exceed 15 euros per month (540 euros in total), the computer alone (plus the training pack) will therefore cost 545 euros. Much cheaper than in stores? Bernard Lang, one of the founders of the French-speaking Association of Free Software Users (Aful), is skeptical: "You can find perfectly acceptable computers for 400 euros." Already in 2004, when the laptop for 1 euro per day for students was launched, Aful estimated that "the State had obtained nothing significant from computer manufacturers." "These are roughly market prices," adds Michel Briand, president of Créatif, an association that campaigns for the dissemination of new technologies to local authorities. I cannot understand why free software solutions are not promoted, when these tools work extremely well and often for a low price." The costs of an operating system represent between 20 and 30% of the total price of a computer. Michel Briand nevertheless acknowledges that the formula proposed by the government can be considered "practical". This is indeed the hobby horse of the Internet Usage Delegation (DUI), which is piloting the operation. "We decided to offer new, entry-level equipment, not low-end," assures Benoît Fillard, its director. "We did not seek to lower prices as much as possible, but to find the best quality/price ratio." He also assures that "putting manufacturers in competition should make it possible to offer prices 15 to 20% lower than those on the market." Will this offer reach families with the lowest incomes? The income ceiling for eligible families has not been set. The criteria selected could correspond to those of the social electricity tariff (annual resources less than 5,520 euros). The formula would then concern between 1 and 1.5 million people. Today, according to the Research Center for the Study and Observation of Living Conditions (Credoc), one in two households does not have a computer and less than 40%, or 25 million French people, are connected to the Internet at home. "Hardware access to a computer is very important because studies show that price remains the main factor blocking purchase," notes Régis Bigaud, researcher at Credoc, before adding: "A euro per day is still super expensive, not everyone can afford it, despite the spread of the expense over time." Benoît Fillard then dots the "i's". "We thought about using recycled or second-hand computers, but that made it look like a poor man's computer. So, it's true, our offer will not be accessible to everyone. We are not forcing anyone to buy a computer, but we are offering a solution for those who are willing to make the effort; because it is an effort." Is individual access to the Internet the best way to reduce the digital divide? "We need to go beyond cost reduction and develop collective solutions," says Michel Briand. Like these social housing tenants in Moulins (Allier), who have been connected since 2003 via their television thanks to the work of the social housing office. "There is a need for local work to support people who are furthest removed from computers, that is, from writing. Support through a hotline is necessary but not sufficient." Exactly, acknowledges the DUI, which insists on the training and support that users will benefit from. Without specifying the terms and conditions. On the other hand, it disagrees with the idea of collective solutions. "Look at digital public spaces: there are nearly 3,000 of them, where the Internet is freely accessible, but they only reach 3 to 5% of the population. We also defend collective solutions, but they are not the most suitable for allowing mass access to new technologies." Benoît Fillard, who defends his projects tooth and nail, knows that he does not always convince: "Our proposals will get everyone moving, including those who are against them. It will tease them and push them to make alternative proposals."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1496

The "micro-student laptop" offer, launched with great publicity in September 2004, was "not far from being a scam", complains Bernard Lang, co-founder of Aful, who criticizes the prices being too high and the absence of free software, some of which is free. "The prices obtained by the State were 15 to 20% lower than those on the market", retorts the delegation for Internet usage (DUI). The aim of the operation was not to provide entry-level prices but to encourage the purchase of a laptop with "good value for money". A successful bet, according to the DUI. In total, 500,000 to 550,000 laptops were purchased thanks to the scheme (out of a total of 2.5 million students) and nearly a third of students are equipped with a laptop (compared to 8% in 2004). It should also be remembered that the loan (30 euros per month to be repaid) was only taken out by 20 to 25% of buyers. These figures prove both the student union UNEF right, which denounces a "publicity stunt", and the government right, which wanted students to equip themselves (by relying on the "student micro-portable" label) without dipping too much into the National Education budget. For 2005-2006, the forecast budget was 5.1 million euros, of which 1 million was provided by the ministry. In 2004-2005, the State paid 1.7 million euros for the equipment of WiFi terminals at places of study, universities 4 million. There are 5,000 of them, which allow free connection.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1497

A very violent diatribe against free software and its economy appeared here recently (Libération, July 5, 2006). Its author, through his deliberate clumsiness and bias, has discredited himself. It is therefore not necessarily necessary to respond point by point to this attack. However, it seems interesting to re-establish some truths about the formidable dynamics of the free software market, its importance for France and Europe, and to study the procrastination of these lobbies that do not even have the courage of their opinions and prefer to advance in disguise. In the great global economic competition, one of the last sectors where France can still play a leading role is that of the knowledge economy. Everyone agrees on this point. However, we have lost, against the United States and the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China), most of the technological and economic battles in this sector. The only area where France still has a chance of maintaining a leadership position is that of free software. Maintain, because, until now, France has been able to develop know-how and a free software industry that makes it a serious contender for the role of leader in this area. But this state of grace is disappearing. The current government is no longer playing its role, and strategic choices in administrations are being called into question by increasingly well-organized lobbies. Furthermore, and as if by chance, certain public positions are raising awareness among decision-makers and the general public, as we suspect was the case for this column, which aimed to attack the free software economy. The most important thing for "them" is not to tell the truth; the most important thing is to maintain their monopoly situation. It is only in Europe, and particularly in France, that questions still remain about the reality of a free software economy. The great movement of development of its industry is happening elsewhere, and in particular (once again) in the United States. There, they have understood that the new battle that is beginning is that of the free market. In a very pragmatic way, the public sector supports the research and development effort, the major players in IT and electronics invest in the free communities, start-ups become global players (Red Hat), while the order givers choose these solutions. All those who call for innovation and value creation should meditate on the example of the company Jboss which, in less than four years, has established itself as one of the leaders in application servers alongside giants like IBM and which has just sold itself for 420 million dollars, almost 20 times its turnover. It has been a long time since we have seen such high valuation levels. This example is not an isolated case. In Silicon Valley, over the last twenty-four months, 500 million euros have been raised by less than 50 companies. American investors, for their part, have long understood that there is no myth about free software being free and that it is simply the market of the future. So why on earth do we still have to fight in France to make people understand that free software carries the growth of tomorrow? Even Microsoft recently started doing open source, or at least financing it... In the United States, they don't hide it, but I have never heard one of their representatives say it publicly in France... They could have said it at "Paris, capital of free software", which was held on June 26th. They had been invited. They preferred to decline the invitation, to avoid the debate. What a shame! Most of the software industry joined in this event. In addition to the trade union, Syntec, representing all service providers and publishers, the big names in IT (Cap Gemini, Steria, Thales, Bull, Oracle, IBM, Sun, etc.) and the free software players in France had all met to think together about the economic, industrial and political issues of free software. It was very far from a gathering of "libertarian" players. On the contrary, we talked about the market, growth, innovation, jobs. These are perhaps the subjects that frightened the few players who "boycotted" this event. But, in this case, let's ask ourselves the right questions: who are those who have nothing to hide and who accept public debate, and who are those who advance in disguise and refuse to argue? Who should be listened to and heard by the public authorities? The major global publishers are now advancing behind so-called expert and independent front men or behind small associations and are trying to make people believe that France can still hope to see a new Microsoft emerge one day. We have only been waiting for twenty-five years... Let's be clear: the day we have new world leaders, they will necessarily be players in the free software sector. So, let's not wait five years to launch the "Quaero du libre" [a Franco-German multimedia project, editor's note]. We must create our "OpenSource Valley" and we must be one of the world leaders in this dynamic market which will represent, in 2009, 88 billion dollars, according to Gartner [a center for analysis of new technologies, editor's note], or more than 20% of the global market for licenses and services. Freedom in computing is not just a concept or a philosophy. There is, alongside the phenomenon of free software, a market. From an economic point of view, free software therefore represents above all jobs, innovation and the creation of value. In less than five years, in France, this sector has created 10,000 jobs. At this rate, free software will represent more than 60,000 jobs in France in 2010... If only we were allowed to do so! Alexandre Zapolsky, president of the Association of Free Software Service Companies, organizer of "Paris, Free Software Capital".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1498

A very violent diatribe against free software and its economy appeared here recently (Libération, July 5, 2006). Its author, through his deliberate clumsiness and bias, has discredited himself. It is therefore not necessarily necessary to respond point by point to this attack. However, it seems interesting to re-establish some truths about the formidable dynamics of the free software market, its importance for France and Europe, and to study the procrastination of these lobbies that do not even have the courage of their opinions and prefer to advance in disguise. In the great global economic competition, one of the last sectors where France can still play a leading role is that of the knowledge economy. Everyone agrees on this point. However, we have lost, against the United States and the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China), most of the technological and economic battles in this sector. The only area where France still has a chance of maintaining a leadership position is that of free software. Maintain, because, until now, France has been able to develop know-how and a free software industry that makes it a serious contender for the role of leader in this area. But this state of grace is disappearing. The current government is no longer playing its role, and strategic choices in administrations are being called into question by increasingly well-organized lobbies. Furthermore, and as if by chance, certain public positions are raising awareness among decision-makers and the general public, as we suspect was the case for this column, which aimed to attack the free software economy. The most important thing for "them" is not to tell the truth; the most important thing is to maintain their monopoly situation. It is only in Europe, and particularly in France, that questions still remain about the reality of a free software economy. The great movement of development of its industry is happening elsewhere, and in particular (once again) in the United States. There, they have understood that the new battle that is beginning is that of the free market. In a very pragmatic way, the public sector supports the research and development effort, the major players in IT and electronics invest in the free communities, start-ups become global players (Red Hat), while the order givers choose these solutions. All those who call for innovation and value creation should meditate on the example of the company Jboss which, in less than four years, has established itself as one of the leaders in application servers alongside giants like IBM and which has just sold itself for 420 million dollars, almost 20 times its turnover. It has been a long time since we have seen such high valuation levels. This example is not an isolated case. In Silicon Valley, over the last twenty-four months, 500 million euros have been raised by less than 50 companies. American investors, for their part, have long understood that there is no myth about free software being free and that it is simply the market of the future. So why on earth do we still have to fight in France to make people understand that free software carries the growth of tomorrow? Even Microsoft recently started doing open source, or at least financing it... In the United States, they don't hide it, but I have never heard one of their representatives say it publicly in France... They could have said it at "Paris, capital of free software", which was held on June 26th. They had been invited. They preferred to decline the invitation, to avoid the debate. What a shame! Most of the software industry joined in this event. In addition to the trade union, Syntec, representing all service providers and publishers, the big names in IT (Cap Gemini, Steria, Thales, Bull, Oracle, IBM, Sun, etc.) and the free software players in France had all met to think together about the economic, industrial and political issues of free software. It was very far from a gathering of "libertarian" players. On the contrary, we talked about the market, growth, innovation, jobs. These are perhaps the subjects that frightened the few players who "boycotted" this event. But, in this case, let's ask ourselves the right questions: who are those who have nothing to hide and who accept public debate, and who are those who advance in disguise and refuse to argue? Who should be listened to and heard by the public authorities? The major global publishers are now advancing behind so-called expert and independent front men or behind small associations and are trying to make people believe that France can still hope to see a new Microsoft emerge one day. We have only been waiting for twenty-five years... Let's be clear: the day we have new world leaders, they will necessarily be players in the free software sector. So, let's not wait five years to launch the "Quaero du libre" [a Franco-German multimedia project, editor's note]. We must create our "OpenSource Valley" and we must be one of the world leaders in this dynamic market which will represent, in 2009, 88 billion dollars, according to Gartner [a center for analysis of new technologies, editor's note], or more than 20% of the global market for licenses and services. Freedom in computing is not just a concept or a philosophy. There is, alongside the phenomenon of free software, a market. From an economic point of view, free software therefore represents above all jobs, innovation and the creation of value. In less than five years, in France, this sector has created 10,000 jobs. At this rate, free software will represent more than 60,000 jobs in France in 2010... If only we were allowed to do so! Alexandre Zapolsky, president of the Association of Free Software Service Companies, organizer of "Paris, Free Software Capital".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1499

I would like to point out that Bill Gates' intention through his charity is not obscure: it is the result of a desire to disseminate Microsoft software. The Gates Foundation's "education promotion" consists of giving away computers that will only accept Microsoft hardware. The capitalist logic of expansion, profit and competition did not disappear following a speech by members of the business class. For the record, an African country had to replace computers using free software installed by a locally established community organization in order to make room for Microsoft computers. "Partnerships with governments" and the like then look more like a collusion of interests. It seems to me somewhat utopian to blindly praise a large private entrepreneur who is also known for his use of unfair competitive tactics. Making countries that are bled dry (the West also bears some responsibility for this situation) even more dependent on the North does not constitute "philanthro-capitalism." For Western capitalists, it is simply a matter of taking advantage of the North's comparative advantage and opening up the markets of the South to the information society economy by developing only infrastructure while refusing to open the file on the asymmetry of information flows, which have stagnated since the defunct NOMIC project put forward at the UN by the non-aligned countries during the Cold War. Nancy Turgeon: Political science student at UQAM, Montreal, July 6, 2006

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1500

On June 26, the Paris City Hall hosted the "Paris Capitale du Libre" event. Thus, the libertarian myth of open source software, improperly called "free", now aims, beyond expert circles, to win the hearts of the general public. Riding the fashionable theme of community freeware, it sends a message to everyone: IT should not be inserted into the economy, it is one more freedom and nothing else. This discourse is a bad blow to access to IT for the greatest number, a dangerous misinterpretation for the European and French software industry, a real incentive to relocate IT services outside Europe. The opening of computer codes can be useful for research, and community work can sometimes contribute to certain technological progress; but can we sustainably ignore economic issues and in particular put ourselves on the sidelines of intellectual property law? Is there really a future for a "libertarian altercomputing" where creative work would be free? Is freedom reduced to free? The principle of intellectual property is one of the foundations of our democracies and our economies, which must be guaranteed and protected. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen solemnly recall this. Calling this principle into question is suicidal in a context of increased global competition. However, the words of R. Stallman, the self-proclaimed pope of free software, are edifying in this respect: "Proprietary software is immoral and must not exist..." To the question: "How can companies developing free software make a living from their programs?" He even made the following historic statement: "This question does not interest me, I am against the market society..." If Europe and France want to have a software industry, which generates the income and jobs of tomorrow, it is necessary, on the contrary, to strengthen its foundations and allow the development of production capacities for these new "works of the mind". A programmer who invents solutions has the right to be remunerated accordingly by the marketing of his invention. He is not obliged to share them. It is therefore urgent to protect the works of the mind that are software, in France and in Europe. The commercial reality of the "open source software" industry is simple: instead of predictable software equipment expenditure, allowing the controlled depreciation of major investments, it shifts the expenditure to the services necessary for the "tinkering" of "open source" software. Experience shows that these expenses give rise to multiple extensions, since the fruit of this work is not "stabilized", and does not fit into a normal economic relationship that guarantees its legal and operational security. This is how the French Ministry of Finance has just proudly signed the largest contract in the world for IT maintenance on open source software, for an amount of 39 million euros. Which makes this "free software" the most expensive software in history! Let's pass it on to Parliament and the Court of Auditors who will assess, over time, the relevance of the experience. "Free" software is therefore not really free. Driven by IT service multinationals, large consumers of maintenance and development credits, "open source" is now targeting public administrations, very convenient cash cows in a sector where competition is fierce. It would be naive for administrations to think that they are gaining independence from software publishers when they are much more dependent on service companies. From one dependency to the other, everyone will choose. But preferring the solution that hinders the development of a genuine European software industry is very unwise. Prioritising service over creation is like choosing to build petrol stations and ignoring the automobile industry. Preferring services also means encouraging offshoring. Software creation activity is based on research and can therefore be more "fixed" to a territory. IT services activity can be carried out anywhere, especially where labour is less expensive. IBM, for example, announced in July 2005 that it was hiring 14,000 people in India at the same time as its European social plans. But it has no similar project on the software publishing side because "moving software design factories is very difficult". Furthermore, computer security has become a considerable issue in our societies. We need well-defined, known, guaranteed products that engage the responsibility of stable economic players. We owe citizens the security of exchanges on the Internet. This requires increasingly sophisticated processes, which are very expensive, and can only be financed by real publishers who then know how to market them for the benefit of the greatest number. The real challenge to be met is that of the widest possible diffusion of IT in our economy to increase its competitiveness and performance. In particular, in small and medium-sized businesses. Under these conditions, promoting software that is free only in name is a bad economic action. No intellectual work is free and all work deserves a salary. Let us not let ourselves be carried away by the ultra-libertarian fashion in areas as strategic as the software industry. This would mean sacrificing the knowledge economy for the sake of a supposed freedom that risks the death of our industries of the future. Behind the illusions, the reality would be much less beautiful. Jean-Dominique Giuliani, president of the Robert Schuman Foundation, member of the Internet Advisory Board. Latest published work: l'Elargissement de l'Europe, PUF 2005.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1501

A penguin storming the Stock Exchange, quite a symbol. It was indeed a giant version of the mascot of Linux, the famous free operating system, that welcomed visitors last Monday at the Palais Brongniart for "Paris, capital of free software". This meeting attempted for the first time to unite the major players in free software. Unlike classic commercial software (known as "proprietary"), the latter are not only free, but also usable and modifiable at will. And a happy consequence: these software programs have even created several hundred jobs. Despite their non-commercial aspect, these software programs have been developing for about ten years. What was originally just a hobby for passionate computer scientists has become a fully-fledged economic sector and now represents nearly 2% of the software and services market in France. "We are finally beginning to understand that our only chance of establishing our leadership position in the information technology sector is through the development of a strong free software industry in France and Europe," emphasizes Alexandre Zapolsky. The president of the Association of Free Software Service Companies is campaigning to make the Ile-de-France region the scientific, academic and economic hub of this sector. In order to remind people that the sector is dynamic, the big names in IT (Steria, Thales, HP, etc.) presented their offers in terms of free software. A job space managed by the Parisian ICT professionals association, Silicon Sentier, and by the ANPE offered 300 job offers. Not bad for a start. Moreover, the ANPE, which has just set up an agency specializing in IT (85, avenue Philippe-Auguste, Paris XIe) intends to take a closer look at free software. But these products are not reserved for scientists and those with a 12-year degree. A cyberbus installed by the RATP in front of the Palais de la Bourse allowed the general public to discover the most common applications. This was an opportunity for some visitors to test their skills and attract the attention of future recruiters to the rapidly developing niche of IT assistance.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1502

STRASBOURG CORRESPONDENT - Microsoft, the software giant, will offer its Office 2007 office suite in around a hundred languages around the world next year. But one of the versions marketed will be completely new: it will be bilingual, in French and Alsatian. An agreement was signed on Thursday, June 29, in Strasbourg between Microsoft France and the Alsace regional council to develop this pilot project. It will be a "world first," explains Eric Boustouller, president of Microsoft France. This is the first time that his company has translated software into a minority or regional language. Alsatian was chosen because of the high number of speakers: 60% of Alsatians declare themselves to be dialect speakers and 35% of them regularly speak Alsatian, according to figures from the Office for the Language and Culture of Alsace (OLCA), a regional tool and partner in the operation. To adapt Word, Excel, Outlook, etc., into Alsatian, a Benedictine task would have to involve linguists and computer scientists. The Institute of Dialectology of the Marc-Bloch University (Strasbourg-2) was asked to translate the 50,000 or so words or short sentences in the Office suite. Its former director, Raymond Matzen, has already prepared the ground: he has drawn up a basic lexicon of 2,500 words, not hesitating to invent neologisms when necessary. Thus the browser will be the Webschnüffler ("Web sniffer"), while the keyboard could be called Täschtbrett ("touch pad"). For the Alsace Regional Council, it is first and foremost a question of image: Alsatian, an Alemannic and Franconian dialect inherited from history, a language of the heart, of the land, of the family, can also be associated with modernity. It will thus be "a support language for new communication technologies", notes Adrien Zeller, president (UMP) of the region. The older ones, sometimes more comfortable in Alsatian than in French (and especially in English), will thus be able to try their hand at computers; the younger ones could discover that Alsatian is not so old-fashioned since even their computer speaks it. Alsatian, used in conversations in rural areas, is also present on private or public radio stations (France Bleu Alsace broadcasts dialect programs on its medium wave network), on television, and in columns in the daily press. It is used in the "regional language and culture" options of national education. It also allows, explain the linguists, a better acquisition of German, for which there is a whole network of joint bilingual classes in Alsace, starting in nursery school. The decline of Alsatian is likely to accelerate, however: surveys show that its transmission from one generation to the next is increasingly weak. Only 15.5% of dialect-speaking couples speak Alsatian to their children. The OLCA has tried to raise awareness among young couples about the importance of not depriving their child of Alsatian through a campaign of small bilingual books and "Bébé à bord/Kind an Bord" stickers for their car. Microsoft Office in Alsatian should be available in the second half of 2007. It will be available to download in addition to a version of the year in another language or to be found on CD-ROMs that the OLCA will distribute. Other versions in regional languages are under consideration, Mr. Boustouller said, for example for Catalan. The reactions in Alsace are rather positive. Singer Roger Siffer, a pillar of Alsatian song and cabaret, applauds, noting that linguistic kinship should also interest the Swiss and the Baden, with their very similar dialects. But on Internet forums, discussions are heated: is the Microsoft "steamroller" the best ally of regional and minority languages? Jean-François Wollbrett, president of the Junge fers Elsassische association, which organizes Alsatian courses and Stammtisch ("regulars' table") in dialect, adds that beyond this initiative "we should also think about translating free software."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1503

Seen through the prism of Hollywood or the media, the hacker is this gifted programmer who, in less than thirty seconds, can break into the best-protected computer system, or who, from his laptop, remotely infiltrates enemy systems. In turn, hero or cybercriminal. A reductive vision that has little to do with "hacker culture". The Multimedia Institute of Zagreb explores it in depth and takes a sharp look at its roots, its fields of action, its specificity, its subversive force, with the exhibition "System.hack()", which was held in a hotel room in the Croatian capital in mid-June. The project continues in a book and online with a selection of hacks put into perspective in fascinating essays. Internet users are invited to complete the database with their favorite hack. "A moment of excellence in programming is called a hack. A perfect hack is surprising, mediagenic, innovative in the use of technology, funny, and non-violent. "System.hack()" is any hack that opens a closed system or energizes an open system," the curators write. The hacker figure became popular with the development of computers and the Internet, but this culture has older roots. The curators chose to open their selection with the edifying radio hoax of October 30, 1938. On the eve of Halloween (and World War II), Orson Welles threw CBS into disarray with his adaptation of H.G. Wells' novel The War of the Worlds (1). He reported live on the invasion of Earth by Martians, using fake news bulletins and reports, triggering a wave of panic among listeners. This larger-than-life simulation shook blind trust in broadcasting and insinuated a doubt about the credibility of the media that persists more than ever. At the time of the telephone, they were not yet called hackers but phreakers, from phone-freaks, these people who studied, experimented with or even exploited the flaws in the systems used by telephone companies, like Captain Crunch, alias John Draper. In the 60s, he had found a way to crack complex telephone relay systems using a plastic whistle, a toy distributed in Captain Crunch cereal boxes. The modified whistle made it possible to reproduce the 2,600 hertz tone necessary to authorize a call and make free phone calls. This earned him a short stay in prison, where he quickly divulged his technique to other prisoners, training hundreds of phreakers. "Throwing me in prison was their biggest mistake. I did more harm to the telephone companies by being behind bars than if they had not incarcerated me," he joked in an interview (2). Contrary to the Hollywood cliché, hacker culture is not that of a lone hero. It is much closer to a "harmonious ecosystem", according to the expression of the programmer Marcell Mars, where each new organism brings its stone, collaborates and shares the results of its research. Like the movement for free software, launched twenty-five years ago by the guru Richard Stallman, today president of the FreeSoftwareFoundation (see Ecrans of June 24), and which campaigns for programs that can be copied without limit, whose source code is accessible and modifiable, unlike proprietary software, such as Microsoft. The more the restrictions imposed by the giants of IT, music or cinema increase, the more hackers make a point of honor to circumvent them. To support his project, Richard Stallman invented a legal tool, the general public license, which precisely defines that one can freely copy and modify a program at will. The issue of the free circulation of information goes far beyond the circle of IT. Transposed into the field of life and biotechnologies, the hacker's response to the uncontrolled development of GMOs is called "biological civil disobedience" or "cultural terrorism". The activist artist Heath Bunting has imagined the SuperWeed Kit 1.0, a kit distributed on the Internet to produce a genetically modified weed, resistant to pesticides. He invites guerrilla gardeners to spread this mutant weed in order to counter the GMO seeds of the giants of the sector, even if it means destroying all other species, including organic ones, in the process. A weapon of mass deterrence, symbolic above all, to force Monsanto and its ilk to take into account a public opinion hostile to this proliferation. (1) www.archive.org/details/WAROFTHEWORLDS2 (2) www.barbalet.net/crunch

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1504

A huge mess with an aborted start to the legalization of downloading, a majority in turmoil, turmoil all the way to the United States where the American manufacturer Apple is brandishing the threat of abandoning the French online music market... More than six months after the start of its examination, the highly controversial bill on copyright, or DADVSI (Copyright and related rights in the information society), was definitively adopted yesterday by Parliament. A late transposition of a European Union directive, the DADVSI creates a new system of fines for Internet users who illegally download files and legalizes the embedding of MTP (technical protection measures) on digital files that organize and limit copying. Unsurprisingly, only the UMP voted for the text and still not unanimously since some of its members, supporters of the global license like Alain Suguenot or Christine Boutin or of greater protection of free software, voted against. The UDF also voted against, as did the PS, the PCF and the Greens. The president of the UDF, François Bayrou, denounced a text that "seriously" lacked the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, while the socialist Patrick Bloche castigated a "shaky, anachronistic, unintelligible text, unsuited to technological developments". An assessment that is the polar opposite of that of the Minister of Culture, Donnedieu de Vabres, according to whom the text "guarantees respect for copyright, interoperability and the right to private copying". If the principle of interoperability (the right to play downloaded music on the portable player of one's choice) is set in stone in the law, it is framed by an independent administrative authority that can only be seized by professionals and not by users. A step backwards to be put down to the Senate since the project adopted by the National Assembly required the implementation of interoperability under judicial supervision. In other words, as with the private copying puzzle, the parliamentary majority is referring to yet another authority, the 35th of its kind in France, to force Apple to open its format to all consumers and not just those equipped with their iPod. The text will still have to be validated by the Constitutional Council following its referral announced by the opposition. And specified by decrees whose content will determine the more or less repressive nature of the sanctions. The more or less systematic and massive application of fines (from 38,000 to 300,000 euros) will reflect, according to music professionals who support the law, the will or not of the public authorities to opt for a "truly dissuasive" policy.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1505

For twenty-three years, Richard Stallman has been on a mission for free software, programs that can be copied and whose source code is accessible and modifiable, unlike proprietary software such as Microsoft's. The president of the FreeSoftwareFoundation (1), 53, was in Paris to demonstrate against DRM (usage control device) and the draft law on copyright (DADVSI). DRM (2) are digital locks grafted onto works sold online or onto certain CDs and DVDs in order to limit their copying and use. He went to Matignon on June 9 with the list of 165,000 signatories of the Eucd.info petition (3) demanding the withdrawal of DADVSI, in order to alert the Prime Minister of the danger it poses to users of free software. In vain. The FreeSoftwareFoundation launched its anti-DRM campaign, "DefectiveByDesign.org" (4) in Seattle in mid-May. Why are you hostile to these technologies? They challenge public control over technology. Major film, music, and computer companies like Sony, Disney, and Microsoft want to put restrictions on machines. They plan to build computers that are no longer universal machines, so that certain tasks can no longer be performed by any program, including a so-called free program. I call this "treacherous computing." For example, making a website work only with a specific browser. If you use another one, the site could refuse to communicate with your machine. Another system, proposed by Microsoft under the name Palladium, is a program that allows you to "seal" a file so that the content cannot be read by any other alternative program. There will be no more competition because there will be no more "interoperability". Hollywood and the music factories plan to use treacherous computing for DRM, so that downloaded videos and music can only be played on a given computer, making file sharing impossible. This is not a technological advance but a technical step backward that they want to impose, a world where every piece of information will be completely under their control, where permission will have to be asked each time. But programmers have always known how to get around these restrictions? Before, there were no laws that prohibited it, P2P programs are not illegal. You could bypass the protections of a DVD. But Blue Ray and its rival HD DVD, two new generation formats to replace the DVD, will be completely locked down. Why do you think we should mobilize for free software? All freedoms depend on computer freedom, it is not more important than other fundamental freedoms but, as the practices of life shift to the computer, we will need it to maintain other freedoms. Taking advantage of the weakness of contemporary democracy, large companies are taking control of the State, they are the ones who control the laws, not the citizens. It started with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act in the United States, then they imposed European directives in their interest. Do you think that, like software, art should be free? Free software is defined by four essential freedoms: to use the program, to study the code and change it, to redistribute copies, to improve the program and to publish its improvements. All works for a practical purpose must be free. However, in computing, a proprietary word processing program can be replaced by a free program, this is not the case for art, which is not interchangeable. But the essential freedom of non-commercial sharing of exact copies via the Net extends to all published works, including artistic ones. P2P must be legal, the vast majority of artists earn nothing from the copyright system, only an elite fill their pockets. And they are the ones that the music factories hold up as examples. These factories pay 4% of their income to musicians: few artists earn much and all the rest earn very little, it is a completely unfair system. I propose a global license that I have detailed on www.gnu.org/philosophy.html. The idea is to establish a tax on blank CDs, and equivalents. All the money would go to the artists and composers, redistributed according to the popularity of the artists measured by survey. It is the public who decides. (1) http://fsf.org (2) http://stopdrm.info (3) http://eucd.info (4) www.defectivebydesign.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1506

6: Flash news from all screens The explosive Diet Coke-Mentos duo, the JFK archives soon on the Web, the 118 218 operators who are taking up the "tou tou you tou"... 8: The look of... charlie white The American photographer slips a strange mutant into everyday scenes. Reality or fiction? 10: TV moments Recipes for a successful summer saga The scenario of the soap operas of summer 2006? Hidden loves, family revenge, supernatural forces... Be careful, 2007 may be even more intense. 12: At the controls Rainbow rap The portrait of D' de Kabal, the author of the first gay hip-hop clip on the Net. And also Mohamed Hamidi, the editor-in-chief of the Bondy Blog. 14: Uses and users These "little games" that the industry covets Let's start by relaxing. Then we spend hours on a computer or on our mobile. Tetris or Minesweeper are "casual games" par excellence, a market that should explode. 16: the JT Screen File: the formatting factory In France as in the United States, the new news presenters no longer look like their elders. Young, smooth and sanitized, they are the first victims of political correctness and the reign of the image. 22: the Netoscope day after day The latest news of the week's online releases and the sites to visit. 25: the Current TV Guide, the TV for viewers And also the video game that stimulates the neurons, Italian thrillers from the 70s, a report on the filming of a "Concert sauvage" by France 4, artists who hijack Google Earth... 42 Practical How to equip yourself with a Wi-Fi network at home Tips and tricks for watching a film on your computer or sending emails from your sofa without getting tangled up in wires. And also the plasma TV test bench. 46: Tribune richardstallman The president of the FreeSoftwareFoundation explains why he fights for free software and against any control by the industrialists of new technologies.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1507

SOME TEXTS of law are painfully introduced. The one relating to copyright and related rights in the information society (DAVDSI), which transposes a European directive from 2001 into French law, is a good example. The joint committee (CMP), which brought together, on Thursday morning, June 22, seven senators and seven deputies from the majority and the opposition, reached a compromise in a highly charged atmosphere. Highly controversial, this bill, voted on under emergency procedure (i.e. with only one reading, instead of the usual two, in the National Assembly and then in the Senate) had been considerably modified by both chambers. Since Christmas 2005, heated debates have divided all the parties and put professionals from the music, cinema and Internet sectors in a frenzy. Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, Minister of Culture and Communication, had publicly committed to proceeding with a second reading if the provisions adopted by the deputies and senators were very different. The PS parliamentarians of the CMP, Patrick Bloche, Christian Paul and David Assouline, reminded him of this unfulfilled promise. They again asked the government to lift the emergency on this text, and were joined by Jean Dionis du Séjour (UDF). In a very exceptional event, the opposition parliamentarians and their substitutes in the CMP considered that "the rights of Parliament were being flouted" and slammed the door of the meeting held at the Palais-Bourbon, "to protest against this sleight of hand and not to endorse a text adopted without debate, on the orders of the government". The two rapporteurs, Senator Michel Thiollière and MP Christian Vanneste, who had met the day before for a conciliation meeting, therefore continued the CMP in the morning. No fewer than fifty-five proposals for new wording of the articles were adopted. THORNY INTEROPERABILITY One of the most thorny points, the question of interoperability - the possibility of reading a work on the medium of one's choice - has been reworked once again. According to Jacques Valade, president of the Senate's culture committee, "this text guarantees the presence of small, free software players. Without going as far as some in the National Assembly wanted". It is thus clearly stated that "technical measures [intended to protect works] must not have the effect of preventing the effective implementation of interoperability". The idea of a group of mediators to resolve private copying conflicts has been abandoned in favor of a technical measures regulatory authority, desired by the Senate. This will ultimately include six members and will have the status of an independent administrative authority, with judicial and technical powers. Its scope of intervention is extended to interoperability. The CMP also reinstated an article from the National Assembly on the liability of software publishers, excluding from the penalization illegal downloads of "software intended for collaborative work [sic], research or the exchange of files or objects not subject to copyright remuneration". The architecture of the sanctions provided for in the event of illegal downloads was not, however, modified. This compromise text was only voted on by the UMP. The UDF abstained, even though some of its proposals were ratified. Refusing to sit in solidarity with the PS, the PCF and Green representatives did not participate in the vote. This text must still be the subject of final adoption on June 30 by Parliament.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1508

The text on "Copyright and related rights in the information society" (DADVSI), which is being considered by the joint committee this week, contains economic and strategic issues that go far beyond the simple remuneration of authors and performers in the segment of digitized works. Indeed, digitization, by dissociating the work from its physical medium, introduces a new intermediary into the relationship between artists and the public, the creator of digital encoding formats and software capable of producing and reading these formats, who thus finds himself in a position to control the flow of information. In collusion with the dominant publishers, and contrary to the interests of both artists and the public, this silently monopolistic position of technical control is already producing a number of perverse effects. This is the case with the "zoning" of DVDs: presented as a means of "fighting piracy", this mechanism makes it possible, in contravention of international trade laws, to prohibit, for example, the reading in Europe of a DVD purchased in the United States. This of course does not prevent piracy - re-burning a DVD is child's play - but it serves to artificially segment distinct markets in order to control prices. This is how Warner currently sells its DVDs in China for $1.50. Is this selling at a loss, or is it the price that could be paid everywhere else for works that have already been largely written off? Why is it also not possible to skip the advertising that appears at the beginning of each DVD? A trifle, or an insidious monopolization of available brain time? The irruption, not uncontrolled but rather too well controlled, of digital technology into our lives, can be very damaging, because for the first time, control of usage can be done even in the private sphere of individuals. This space of freedom, previously inviolable, is currently threatened, through individuals' Internet connections. Let's re-establish the truth: the purpose of the EUCD directive from which DADVSI comes is not the protection of artists, nor even the fight against illegal copies. The main provision of this text is to protect "technical protection measures" (TPM), software methods for encoding works, thereby creating a right over the means of transmitting information. This new form of industrial property has surprising characteristics: it does not require any innovation but just use in a system (the CSS algorithm for pseudo-protection of DVDs is a simple coding by exchange of symbols, as Julius Caesar did two thousand years ago), does not require any filing with an evaluation body such as a patent office, costs nothing and its duration is unlimited. In addition, it applies to algorithmic methods, while the European Parliament has rejected the patentability of software. The purpose of this right is to prevent anyone from creating software to decode a digital stream containing a work (which therefore even concerns word processing files) without the permission of the creator of the encoding algorithm. Subordinating the creators of reading software to the publishers and creators of the encoding format makes it possible to control the use that individuals will make of their digital equipment, as has already been done by Sony-BMG with its XCP system, which installed on the user's computer, without their knowledge and irreversibly, modified versions of the system components aimed at preventing certain behaviors deemed contrary to the rights of exploitation of the works. Even more serious, Sony's device regularly connected via the Internet to the publisher's site, which constitutes a very serious threat to the privacy and confidentiality of information systems due to the risk of malicious use of this connection. The current version of the DADVSI text, which subordinates the right to interoperability to the decisions of an independent administrative authority, does not provide protection against this. But above all, MTPs in the Internet era allow the rental of works: no one will have usable copies of their files, which will be stored in an encrypted "digital safe", an enclave of the publisher within individuals' computers, the publisher being able to revoke the licenses to use the files at any time via the Internet. While digital technology allows for the multiplication of access to culture, such systems would weaken it, putting works under the sword of Damocles of a hard drive failure, the disappearance of the publisher, or instantaneous digital auto-da-fés if the censorship of a particular work were decided. Is this really what artists want? And what would be the cost of access to works under such a monopoly of control? First of all, is it reasonable to charge 1 euro per title, when most of the distribution costs are covered by Internet users themselves, and artists only receive a few cents? While the text voted by the National Assembly preserved the independence of free software, the version heavily amended by the Senate allows, under the pretext of protecting artists, to prohibit the redistribution of source code, the keystone of the distributed creation of added value in the world of software, and to close the doors of administrations and companies to free software. What the current battles around the appropriation of intellectual and algorithmic methods, software patents and MTPs combined, illustrate is the emergence of interoperability as a fundamental principle of law in the digital age, as freedom of speech and association were in the past for the creation of a modern society, free from feudalism. The National Assembly had understood this, and this decision had been welcomed well beyond our borders. While the European Commission must re-examine the EUCD directive in October, let us not hastily sacrifice our cultural and technological independence. The price for artists, the Nation as a whole and culture would be very heavy to pay. \* Respectively MP (UMP) for Tarn and former Prime Minister.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1509

At first glance, the "pitch" of this newcomer with the perfectly incongruous name is most bizarre: Lulu.com intends to allow everyone to use the Internet to self-publish, as simply as creating a blog, and to give its letters of nobility to a genre that is at the very least mocked and decried, the self-published work. Two years after its launch across the Atlantic, the portal is arriving in France and the rest of Europe. Its Canadian founder, Bob Young, has the ambition to make it an "eBay of intellectual property", nothing less. In other words, a marketplace rich in several million references. And on which creators-sellers will be able to find an audience of readers-buyers interested in their thoughts on the dissection of ants in a desert environment or their "me, my life, my work". Ambitions. "France loves books and revolutions," says the boss of Lulu, a high-tech giant for having co-founded Red Hat, the number 1 in free software in the world, ironically, and our universal service allows publishing to be opened up to those who have not had access to it until now." Lulu.com does not intend to limit itself to books and already offers Internet users the possibility of publishing music, photos and videos and, tomorrow, software. On the site, everything is à la carte: the license, classic copyright or "copyleft" allowing copying under certain conditions, the format, electronic and/or paper, the price and the jacket, etc. "The author controls his publication terms from start to finish," explains Bob Young, "and our role is limited to providing him, for a fee of two cents per page, the tools to make himself known online, print and distribute." Lulu, which uses the latest Xerox printing technology, only prints each copy once the book has been ordered and paid for, zero inventory, and only charges an additional 20% commission on top of the low cost price, with the remaining 80% going to the author. In the end, the putative writer can get away with a handful of euros per copy. Picasso. The flexible and economical model (see below) allows Lulu to nurture legitimate ambitions in a market that Bob Young describes as "new and totally disconnected from traditional publishing." The site currently publishes 1,300 new books per week, twice as many as the top 10 American publishing groups, and has already released more than 55,000 books. Enough to predict a turnover of 15 to 20 million dollars in 2006 (5 million in 2005) and to affirm that the balance is already there. Far from dreaming of one day "self-publishing" the future JK Rowling, Bob Young is betting that his "service-tool" is destined to become an essential online commercial platform, where millions of increasingly dematerialized works will be able to find their micromarket, even if it is limited to a handful of units. "Sotheby's occasionally sells Picassos for a few tens of millions of dollars each and eBay sells tens of thousands of items every day that bring in tens of billions of dollars in revenue," explains the enthusiastic entrepreneur, "we want to make Lulu the place for exchanging intellectual property on a par with what eBay did for tangible goods."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1510

New York - Ray Ozzie, who only joined Microsoft in 2005, will replace Bill Gates as the world's leading innovation officer at the software giant, as its dominance of the computing world adapts to the Internet. Microsoft announced Thursday that founder Bill Gates will gradually step down from his operational leadership role by July 2008, while remaining chairman of the board. His title of chief software architect, the company's house name for the head of product development, will immediately go to Ozzie, who took over as CTO in spring 2005 when Microsoft acquired Groove Networks. Ozzie, 50, founded the company in 1997, which specialized in real-time remote work software. Yesterday, analysts said they were not very worried about this change of leadership, insisting on a succession plan that they considered well prepared by Bill Gates (who had already given up his CEO position in 2000 to Steve Ballmer) and on the very good reputation of Ray Ozzie. Before his young company Groove Networks, Ozzie had created in the 1980s the Lotus Notes professional messaging software (later developed by IBM), and he is considered one of the very best professional applications programmers in the world. "Ray Ozzie's promotion is a natural evolution and could have a positive impact on the long term," says Jason Maynard, of the bank Credit Suisse. "Bill Gates has been preparing this since Ray Ozzie was hired and we are only moderately concerned about the impact of the announcement," underlines Brent Thill, of Citigroup. But investors seem to be struggling to regain confidence after the setbacks linked in recent months to the sluggish launch of the Xbox 360 video game console and, above all, the delayed release of Windows Vista, Microsoft's new operating system. The group's shares have lost more than 20% of their value since the end of January. "Given the recent product delays and the decline in the stock, losing such a visionary [Bill Gates] could affect morale in the short term," adds Brent Thill, also noting that this change of leader is "emblematic of a transition in terms of business model." For Jason Maynard, the new chief software architect will have "the impressive task of evolving [Microsoft] from a model centered around the PC to a model focused on services" and software available online. In short, it is Ray Ozzie who will have to understand to what extent the behavior of the PC user has changed recently. The latter, pushed by Google's free offerings or the whole "open source" movement, is increasingly inclined to turn to the Internet for its computer applications. With regard to professional customers, adds the Credit Suisse analyst, Microsoft will also have to be more flexible and more responsive while competition is increasing from groups like Oracle, Salesforce.com and Red Hat, a major distributor of the free software Linux. "Even if we think that Microsoft has understood [this challenge of online services], the reality is that it is difficult to manage an organization of this magnitude rooted in many old practices," concludes Jason Maynard.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1511

On one side, laundry drying on a line. On the other, three young men in jeans and sneakers, absorbed in their screens. This small apartment in the 12th arrondissement of Paris could well be that of a gamer brought up on World of Warcraft or Counter-Strike. It is in fact the heart of one of the most innovative and promising companies on the Net: Podemus.com. As indicated by an audio presentation on their site, it is the "first French-speaking podcasting and videoblogging portal". Visited by more than 200,000 people per month, Podemus has become one of the French references. By the thousands, geeks, nerds or simple people have made it their main source of information, delighted to be able to choose à la carte and for free from these hundreds of audio or video programs. Podemus lists pretty much everything that is done in podcast, from the most serious (France Inter) to the most offbeat (for example, the hilarious Editions du Mutisme, the blog of a fan of Bollywood trash) (1). The apartment is that of Olivier Vignot. With Mayel de Borniol, they have been managing the site for nine months under the supervision of their manager, Bertrand Lenotre. Olivier is 22, Mayel, 21. The first is a project manager, the second takes care of programming and development. A duo whose origins go back to a shared passion, in adolescence, for the new territories of the Net, libertarian version. After graduating from the same school, ABC Formation, the two friends quickly understood the fabulous potential of open source and free software and set up their first company, Ablaze Productions (2). The idea for Podemus came from the duo's meeting with Bertrand Lenotre, the first Frenchman to start podcasting (3). "Thanks to the success of his podcast, Bertrand had some hosting problems," explains Olivier. "As we liked his show, we provided him with free disk space and bandwidth. He then had the idea of creating a site to list podcasts, to help people discover this new medium, and he offered to make it happen." Olivier had barely finished his explanation when Mayel interrupted him: "That's it, DSK has confirmed his interest." The former minister asked Podemus to help him create his podcast. He will join other Podemus clients, such as Karl Zéro, Omar and Fred, and the host Max (4)... Among their major partners, Mayel and Olivier cite LCI, Europe 1 and Radio France. However, to maintain their independence, they have refused investment offers from other major media outlets. And, rather than talking about business plans, they prefer to present their current podcast: Radiovni 83, a site for crazy ufologists (5). Soon, the apartment will resume its usual functions, and the company will move into real offices. The team has also hired a third person, Julien Millanvoye, former editor-in-chief of Blast magazine, also a geek in the SF, Star Wars and alter-globalization version. Finally, Podemus put online, on May 31, a new version of the site in Web 2.0. A small revolution that allows Internet users to create their own page in a few clicks. Supported by major investors, critically acclaimed on the Internet, this very polished version makes Podemus the "very first French-speaking agency for independent podcasters". Olivier likes this new role as a catalyst for free electrons. "This will allow talented amateurs to transform their passion for podcasts into a profession." Dare you? (1) pneuma.podemus.com (2) web.ablaze.fr (3) podcasteur.podemus.com (4) karlzero.podemus.com, omaretfred.podemus.com, maxpod.podemus.com (5) ovni83.podemus.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1512

THE ROAD is mapped out. Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft since 2000, already has the keys to the group. With Bill Gates, he will continue to share power after June 2008: his friend Bill will keep his position as chairman of the board of directors. In terms of software design, the richest man on the planet will smoothly hand over his prerogatives to two technical directors. These successors should smoothly continue the work of the "visionary". He has already strongly influenced the future of the group. After conquering the PC universe with Windows and its Office software (Word, Excel), Microsoft is trying to expand its spectrum. The idea is to distribute its programs and services on the Internet, television, music, video games and mobile phones. On the Internet, Microsoft is racing behind Yahoo! and Google. Its two rivals are expanding the use of their search engines. They offer free e-mail services, paid video, voice communications and online newspapers. Google is going even further. Since the summer, the search engine has been selling its first software online, a version of Google Earth to walk around a virtual earth. And to make life easier for PC users, since January, the Californian company has been offering a "Google pack" consisting of around ten software programs to download for free, to view photos, texts and protect personal computers from viruses. Larry Page, co-founder of Google with Sergueï Brin, explained in January to Le Figaro that he did not want to confront Microsoft head-on. But just like Bill Gates, he admitted wanting to "change the world". Its power lies in Windows This young competitor is emerging where Microsoft does not expect it: it is testing free wireless Internet connections (Wifi) with the San Francisco city hall. These attacks are slightly tilting the strategy driven by Bill Gates. But the power and future of Microsoft lies in its Windows program, the operating system used by 95% of PCs in the world. The company will continue to enrich its flagship program to maintain its price. New Internet search functions and security programs will be added to Vista, the next version, whose launch was delayed until early 2007. According to its detractors, Microsoft innovates little, but appropriates the promising solutions of its adversaries. However, Windows' competing programs, based on the free software Linux, are not managing to undermine Microsoft's supremacy in PCs. Bill Gates' "withdrawal" will not change anything. Marc Cherki

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1513

Today, 100% of CAC 40 companies are equipped with them, as are half of the 350 to 400 French companies with more than 2,000 employees, estimates Emmanuelle Olivié-Paul, associate director of the research firm Markess International. What are they? ERPs, "Enterprise Resources Planning" (integrated management software packages) which allow all management and production actions to be recorded in a standard format to feed a company's information system and thus allow its managers to monitor activity in real time and make better-informed and faster decisions. In principle... Because after ten to fifteen years which have seen these systems gradually deployed, opinions are divided: have ERPs become the vector of performance, or the manager's nightmare? For Henri Savall, director of the Institute of Socio-Economics of Businesses and Organizations (Iseor-Lyon-II), the case is heard, as shown, among other things, by the examination of 20 cases of ERP installation by Guy Saint-Léger, author of a thesis defended at Iseor. "ERPs pursue an old chimera, which corresponds to a real need: to know what is really happening in the company, to obtain reliable data on what the different actors are doing, to finally manage to control all the procedures. The paradox of ERPs is that they require, in order to be fed with reliable data, the collaboration of the actors, even though this tool deprives them of part of their power, their autonomy and especially their know-how, by imposing standardized procedures on them." In the absence of real negotiation with the actors, most often "sacrificed" due to lack of means, they then tend to provide false information to the system. "The data is centralized, but it is falsified, which gives the manager a feeling of false security, which is very dangerous for the organization," continues Mr. Savall. For such a system to work, all the stakeholders must be involved, and the process then takes ten years, not three! The other form of user resistance is the almost systematic demand for "adjustments" to the ERP, by adding applications that respect the specificity of the different professions. This gradually leads the organization to recreate the "balkanization"... that the ERP was supposed to eliminate. Philippe Le Mesnil, consultant at Cegos, certainly recognizes "the resistance to change" that the implementation of ERPs generates, but indicates that this resistance can be overcome because, "in the long run, the stakeholders end up perceiving the advantage of knowing what is happening in the next department." On the other hand, he admits that the productivity gains supposed to be generated by ERPs are not obvious. For example, the departments responsible for orders and invoicing, accustomed to handling "related activities" locally (anomaly management, customer reminders, invoice corrections), had to recreate departments centralizing these activities since the system did not take them into account in standardized procedures. "The real contribution of ERPs is the richness and quality of reporting, which is a significant plus for the manager. But this comes at the cost of a constraint for users, who are forced to comply with rigid and often off-putting procedures, even if the interfaces have been greatly improved." The lawsuit brought against ERPs is no longer relevant, says Danielle Tuarze, senior partner at CSC Peat Marwick. Today, ERPs are only a "backbone" that allows applications specific to each business to be grafted, "where the real added value of the company is at stake," she says. Major publishers are also developing partnerships to design these "business building blocks" and are developing their own systems to open them up to newcomers. But Richard Collin, president of the consulting firm ICCE (Collective Intelligence, Cooperation and Efficiency), doubts that ERP publishers, "the latest avatar of the industrial era", are capable of handling the immaterial processes at the origin of real value-creating innovations. "The engineering culture that prevails in French companies continues to seek productivity gains in processes, while we are already at the peak. At the risk of missing out on what the second generation Internet or free software can bring to the creativity of organizations."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1514

MICROSOFT The European Commission often plays a useful role in the proper functioning of markets in Europe, for example when it encourages States to deregulate. But it can also be the source of obstacles: although this may seem paradoxical, this is particularly the case when it implements what is called "competition policy", simply because its action is based on erroneous or vague conceptions of competition. We saw this when the Commission banned, for questionable reasons, merger projects, for example Schneider-Legrand or General Electric-Honeywell. History is now repeating itself with Microsoft, which is accused not, of course, of any merger project, but of the existence of an "abuse of dominant position". This case is a very fascinating textbook case. Indeed, Microsoft had to face attacks from the American justice system between 1999 and 2002. Its competitors accused it of abusing its dominant position because it had an advantage in developing software compatible with its Windows operating system and they wanted it, for example, to remove the Internet Explorer browser from the latter. Finally, the proceedings ended, in particular because Microsoft agreed to sell certain protocols under license. But the American trial had barely ended when the European Commission began to attack Microsoft. In March 2004, it fined it 497 million euros for "abuse of a dominant position". And it forced Microsoft to provide PC manufacturers with versions of Windows that had removed its software for accessing Media Player audio and video files. Yet it is not clear how having additional software could harm Microsoft customers (in fact, for a year now, there has been no demand for the version of Windows without Media Player!). But the Commission's fear is that Windows' dominant market share will create "barriers to entry" for its competitors. The Commission heard Microsoft one last time on 30 and 31 March before the hearings held at the end of April by the Court of First Instance, which has been appealed by Microsoft and is due to rule shortly on the Commission's 2004 decision. But the Commission has suggested that, if the Court rules in its favour, it would encourage firms that market free software and use Microsoft licences to make public the procedures for creating interfaces between these products, at the risk of making Microsoft's original protocols freely accessible and thus threatening its intellectual property. Taking the lead, Microsoft recently announced that it would issue "reference licenses" to view and understand the necessary characteristics of its source code. The firm has therefore gone far beyond what Brussels was demanding. In fact, the European Commission criticized Microsoft not only for its "abuse of a dominant position" (which would give it a competitive advantage in producing new software) but also for risking creating interoperability difficulties due to the secret nature of its source codes. However, interoperability has never posed a problem until now. We are therefore legitimately led to think that there is essentially, on the part of the European authorities, an obsession with what is called a "dominant position". For what reason? The Microsoft case is edifying because it reveals two very different visions of competition. The European authorities remain faithful to what is called in most economics textbooks "pure and perfect competition". This theory is the result of an obsession: to prevent a firm from having "excessive market power". We therefore simply look at the number of producers on an arbitrarily defined market and consider that there is monopoly power when this number is so low that competition does not play a role. From this point of view, it is significant that the attacks by the European Commission are the result not of complaints from consumers who feel harmed by Microsoft's "dominant position", but of the legal activism of the firm's competitors! However, this formal vision of competition, even if it is widespread, is fundamentally erroneous. It mixes two totally different situations: on the one hand, that where the State, using its power of constraint, prohibits any other producer from entering the market as a result of a legal provision or as a result of the establishment of patents; on the other hand, that where a producer is an innovator. Now, an innovator is by definition someone who initially holds 100% of the market share and it is absurd to say that he benefits from "market power". His position does not result from the exercise of a power, but on the contrary from the use of a freedom, the freedom to enter a market, which all potential producers had but which he was the only one to dare or to know how to use. Therefore the notions of "market power" or "dominant position" are meaningless except, precisely, in the case of monopolies of state origin. A correct vision of competition is to say that it exists when there is freedom to enter a market. Thus, when Microsoft launched and then developed its Windows software, everyone was free to do the same. And its competitors were then wrong to accuse it of an alleged dominant position. By exercising its freedom to innovate and produce, Microsoft did not infringe anyone's rights. And now her rights are being infringed by forcing her to give up to others part of what legitimately belongs to her because she created it, on the pretext that others do not have an equivalent position on the market! It is fascinating to see how the existence of freedom allows the coexistence of "free software" and "appropriate software", which makes the notion of "dominant position" all the more incomprehensible. In this creative profusion that calls into question both technical imagination and entrepreneurial strategies or ideological visions, the entry on the scene of the administrative and judicial powers of the European Union seems incongruous. It is time to allow the unlimited blossoming of innovations and therefore to stop all the procedures that, in the name of competition, kill competition. \* Professor at Paris-Dauphine University.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1515

Do you say "firewall" or "firewall"? "Phishing" or "filoutage"? "Emoticon" or "mousette"? "Espiogiciel" or "spyware"? That's what the new Observatoire de néologie du Québec at Université Laval wants to know, after spending six months monitoring trends in the translation of technological terms in Quebec and France. Julie Pelletier, a doctoral student who conducted the survey, wanted to "reflect on the success or failure factors" of translations, which often come from duly mandated organizations such as the Office de la langue française (OQLF) in Quebec, and the DGLFLF in France (we'll spare you its full name). Since both nations have their own standards organization, several official translations can coexist. Hence the interest in evaluating their usage to determine the most popular ones. Ms. Pelletier analyzed the terms used by journalists in three Quebec dailies (Le Soleil, Le Devoir and La Presse) and three French dailies (Le Figaro, Le Monde, Libération). A few findings, in bulk: 74% of Quebec newspapers talk about "blogues" and 68% about "clavardage". For their part, 99% of their French counterparts use "blogs" and 100% "chat" (pronounced tchatte). The recent term "baladodiffusion", which has so depressed some technology journalists, the "baladeurs", that dates back more to 1985 than 2005, is used by 74% of Quebec newspapers while 79% of French people prefer "podcasting". It must be said that over there, words ending in "ing" and other French-style anglicisms largely interfere with the semantic fields of everything modern, from fast food to computers. Is English cooler in France than here? "Americanophilia is a general phenomenon, not just in France. Except that here, it's when we probe the uses of the spoken language that we find it the most," says Ms. Pelletier, who recently presented this study as part of the 74th ACFAS conference at McGill University. "In writing, Quebec journalists clearly don't allow themselves to use English words as much as their French counterparts. Local newspapers are under more pressure in terms of francization, as official vectors of the language. Ultimately, there are a lot of things proposed in Quebec that are well established, while in France, not at all." The art of adaptation is difficult. Sometimes it produces great successes: "spam" for unwanted emails, the "foire aux questions" to francize the acronym FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions). Other terms are ignored because they are not popularized enough by the media, or because they are too long or far-fetched. In order to measure the general public's enthusiasm for some of these neologisms, Julie Pelletier conducted a survey of 250 French-speaking Internet users (75% of whom were Quebecers), alongside her study of newspapers. Among the technological terms that are well established in everyday use, she cites "bogue", "courriel", "lien hypertexte", "lecteur MP3", "logiciellibre", "baladodiffusion", "blogue" and "hameçonnage". Among those that are struggling, we can count "barrière de sécurité" (firewall), "binette" (smiley), "clavardage" (chat), "espiogiciel" (spyware) and "filoutage" (phishing). Finally, some English terms persist in their original language despite official translations, including firewall and smiley. As a linguist and translator, is Ms. Pelletier satisfied or shocked by the linguistic usages of her contemporaries? It is impossible to know. "We take a descriptive approach," she says. "We don't want to give any opinion, we just want to describe the real usage of terms to see what is adopted or not." It should be noted that among linguists specializing in neology, there are two schools of thought: on one side, the "purists" like Marie-Éva de Villers and her normative dictionary, who seek to impose usages by passing judgment on others by writing, for example, "to be avoided" next to certain terms. On the other side, there are the "variationists" of which Ms. Pelletier is a member, who reserve their judgment. It must be said that it is difficult to fight against terms widely adopted by people. "It is the users who take precedence," she says to summarize her approach.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1516

This week, the Web helps me... ...to make a film camera This site allows you to "download your camera" in the form of a detailed plan that you must then reproduce in the finest and most opaque material possible. The goal: to create a "pinhole", or lensless camera, which works according to the principle of the darkroom by exposing a film to the inverted image coming from a very small hole. A hole that is quite tricky to drill, in fact, since any error in roundness, depth or width will cost you the clarity of your image. The camera itself will not cost you anything. So, it is an easy risk to take. Read the instructions carefully and follow the animated 3D assembly plan offered on the site. Quality of explanations: 3/5 Cool factor: 3/5 www.linatree.com/index.html?lang=fr THE BIRTHDAY June 1992 We "surf" the Internet. The expression "surfing on the Internet" was first officially used in June 1992 in the newsletter of the Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota. "When you jump from page to page on the Web, it's like jumping from wave to wave while surfing the ocean," explained Jean Armour Polly, a librarian turned publisher with her NetMom series, which explained technology to mothers. Today, mothers "surf" the Web like everyone else, and when they are French-speaking, they "navigate"; always the theme of the ocean, associated in many cultures with the idea of total freedom of movement. Ms. Polly later acknowledged that the term had already been used by hackers on Usenet since 1991. However, it is her name that gives the correct answer in the American edition of Quelques arpents de piège. THE QUOTE "Game consoles have always been associated with the image of the teenager alone in the darkness of his bedroom. It's time to free ourselves from this stereotype, otherwise we will never really be part of global culture. I would like typical gamers to be people of all ages, who move, are active and have fun." SHIGERU MIYAMOTO, Nintendo guru and father of the famous Mario, in an interview with MTV on May 26. THE TECH WORD TO PLUG Crowdsourcing This derivative of "Outsourcing" describes a new business model based on the pooling of individual microproductions of a large number of Internet users. The small contributions of each, once multiplied, make it possible to create immense banks of images, texts, encyclopedic articles or specialized resources of all kinds. The resulting product can be sold individually, in which case the site serves as a sort of representative agent for each producer, or offered to Internet users in exchange for advertising exposure, or given away free of charge, as in open-source collaborative sites such as Wikis. DIGITAL Software piracy worldwide. According to the Business Software Alliance, which represents the interests of commercial software publishers, 35% of the software installed on PCs worldwide is pirated. Proportion by region of the world North America: 22% Western Europe: 35% Asia-Pacific: 54% Middle East and Africa: 57% Eastern Europe: 69% Latin America: 68% Source: study conducted by IDC for the Business Software Alliance, May 2

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1517

ACCESSIBLE on the Internet, free, scalable, efficient and not very susceptible to virus attacks, free software has at first glance all the qualities to attract a large number of companies. To the point that the European Commission is campaigning for its development. In France, large administrations and local authorities have started the shift and are gradually equipping themselves with IT tools from the world of open source. Their motivations are essentially economic. Then comes a more ideological stance: no longer depending on the agenda and commercial conditions of a software publisher and its proprietary solutions. Faced with this movement, big names in IT such as IBM, Oracle, Sun or Oracle are investing in open source projects and community software development. However, moving from a classic, marked-out IT system to open source is not necessarily within everyone's reach. And the migration can sometimes hold surprises. Free is the founding principle of open source. Software is designed from the joint work of hundreds of thousands of developers. These communities or foundations that have been created in this collaborative mode are developing these products that anyone can download from the Internet. There is therefore no license to pay, all workstations can be equipped without marginal cost. Getting familiar with new benchmarks Thus, the FireFox Internet browser is accessible from the Mozilla Foundation site as is the OpenOffice office suite from the site www.openoffice.org. However, "more and more consulting companies or publishers are marketing software designed in open source mode. In this case, we fall back into a more classic economic model", specifies Bertrand Diard, CEO and co-founder of the publisher Talend. If the publisher has the obligation to share the manufacturing secrets of its software and to make it freely accessible from the Web, nothing prevents it from marketing a packaged offer, enriched with functionalities. In other words, freedom is not always synonymous with free. "Licenses represent between 5% and 20% of the cost of IT equipment depending on the number of workstations," says Yves Miezan Ezo, head of training marketing at the service company Alcove, which offers solutions based on the Linux operating system and free software. Also, before freeing themselves from a proprietary system, the business manager must assume a whole series of induced costs. First of all, they will have to provide training for their staff who will switch from a familiar world, most often Microsoft Office if it is only office automation (word processing, spreadsheet, page layout application, etc.), to OpenOffice or StarOffice. "Migrating from one system to another is difficult if there is no support for the change," explains Yves Miezan Ezo. It is not easy to become familiar with new benchmarks when you are used to working in Word. The best way is still to recreate the document templates used in Microsoft Office in OpenOffice or StarOffice. As an indication, training around twenty employees for a day and a half will cost around 1,000 euros. In addition, developments will be necessary to create specific functionalities related to the company's activity. Are these programs reserved for specialists? The need for expertise depends above all on the company's level of equipment. "Downloading the FireFox or OpenOffice browser is within everyone's reach. On the other hand, operating a database, managing an infrastructure or developing applications from the Linux operating system requires more IT knowledge," emphasizes Bertrand Diard. Also, unless you have a permanent IT manager, using a service provider is necessary to migrate from a proprietary system to an open environment. First, adaptations and developments will be essential to find the same environment. Then, getting involved in the world of free software requires constant monitoring to follow the developments, corrections and updates made by the open source community. These are all tasks that a service company will accomplish... for a fee.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1518

All corporate computing is now being disrupted by the Internet. Software publishers are reinventing their business models to move towards services. "The debate is no longer between free software and proprietary systems, but at the level of appropriation of standards," explains Jean-Christophe Gougeon, in charge of software technologies at Anvar. Publishers have understood that they can integrate free software components into their offering. Service providers and integrators are now recovering free licenses and providing additional services. Apache has established itself on Microsoft servers. Companies are selling services on Linux. MySQL, the world's leading "free" database, has more than four million servers deployed around the world. The languages of the "open source" community are spreading. Free software is establishing itself. We still have to learn to manage this freedom (read elsewhere). 2005 was truly the year of the opening to digital convergence: in terms of the number of lines, the voice over IP market (telecommunications over the Internet) quadrupled last year to exceed the 25 million lines mark worldwide, notes Idate (Institute of Audiovisual and Telecommunications in Europe). The Skype platform served as a revelation. This technology, which involves the coupling of telephony and IT, is transforming the telecoms market and forcing historical operators to react to find relays for their traditional activity. Flexibility of use, speed and simplicity It is the equipment manufacturers who, under the combined pressure of deregulation and the crossing of technological thresholds, have developed voice over IP, overtaking the operators. And, now increasingly accessible due to the drop in the price of PBXs, voice over IP for the user generates savings on both communications and subscriptions. Thus, telecom operators see a new type of competition emerging among Internet and IT players. To adapt their strategy, they can develop new services on their own (like Neuf Telecom, a mobile operator, which created its subsidiary Wengo a year ago, specializing in IP telephony), but also form partnerships with giant Internet portals to expand their offering. What was previously reserved for large groups can now be applied to SMEs, or even VSEs. Integrators of secure IP communication solutions like NextiraOne have specialized in supporting small and medium-sized businesses. The market is huge, since there are 3.2 million very small businesses in France, Idate points out in a survey on the telecom and IT uses of VSEs. However, these VSEs, whose needs are on the border between those of small businesses and individuals, tend to appropriate the general public offering. That, for example, of France Telecom via Wanadoo transformed into Orange on June 1st. Wi-Fi, which allows you to do away with the wired connection, constitutes another stage in the evolution. It has advantages including, first of all, flexibility of use. And also speed and simplicity when it comes to deploying a network in a restricted space. Depending on the standard used, Wi-Fi can be deployed within a radius of 10 to 50 meters indoors and up to several hundred meters outdoors. Finally, for companies, it facilitates the development of mesh networks to replace centralized and integrated installations. Complex security One constraint however: that of high speed. And a major drawback: the complexity of security. Identification procedures must be put in place for each user. Different levels of access must be provided within the same company to avoid any intrusion at an unauthorized level of the system. Furthermore, since it is an open system, defenses against possible attacks are more complicated to install. "We are mainly faced with a problem of network definition and conceptualization," emphasizes Anne Darnige, in charge of innovative services at Anvar. However, specialists are formal: these security problems will be resolved in the medium term via quantum mechanics. However, in the world of ICT, the medium term is always soon.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1519

MICROSOFT ÉRIC PESTEL, founding president of Lookadoc, a non-verbal communication consulting firm, has opted for peace and quiet. "I know absolutely nothing about IT and no one in my organization has a minute to debug machines," he explains. So there was no question of venturing down side roads, such as free software. His solution? Using an integrator who offered him tools... Microsoft dedicated to VSEs and SMEs. The eight workstations - one per employee - are equipped with the Office suite, the XP operating system, the Small Business Server and the Outlook messaging system. To which the integrator added IsiWord, an application for structuring and automatically formatting documents that is used to produce, in particular, prospecting mailings. The service provider ensures the maintenance of the IT system. The option chosen by Lookadok is far from being an exception, since more than 95% of companies worldwide are equipped with software or solutions built using Microsoft tools. Easy-to-install and interoperable products Highly criticized by the IT community, the American giant has not remained insensitive to those concerning the price of products or their malfunctions. Two major points to which small and medium-sized companies are particularly sensitive. Based on the observation that half of the structures with fewer than 50 employees do not have an IT manager, Microsoft has adapted its message to the field. "Products must be easy to install and interoperable," emphasizes Bertrand Launay, director of the SME division of Microsoft France. We train our partners - 11,000 in France - so that they talk above all about uses and functions without getting bogged down in technology." The commercial offers match the requirements of the target. Microsoft offers multi-year contracts that include the cost of software updates and the purchase of new versions - in theory every two or three years. "Updates are taken into account" "For users who have opted for the annualized Open Value contract, updates are taken into account and at the rate desired by the customer," explains Bertand Launay. This argument can be used by companies the size of Lookadoc that are juggling their cash flow. In 2006 alone, Eric Pestel plans to invest 23,600 euros in his IT equipment, for a turnover close to 800,000 euros. Around 3,400 euros will have been spent on purchasing or renewing software, 8,200 euros on maintenance and 12,000 on purchasing hardware. "The three-year contract we signed with our service provider allows us to smooth out our expenses," says Eric Pestel happily.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1520

Before them, the web was frozen. Then came the GIFs, flashy, wiggling, garish, to add a bit of color and movement to the pages. "In the mid-'90s, posting an animated GIF [Graphic Interchange Format Files] on your site was an act of bravery, a way to impress in an era when pages were static," says Marisa Olson, 28, a curator at Rhizome.org, a new media organization based in New York. The artist-musician is presenting the exhibition "GIFs galore! And more!" in San Francisco through the end of the month, which testifies to a renewed frenzy around these animations on the Net. The latest invention is the GIF mashup, which allows for animated image battles (Mario vs. Bush, for example) (1) or animated GIF remakes of films like Ghostbusters (2). “Animated GIFs helped define the look of the Internet with their ability to convey a dynamic image and information in a small file,” Marisa explains. At the time, from advertising logos to porn banners to people’s flashing home pages, GIFs were everywhere. Artists began to use them, incorporating them into their music videos, or to design miniature films. The exhibition presents a video by Paper Rad (3), a collective of wild graphic designers, adept at wild collages, titled Welcome to my Homeypage, which showcases their enormous collection of animated GIFs. “Some of them remind me of pop art,” Marisa notes. “Artists are using images from mass media, reconsidering the relationship between the individual and the multiple, and using popular, even commercial, forms to talk about this culture.” Most of them don’t make their own GIFs; they appropriate those they find online. This raises the very contemporary question of copyright and file sharing. Added to this is a touch of nostalgia for a bygone era, when the Internet was a visual chaos. Paper Rad, like Cory Arcangel, are rehabilitating this dirt style (a dirty style that evokes the early Internet), a way of resisting high-tech chic. This punk spirit also marks the work of the French artist Jimpunk (4), a terrorist of code, who excels in the art of deconstructing systems of representation, aesthetics, consumption... "The dividing line between Internet artists and amateurs who use YouTube, Google Video or Myspace to present their work is increasingly blurred, notes Marisa, who discovered the pieces of Matt Smear, a scientist who makes amazing GIFs and combines them with mp3s on his blog umeancompetitor. "His GIFs, which he called Giffors, have created a real cult on the Internet. When he put his manufacturing secrets online, many blogs took up the recipe but no one can compete." For the exhibition, he created a special blog (5). Because coding GIFs is more complicated than it seems. Hence this minimal contribution from Cory Arcangel, artist and Nintendo game cartridge hacker: an open source email where the artist writes the code for a 4-pixel animated GIF, without showing the resulting gif. The exhibition is available online, on a specially dedicated Myspace page, where people can come and post their own GIFs. "Myspace is a place where people exchange GIFs like kids exchanged stickers. There is a spirit of collaboration and competition to find the most mind-blowing GIFs," hence the regular crashes when you try to connect to the overloaded page. (Gently) punk, we said. (1) http://gifmashup.eyebeamresearch.org (2) www.sayagain.co.uk/b3tapix/images/GhostBusters.gif (3) www.paperrad.org (4) www.jimpunk.com (5) http://yahmobmeancompetitor.blogspot.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1521

How to stay in the race to place computers equipped with Windows in the hands of populations with low purchasing power? Microsoft, allied in China with the PC manufacturer Lenovo, has found the solution: sell off the PC by offering it, for example, at half price. Or put a meter on the machine and charge for the time of use, via a prepaid card debited over the minutes like a phone card. The technology, called Flexgo, will be tested in China and Brazil. Microsoft and its partner are mainly trying with this initiative to counter the offensive of manufacturers of ultra-cheap PCs who are giving pride of place to free software and shunning Windows.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1522

DEVOTEAM Specializing in information systems infrastructures, the company has developed three types of jobs: upstream consulting for information systems departments; engineering; production and operations. To continue its development, Devoteam is looking for people with a 5-year degree from leading schools and universities, 20 to 30% of whom are recent graduates, and people with a 2-year degree with experience in production and operations in particular. The company regularly takes on interns, whom it trains in infrastructures through its partnerships with publishers and then integrates into its skills centers (management, security, open source software, etc.). The group has developed offers by sectoral and regional agencies. For Jean-Michel Apert, HR Director of Devoteam France, it is clear that tensions are increasing for experienced profiles. "Our advantage is having internal training platforms targeted at our professions and a knowledge sharing system. "About twenty consultants lead the knowledge community," he explains. Like Sogeti, Devoteam does not want to enter into a policy of wage escalation, especially as Jean-Michel Apert notes, since customers' purchasing scales do not change much.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1523

What equipment do I need? Any computer, even a slightly old one, PC or Mac (but equipped with OS X). A 300 MHz processor, 128 MB of RAM and 10 MB of free space on the hard disk are enough. To emit the sound of your voice, you will need a microphone. The easiest is to buy a headset (from 10 to 40 euros) to hear your correspondent more confidentially. A lavalier microphone and a pair of speakers will do the job very well. Last essential element: an unlimited Internet connection and if possible high-speed. You can also add a webcam (from 25 to 100 euros) to see yourself while talking. You can even connect a telephone to your computer, via the USB port (from 35 to 100 euros for a wireless model), to find the comfort of the handset. I have all the equipment, what do I do now? You are going to download a free telephony software (also known as a "softphone"). There are several. Since the gateways from one software to another are practically non-existent, try to use the same one as your contacts. Some software only allows communications from one computer to another. Others can also establish contact between your machine and a landline or mobile phone. Which software should I choose? Here are the most widespread software on the market, thanks to which you can contact anyone, anywhere from your computer. All offer free calls between two and five computers. NetAppel: German software. Beta (evaluation) version for download. Free calls to landlines in twenty-eight countries. Available on www.netappel.fr Skype: developed by the founders of Kazaa, a peer-to-peer software (download from the Internet). This completely legal software claims 75 million users worldwide. Calls to landlines and mobiles are billed by the minute. Available at www.skype.com Wengo: this young subsidiary of Neuf Cegetel offers flat-rate pricing to sixteen countries, in addition to its per-minute pricing to others. Wengo is free software (it can therefore be used, copied, studied, modified and redistributed without restriction). Available at http://wengo.fr Yahoo Messenger: initially a simple chat software, Yahoo Messenger has expanded its functions while retaining its fun side (online games, customization, avatar creation). Calls to landlines and mobile phones are billed per minute. Available at http://fr.messenger.yahoo.com How does it work? Calls made from a traditional telephone go through lines of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), dedicated to this use. Communications transmitted by your computer go through the Internet, among millions of other data of all kinds. This technology, used by Internet access providers who offer a telephone service, is called "voice over IP" (Internet Protocol). Its principle: each of your words is chopped into data packets that are numbered before being sent over the network. Upon arrival, the message is reconstituted and transmitted to your interlocutor. Each time one of these packets gets lost in the meanders of the network, the quality suffers. To limit this risk, free up as much bandwidth as possible on your computer during the call by stopping any downloading or online gaming activity. How much does it cost? Regardless of the software you choose, calls between computers are free, even if you are calling to the other side of the world. On the other hand, calls to traditional telephones are chargeable. A minute to France, the United States, China or Chile, all cheap destinations, costs 0.2 euros per minute with Skype. And almost half as much with Wengo. But interest in Skype and its clones has waned since the boxes (Alicebox, AOLbox, Neufbox, Freebox) added a certain number of international destinations (Europe, United States, China, Japan, etc., sometimes with mobiles included) to the free calls to landlines in France. It is better to avoid calls to mobiles, which are sometimes more expensive than with traditional operators (0.19 euros per minute with Skype!). You can also have a telephone number assigned to you to be reached more easily on a handset connected to your PC. An expensive service (30 euros for a year with Skype). Compared to the telephone, is it really better? Yes and no. Of course, when you call from one computer to another, communications are free and unlimited. During the conversation, you can share photos, texts, or any other type of file at will. However, the quality is not always up to par. Although conversations are never unintelligible, you will sometimes have the impression that your interlocutor is speaking into a tin can, notice an echo or static. The quality varies depending on the activity (especially downloading) of your computer but also the time of day. Finally, be aware that softphones do not allow you to reach certain special numbers, especially emergency numbers.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1524

AFTER HAVING obtained the closest vote of the entire legislature in the National Assembly, the controversial bill on copyright and related rights in the information society was adopted again with a narrow majority in the Senate, during the night of Wednesday 10 to Thursday 11 May. The text was voted on under emergency procedure (a single reading in both Chambers before being submitted to a joint committee). One hundred and sixty-four senators - UMP and part of the RDSE (radicals) - voted for, while one hundred and twenty-eight - the socialists, communists and Greens - voted against. The UDF senators, very virulent during the debates, abstained. The debates were conducted at a brisk pace on Wednesday afternoon and in the evening. The initial version of the text was sometimes strongly contested or modified. Thus, the creation of an administrative authority responsible for regulating private copying of protected works, as well as ensuring the effectiveness of interoperability - the ability to read a work on any medium - was seriously criticized and narrowly adopted (by 164 votes to 159). Greens, communists and centrists tried in vain on Wednesday to impose in the law a minimum number of authorized private copies. The text finally provides that this new Authority for the regulation of technical protection measures, composed of six members - three magistrates and three qualified figures from civil society - will rule on a case-by-case basis. Catherine Morin-Desailly (UDF) regretted that an ordinary citizen can no longer refer the matter to this new entity, the procedure being reserved for software publishers, manufacturers of technical systems and service operators. The system of sanctions imposed on fraudulent Internet users, graduated according to the seriousness of the offence - the lightest being 38 and 150 euros - was validated by the senators. The Minister of Culture and Communication, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, however announced that "the government will create a higher level of fine, by decree". REDUCED INTEROPERABILITY The senators also adopted the principle of creating a public register of protected works and considered a public download platform. Against the advice of the government, an amendment by the communist Jack Ralite made it possible to improve the rights of performing artists. Several amendments by Michel Charasse (PS) were adopted and aim for greater transparency in the management of societies for the collection and distribution of rights (SPRD). Thus, their financial products must be paid in full to the rights holders. Actions to support creation will be much more targeted and the information due to partners better supervised. Following the model of the film tax credit, the Cultural Affairs Committee laid the groundwork for creating a phonographic tax credit. Ultimately, since the start of its examination in the Senate, the text has made it possible to create a new exception to copyright, in favour of education and research. But, although the minister denies it, the text has reduced the scope of the measures adopted in the National Assembly in the area of interoperability. To the point that many senators, such as Bruno Retailleau (non-registered), have become concerned about the fate of free software. What was annoying, such as the global licence, has been abandoned. But certain crucial issues, such as the financing of culture by Internet access providers, have been shelved. The task of the joint committee - made up of seven deputies and seven senators - will not be easy. Mr Donnedieu de Vabres had nevertheless promised, while he was being attacked from all sides in the Assembly, a second reading in the Assembly and then in the Senate if the two texts adopted were too different at the end of the first reading.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1525

"The ACCUMULATION of technology is disconcerting us and is disconcerting democracy," declared Senator Jack Ralite (PCF, Seine-Saint-Denis) in a night session on Tuesday, May 9, during the Senate's examination, under emergency procedure, of the bill on copyright and related rights in the information society. During this session, the senators limited the scope of the principle of interoperability (the ability to read a legally acquired work on any medium or any software) that the deputies had adopted in the first reading. Mr. Ralite considered that the senators' vote expressed "a clear step backwards compared to the text adopted by the deputies." "We are faced with the monopoly of giant companies like Microsoft or Apple, but there is no anti-concentration law," lamented the former minister. Other senators fought to maintain the measures guaranteeing interoperability. In the ranks of the majority, Yann Gaillard (UMP, Aube) questioned the merits of creating an additional administrative authority responsible for ensuring this interoperability. The Assembly had initially entrusted this mission to the high court. Mr. Gaillard highlighted "the deep concern" felt by defenders of free software. Bruno Retailleau (non-registered, Vendée) specified that France was today "one of the leaders in free software", used by "80% of companies listed on the CAC 40". He ironically criticized this text which only offers "locked protection against anemic freedom". Senator Marie-Christine Blandin (Greens, Nord-Pas-de-Calais) feared that the technical protection measures would in fact constitute "only a blank cheque, allowing the implementation of surveillance of Internet users". For the Minister of Culture and Communication, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, on the contrary, "France plays a role of scout and precursor" in the field of interoperability. "This may have been true in the Assembly, but it will no longer be true in the Senate with the amendments proposed by the Cultural Affairs Committee," retorted Mr. Retailleau. In addition to the powers given to the new regulatory authority, this committee wanted to clarify the definition of technical protection measures and to reduce somewhat the dissemination of essential information, which risks "threatening certain industrial secrets." The vote on this thorny issue was not easily won: the UDF voted against, as did the Communists and the Greens. The Socialists abstained. Among the other important measures adopted by the senators is a very old demand from Michel Charasse (PS, Puy-de-Dôme). He convinced his colleagues to put an "end to an injustice" and to change the law to restore the rights of deceased artists and finally allow the heirs of "Coluche, Joe Dassin or Claude François to no longer be harmed." The debates were due to resume on Wednesday afternoon, May 10.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1526

IF THE DEBATES had been heated in the National Assembly before the vote on the law on copyright in the digital economy, passions calmed down in the Senate on Thursday, May 4, when the examination of this text resumed. Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, the Minister of Culture and Communication, was able to estimate that the bill "arrived safely". However, many sticking points did not seem to be resolved. The most spectacular progress was the adoption, although far from obvious, of an amendment providing a new exception to copyright, in favor of research and teaching. Defended by the Senate's Cultural Affairs Committee, this amendment, discussed at length and sub-amended, to which the Minister finally rallied in the evening, plans to take schools and universities out of a lawless zone that prevails today, particularly in the use by teachers of films and works in general. From 1 January 2009, the date on which the recent contractual agreements signed between rights holders and the national education system - agreements that the Commission considers unconvincing - will be null and void, it will be possible to use "performances or reproductions of short works or extracts from works (...) for educational purposes, for the exclusive purposes of illustration or analysis in the context of teaching and research, to the exclusion of any recreational or leisure activity, and provided that the public for which they are intended is strictly limited to a circle mainly composed of pupils, students, teachers and researchers directly concerned". "FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES" This use of works must not be commercial and must be compensated by remuneration to the authors. Such an exception had been adopted by many member countries of the European Union, including Germany, Portugal and Luxembourg. In another important step forward, the senators unanimously adopted identical amendments presented by the Greens and the Communists in favour of photographers and illustrators. "Photojournalism is in danger," declared Senator Marie-Christine Blandin (Greens). She was followed by the exclusion of photography from an exception to copyright established by the deputies in favour of press publishers. The adopted amendment authorises "the reproduction or representation, in whole or in part, of a work of graphic, plastic or architectural art, by means of the written, audiovisual or online press, for the exclusive purpose of immediate information, and in direct relation to the latter, subject to clearly indicating the name of the author. This measure will not apply to photographic or illustrative works which themselves aim to report the information". Thus, "when a report on the Constitutional Council is shown on television, Buren's columns may appear fleetingly", explained the minister. This will not prevent the broadcasting of this report. Mr. Donnedieu de Vabres still has to get 29 articles adopted. Including the very delicate ones on interoperability (the possibility of reading a work on any medium) and on free software. In the meantime, a large demonstration of Internet users is planned for Sunday, May 7, in Paris.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1527

Post coitum, sad parliamentarians? After the orgasmic happening of the examination by the National Assembly of the bill on copyright and related rights in the information society (Dadvsi), its arrival today in the Senate promises to be much more studious. And focused on its central point: the introduction into French law of technical protection measures or DRM, these digital locks grafted onto works sold online and on certain CDs, and intended to limit their copying or uses. Coupled with repression, they are promoted by the cultural industries as the only option to curb wild reproduction via the Net. "Dadvsi Code". We left the "Dadvsi Code", the nickname of this text, at the end of March after three months of noise, where an improbable alliance of deputies from the right and the left had beaten up the poorly put together and overly repressive project of Minister Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres: quasi-legalization of peer-to-peer exchanges before Christmas, suspension of the text, media outcry, long nights of intrigue. And, finally, a last surprise amendment forcing "interoperability", i.e. the possibility of reading a digital work with any software or hardware. A provision aimed at putting an end to a practice illustrated by Apple, whose songs sold on the Music Store cannot be read on any other portable player than the home iPod. With an irritated press release from the apple company speaking of "state piracy" in the wake and frowns from Washington. The Senate can no longer ignore the myriad of problems posed by DRM: privacy (they track works), a brake on private copying (since DRM limits it from the outset), and the risk of technological control by Apple or Microsoft. To address all of these difficulties, UMP rapporteur Michel Thiollière and the Cultural Affairs Committee are proposing the establishment of an independent administrative authority (a sort of CSA) responsible for arbitrating the many conflicts to come. This has the immediate advantage of postponing the details that cause irritation until later. "Thing." "A step backwards," denounce in particular the supporters of free software, who fear that arbitration will get bogged down in an administrative "thing" that is too conciliatory with the cultural majors or technology firms. As a result, several groups of Internet users and associations promoting free software, supported by political movements (from young Greens to young UDF) and several deputies from the right and left, are calling for a "march for digital freedoms" on Sunday in Paris, starting from Place de la Bastille. The Senate must examine the text until May 10.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1528

Should we try to ban peer-to-peer (P2P) software, accused by the cultural industries of promoting the free exchange of works? On the eve of the arrival before the Senate of the highly controversial law on copyright and related rights in the information society (DADVSI), this question is causing some friction between a part of the music industry that would like to get rid of these services and technological players worried about a brake on innovation. "Statistically, more than 80% of content distributed via P2P is illegal, we have to find a solution," argues Jérôme Roger, of the Union of Independent French Producers, one of the supporters of this measure known as the "Vivendi amendment", because one of the first versions was written by the company. Three years in prison. Introduced in the Assembly in March and taken up by the Senate's cultural affairs committee, it aims to punish with a maximum of three years in prison and a fine of 300,000 euros the design, supply or promotion of software "clearly intended for the unauthorized provision of protected works to the public". "It is said that it only targets the "bad" publishers who push poor people to piracy, but it can target any software used to make files available, legally or illegally, emails, instant messaging, etc.," criticizes Stéphane Marcovitch, of the Association of Internet Service Providers. The same concern is expressed by supporters of free software, some of whom, united in the ObjectWeb consortium (from Thales to the Atomic Energy Commission), reminded senators in a letter that "the use of data sharing software and the provision of information to the public are the very foundations of the Internet" and that it is "impossible to distinguish between legal and illegal use of software". A way of reminding people that P2P is also used for the exchange of scientific information or protected works, but with the consent of the authors. As is done, for example, by the company Jamendo with a thousand albums made available for free thanks to the eMule or BitTorrent software, which are also liable to be prosecuted if the Vivendi amendment is finally voted through. "Too easy". On the side of the supporters of the measure, they plead good faith. "It is a question of avoiding any collateral damage", asserts Jérôme Roger. "We want a fair balance, it's too easy to say that we can't do anything a priori: let's let the magistrates decide!" continues Hervé Rony, from the National Union of Phonographic Publishing (Snep). And both cite as examples cases like Kazaa, condemned by the Australian courts, or Grokster, in the United States, two commercial P2P services whose judicial investigations have proven that they were mainly looking to make money (notably via advertising) on the back of illegal exchanges of works. But no country, for the moment, has yet enshrined in law a strict definition distinguishing good software from bad.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1529

December 1998: software publisher Sun Microsystems files a complaint against Microsoft with the Commission. According to Sun, Microsoft is forcing it out of the market by refusing to provide it with information that would allow its server software to communicate with Microsoft products (an "interoperability" problem). February 2000: the Commission announces that it is investigating an abuse of the American group's dominant position in the context of the launch of Windows 2000. August 2000: Brussels sends a first official list of grievances to Microsoft (based on Sun's complaint), which will be followed by more exhaustive lists in August 2001 (Brussels denounces the integration of the Media Player software into Windows), then August 2003 (proposal of corrective measures). March 24, 2004: the Commission finds Microsoft guilty of abuse of a dominant position in both the interoperability and Media Player aspects. It imposes a record fine of €497 million and requests "corrective measures". June 8, 2004: Microsoft files an appeal before the Court of First Instance of the European Court of Justice (ECJ), asking that its conviction by Brussels be overturned. June 25, 2004: Microsoft files a second appeal in Luxembourg, requesting that the corrective measures be suspended pending judgment on the merits. July 1, 2004: Microsoft pays the fine of half a billion euros. December 22, 2004: The European Court of Justice deals a first blow to Microsoft by ordering it to implement the corrective measures before the case is even judged on the merits. May 23, 2005: The Commission sets an ultimatum, asking Microsoft to comply fully with its demands by May 31, or face additional fines. June 1, 2005: After Microsoft's final proposals, the Commission acknowledges that it has made significant concessions on interoperability. However, it puts a damper on the matter, considering that it must also provide appropriate documentation to free software publishers. It temporarily suspends its threat of fines, pending the ruling of the European courts. June 8, 2005: Microsoft distributes versions of Windows in Europe purged of Media Player. October 5, 2005: The Commission appoints an IT expert, Neil Barrett, to help it verify the correct application of corrective measures. October 11, 2005: Support for the Commission dwindles. Microsoft signs peace with RealNetworks, for $761 million. December 21, 2005: Based on an analysis by Neil Barrett, the Commission sends new grievances to Microsoft. It orders it to prove, before February 15, that it is complying with the corrective measures, under penalty of fines of up to 2 million euros per day. January 25, 2006: Microsoft announces that it will publish certain parts of the Windows source code. February 15, 2006: Microsoft responds on time to the Commission, which has since analyzed its response. February 22, 2006: a new complaint is filed against Microsoft, by an association (ECIS) bringing together IBM, Oracle and Sun. The complaint targets in particular the Office office suite as well as Vista, the new version of Windows. March 30-31, 2006: during a hearing in camera, Microsoft tries to convince the Commission that it has complied with its requirements. April 24-28, 2006: Microsoft will try to demonstrate to the Luxembourg judges that the Commission was wrong to condemn it in March 2004. The judgment is expected in late 2006/early 2007. lefigaro.fr (with AFP)

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1530

Google, Yahoo, Ebay, but also EADS, Lafarge, Alcatel and even the American NASA. All have chosen MySQL to manage their databases developed in open source (code source open to all) by this Swedish-American company of 300 people. A beneficiary, coveted by industry leaders such as Oracle and SAP, this company, which posted a turnover of 30 million euros in 2005 and has just raised another 18.5 million dollars, has tens of millions of users worldwide. With a few others, it embodies the rise of free software and its promising ecosystem. Interview with its CEO, the Finnish Mårten Mickos. How would you define the model of this so-called "open source" software? Open source software is a model for the production and distribution of software, not an economic model in itself. This distinction is very important. This means that all those who download our products for free on the Web (50,000 per day) help us improve them much faster than our competitors' proprietary software, by reporting bugs to us. Not only do these contributions considerably lower our production costs, but they also allow us to make more frequent updates. It's a virtuous circle, a system intrinsically superior to the proprietary model, more efficient and less expensive. How is this model so different from Microsoft's? If we want to make an analogy, even if it is a bit excessive, we could say that open source is liberal democracy in which everyone can vote and put in their two cents, while closed software is dictatorship: we cannot criticize it or modify it, we just have to believe the marketing propaganda when it claims "our product is the best". But it is not the strongest who should win, but the best. Open source is also closer to the ideal market economy as imagined by Adam Smith and the neoclassicists: in this truly competitive system, the mediocre product cannot exist, it is automatically eliminated. The same cannot be said of certain proprietary software whose exorbitant market shares often have very little to do with their intrinsic qualities. Is the opposition of these two models, one free and generous, the other paid and closed, a relevant reading grid to understand the changes in the software industry? It is outdated to oppose a free and open model to another proprietary and paid one! Because nothing is really free in this world. The users who form the MySQL community may not be paid to help us improve the product, but do you think they have no interest in doing so? Of course they do. In this very meritocratic system, the best are quickly noticed, they build a reputation that will serve them for their career and their CV. The financial gain is not direct, but it can come later. That's the spirit of free software. How does open source help your company progress? We live under the permanent control of an installed base of 8 million MySQL applications worldwide. As owners of a code source open to all, we are responsible for the cuisine we serve to our customers and they do not hesitate to put us to the test. Except that with us the kitchen is open, the ingredients visible! You can't hide a failed dish with a pretty presentation. How does this model of software distributed for free allow you to make money? We belong to the second generation of open source which, while remaining faithful to the principles of free software, has refined and diversified the models quite a bit. We offer two licenses. The first, under GPL, the General Public License of the Free Software Foundation of Richard Stallman, corresponds to the system described above: free use and reciprocity, which means that all modifications of the code must be made public. Which is what we do. The other system is a commercial license, which some customers, like Alcatel or Cisco, buy from us in order to integrate our products into theirs to redistribute them for a fee, with a closed source code. This is blended or double software, both free and proprietary, named in reference to whisky. It provides two thirds of our income today. Another paid model, also growing, consists of charging the customer not for the software itself, which remains open source, but for the support and maintenance service that we sell around it in the form of a subscription. The best part is that by only distributing one commercial license for every 1,000 GPL versions, we still manage to make money! This is proof that this model works. What do you attribute the conversion of an increasing number of companies to the open source model to? In my opinion, this success is not only a question of savings. Of course, and this is crucial, our products, compared to those of IBM, Oracle or Microsoft, cost only 10% of the price of theirs while offering 90% of their features. But it is also a question of efficiency and above all of freedom! We are free to do what we want with them! Aren't the big names in software also tempted to accelerate on this model? The big proprietary publishers have understood that, in many sectors and for the most standardized functions, open source would prevail and that they would no longer be able to compete with it. As a result, they are investing in the model: they open the source code of closed software as the German publisher SAP does with its databases, they launch open source programs, including at Microsoft. And finally, they acquire software or open source companies like Oracle just did. Things are moving. What gives you confidence in the future? We are experiencing very big changes with the new generation of developers and computer scientists. Those who are under 25 have all tried their hand at open source at university. All start-ups use open source to avoid cutting their budgets with unnecessary expenses. The new applications of decentralized and collaborative Internet 2.0 are made in open source as is the case for the online photo sharing system Flickr, recently bought by Yahoo. In short, the market is extremely mature and the revolution, although silent, is no less strong. It would have been surprising if this new way of questioning the ownership of intangible goods had been a total flop in the era of knowledge sharing and information exchange.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1531

www.malaupixel.org Mal au pixel, in Paris until April 29, at Confluences (190, bd. de Charonne, 75020), at Mains d'OEuvres (1, rue Charles-Garnier, Saint-Ouen) and at Ars Longa (67, avenue Parmentier 75011). It all started with this strange word, "pixel-ache", literally translated as "pixel pain". Like one's liver would hurt after having an orgy of Easter bunnies. "This word comes from an article that predicted neologisms. Pixelache was supposed to be used to describe the feeling resulting from an overdose of digital media, explains Juha Huuskonen, Finnish artist and co-organizer of the festival of the same name. This feeling is familiar to me, especially when the content becomes monotonous, formatted, and all ends up looking the same. The Pixelache festival presents projects that question these standards, break this routine, and expand the way we use media and technology." Created in Finland in 2002 by the Piknik Frequency and Katastro.fi associations, around DJing and VJing and more broadly electronic cultures, Pixelache strives to promote new artistic and civic practices gravitating around free software. For two years, the festival has spread to Bratislava, New York, Montreal, Stockholm and settled in Paris on Wednesday. It will stay there until Saturday, April 29 before flying to Colombia. The French edition Mal au pixel is not a simple transfer of the Finnish concept, it was set up outside of the big institutional machines, with limited means, in close collaboration with small local indie structures involved in new media, Confluen-ces, Mains d'oeuvres and Ars Longa with the complicity of Projet 101 and the Finnish Institute. It's funny to see that it's a foreign festival that manages to bring together these initiatives. "It's often easier to work with someone from outside," smiles Mathieu Marguerin, from Mains d'oeuvres. "Moreover, we share the same vision, Pixelache is not an exhibition of existing works, it's one of the rare festivals that shows research in progress, by presenting projects in development, prototypes, experiments that question dominant forms. And above all, it is transdisciplinary, interested in design, architecture, music, activism, hacking, without focusing exclusively on the artistic sphere. In France, all that remains very compartmentalized." Mal au pixel has as its theme the "dot org boom", the boom in free media, a sort of citizen counterpoint to a fashionable concept, the commercial "Web 2.0". "The goal of this event is to kick the proprietary industrial policies of today's digital worlds, DADVSI, DRM, patents, all these things that hurt our pixels," emphasizes Vincent Guimas, from Confluences. The open source phenomenon is growing rapidly beyond the IT spheres, as is open and collaborative content (like Wikipedia). A culture of free that most of the invited artists share (read opposite). They re-appropriate existing tools, divert their codes, or create their own tools between low-tech tinkering and free software programming.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1532

Mobile telephony, office software, databases and servers for companies, administrations and Internet users... The penguin family of free software and Linux continues to expand and convert new small ones. Over the last eighteen months, $400 million in venture capital has been invested in free software projects in the United States and France. And over the last three years, 400 companies have been created, creating 6,000 to 8,000 jobs. The increasing number and sophistication of open source models is also pushing proponents of proprietary software to open their codes, such as IBM or Sun Microsystems, which announced at the end of 2005 that it would almost completely open up its software assets. Without necessarily being directly opposed to commercial logic, new practices and uses are emerging. According to a study by the Gartner institute, the market share of free software should increase from 5% today to 19% in 2009, or 112 billion dollars worldwide compared to 589 billion for the entire turnover of software and associated services. The only persistent handicap is that in 75% of cases, free software is used for new applications rather than to replace old ones. It is better to create than to migrate...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1533

Created by an American couple living in Montreal, the travel guide Wikitravel.org has been bought by the American Internet Brands, which will soon add it to its online service offering. Internet Brands, formerly CarsDirect.com, is a Los Angeles company that specializes in brokering new cars, properties and mortgages via the Internet. The company wanted to add a travel guide to its services, and so it bought the two most popular sites on the Web in quick succession: the American World66.com and the Canadian Wikitravel.org. These sites, which will eventually be merged, both use Internet users to write the content of their pages. This offer was a nice surprise for Evan Prodromou and his wife, Michele Ann Jenkins, co-founders of Wikitravel.org, who saw the birth of their first child, Amita, at the same time as they were negotiating the transaction, last September. "We started this project because we are both passionate about travel and website development. We didn't think it would get big, let alone make money from it," says Prodromou, 37. The entrepreneur worked as a programmer in Silicon Valley before emigrating to Montreal with his future wife - the couple married in 2004 at the Biosphere on St. Helen's Island. "People often say that the important thing is to do what you love, and the money will come," he says. "I always thought that was bullshit. But I was wrong, because now I get up every morning to work on my own website and get paid." The amount of the Wikitravel.org sale transaction was not disclosed. Laid off like many others after the bursting of the technology bubble in 2001, the two programmers spent their severance pay on a world tour that lasted almost a year. It was during this experience that they had the idea of founding an online guide that would be updated by a community of Internet travelers, and would not suffer from the publication delays inherent in printed guides. Editorial independence In addition to the transaction, the arrangement with Internet Brands provides that the two founders will continue to supervise the site's content as consultants. The buyer will take charge of the technical infrastructure and advertising sales - which will be targeted according to travel destinations - but will not intervene in the content of the site. "Wikitravel.org depends on a community of volunteer editors," Prodromou said. "So we looked closely at the deal to make sure it wouldn't interfere with the content of the pages. Some of Internet Brands' executives worked at the Los Angeles Times, so they know what editorial independence is." Wiki's open-source technology allows Web pages to be edited by their visitors in real time. The quality and accuracy of the content depends on the consensus of people who edit the pages as the site grows. The most popular application of this technology is the collaborative online encyclopedia Wikipedia.org. "Thanks to this transaction, we will be able to continue to pilot our project, while being supported by a company that has experience in the field," Prodromou said. Currently, Wikitravel.org has 5,500 registered users in its English version, and about the same number in the nine other languages of the site (the French version is at www.wikitravel.org/fr).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1534

Far from the show-of of the electronic arts grand masses, Mal au pixel reels off its proposals in several places in the Paris region. More than the finalized works, the festival is interested in the process, favoring workshops and seminars to engage the novice or connoisseur public with the artists. At Mains d'oeuvres, he will be able to join the Orgsmobile.org collective to think about the design of the first "open source" vehicle, or how to apply to a concrete object the collaborative principle of software whose code is open and modifiable. Amy Franceschini, from Future Farmers, specialized in political video games (They Rule, Antiwargame...), will invite him to imagine what a video game could be transposed into the urban space. He will also be able to program his own games and animations on the Ping Genius Loci device, an installation in the public space of 430 physical pixels with colored faces activated by a motor that react to the passage of visitors. The desire to get out of the screen to invest the physical space is a constant. Thus the very playful Kick Ass Kung Fu which awakens the street fighter in each of us. The player is embedded in the video game where he must fight formidable adversaries like Bush or Putin. Reverse kick, nunchaku, shovels, all blows are allowed, sweat guaranteed. "It's a kind of digital sport", says Perttu Hämäläinen, specialized in interactive design and versed in capoeira and karate, who gives us a breathtaking demonstration of this new acrobatic way of playing video games. Conversely, Electroscape stages two game consoles, interactive medium par excellence, over which the spectator has no control: he watches helplessly an endless babble between two artificial intelligences implanted in the game machines. Samplings. The playful form is also the one chosen by Sven König with his impressive voice-controlled audiovisual sampling software, Scrambled? Hackz!, but with a resolutely critical perspective. The artist and sociologist is very interested in the question of intellectual property, but in the same way that P2P has popularized the idea of exchange and sharing among young people to the point of becoming second nature, according to him, "a software is worth a thousand words". Digging into a database of clips from the 80s, the visitor sings a phrase, which he immediately finds in the mouth of Michael Jackson or Kurt Kobain. Scrambled? Hackz! pushes the logic of sampling to its limits: it dissects songs into a multitude of micro-samples (thus avoiding copyright infringements) then reconstructs them, reproducing the phrases spoken by the user. "It's becoming a real musical instrument, there's no longer any difference between using samples and playing the guitar," explains the author who will be handling the software live at Confluences on the 26th. The same commitment to free music is shown by the Iberian collective Platoniq, which is presenting its Burnstation, a nomadic station that allows you to freely copy music and burn it onto a CD for free. Burnstation only offers legal content provided by Netlabels, a non-commercial project developed in open source that "brings Internet culture to the streets" (Libération, February 10). Nomads. Among the other instruments to be tested, the Dimi H at the Finnish Institute, by electronic art pioneer Erkki Kurenniemi, which allows you to play music by waving a red glove in space. Cécile Babiole and Laurent Dailleau took over and diverted it during an inaugural concert, saturating the space with red, creating a superb sound storm. At Confluences, you can create sound loops on the Four Ophones sequencer (recording combos connected directly to a speaker) or manipulate the air chambers of the Télégum device to mix live images from a television stream. As for Flavien Théry and Bruno Hubert, they explore the nature of white light, with Potentiel and its mysterious black mirror that reveals what we don't see, a way of re-enchanting reality. The enticing program of sound and audiovisual performances also shakes up established forms, with artists who elude any label. Saturday, an evening dedicated to the Parisian jack-of-all-trades label Active Suspension, where you can belt out MEC's Motor Karaoke installation, a motorcycle racing game where the one who screams the loudest wins, or, on the 27th, an "electronic music and networks" evening with Carl Y & la boîte blanche, Discom, RyBN...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1535

Apple crowned most innovative company! For the second year in a row, the Boston Consulting Group's ranking for the American weekly Business Week places Steve Jobs' firm at the top of the world's twenty-five largest groups for their ability to innovate. And it is this famous iPod, its conception, its marketing and its design that earns it all these honors. Because what the management of the 1,500 multinationals surveyed are praising is the multiplicity of changes made at the same time by Apple with its cult product. First: a new business. The Californian firm had to conclude commercial agreements with the majors of the record industry to sell their catalogs on the Internet. Second: a new business model (each music file sold for 0.99 euros). Third: marketing that has succeeded in imposing a new style of consumption, all for an object that is very simple to use. Because today, explain the authors of this study, it is less technological innovation that makes a company strong than its ability to quickly transform its habits. And to train its troops to realize the new idea that will seduce the consumer. The examples reported in the survey are full of these "scouts" who crisscross the world, Web communities or university labs to sniff out the desires of future customers. This Who's Who of innovation also celebrates the virtues of brain storming that involves, beyond the circle of the company, consumers, ethnologists, suppliers or researchers (3M or Starbucks). Even if, as IBM did, it means throwing some of its patents to a community of Internet users in the hope of profiting from future open source developments. To stimulate innovation, other groups invent very well-paid internal competitions (Nokia) or select, among their young people, the fresh neurons who will attend the management boards (Infosys Technologies Ltd). Apple, Google and 3M: all three on the world podium. No French company in this very Anglo-Saxon ranking which includes rare European companies, Virgin (n° 11), BMW (n° 16), Ikea (n° 19), and a few Asians (Toyota n° 4, Samsung n° 12, Sony n° 13 and Honda n° 23).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1536

AFTER many twists and turns, the bill on copyright and related rights in the information society (Davdsi) was finally voted on March 21. The text must now be examined by the Senate in May before being definitively adopted. In the event of a divergence, a committee may be called upon to harmonize the text. In the meantime, it raises many questions for millions of Internet users. Why this law? m It was necessary to protect artists, publishers and production companies against the problem of illegal downloading, which continues to grow and is estimated to already affect 10 million French people. m France, already condemned for its delay, was obliged to transpose the European directive published in 2001. m The current regulation was unsuitable, providing for a fine of 300,000 euros and three years in prison for fraudsters. What does it provide? m Support for technical protection measures (or DRM, for "Digital Rights Management"), which limit the unauthorized use of protected works by preventing their infinite copying and distribution. However, it is planned that Internet users will be able to duplicate titles legally purchased under the private copying scheme. m The obligation for publishers to declare software that integrates technical measures allowing remote control or access to personal data. m The obligation to obtain the agreement of authors and performers to use technical protection measures. m Sanctions against people who illegally download works protected by copyright, who make pirated files available to others and who program software intended to exchange them or circumvent their protection techniques. m In the event of a dispute, a college of mediators is responsible for arbitrating between rights holders and users. It will also have to monitor the application of technical protection measures and the right to private copying. m These measures should also help develop legal download services such as Fnacmusic.com, Virgin Mega or Sony Connect, which currently represent 6% of the music market. What are the risks? m As the law currently stands, illegal downloading is punishable by a fine of 38 Euros. This sum is increased to 150 Euros if the pirated files are made available to the public. m In practice, identifying fraudsters requires Internet service providers to monitor the activities of their subscribers in order to identify those who illegally download files. This is a perspective provided for by the European directive on electronic commerce, which specifies in particular that "the prohibition on imposing a monitoring obligation on service providers" cannot contradict national legislation. In short, access providers could be called upon to detect fraudsters, for example by filtering the addresses of sites known to illegally provide protected works. Another surveillance system could be set up to track Internet users who make protected works available to the public. m However, as with traffic violations, the courts will have to decide whether the computer owner is liable for acts of piracy committed using his or her account. m Developers of software designed for unauthorized file sharing risk a fine of 300,000 euros and three years in prison. It remains to be seen which software will fall into this category. And especially whether foreign programmers, who provide the majority of peer-to-peer software, will be prosecuted. Will we finally be able to listen to music purchased online on any device? m This is the will of the public authorities, who have imposed what is called "interoperability", i.e. the possibility of listening to a music file purchased on Fnac.com on an iPod and files downloaded from the iTunes Music Store on a Sony portable music player. m According to the law, DRM publishers (Microsoft and Apple in the lead) will no longer be able to oppose another publisher designing a player compatible with their format. It is even authorized to "decompile" the DRM code, that is to say to analyze its operation, to access essential information. This could be in contradiction with the ban on circumventing DRM. If necessary, the Competition Council could order the publisher to publish this information. m This subject mainly concerns Apple, which manufactures the iPod and administers the iTunes Music Store, and which refuses to provide other operators and manufacturers with the technical protection that it uses. According to observers, Apple would then be forced to change its business model or abandon the French market. This situation could benefit Microsoft, whose protected Windows Media format is gradually becoming a standard on other download services. m The law provides that the conversion of files from one format to another is permitted, but does not specify the cases where this possibility can be assimilated to the illegal unlocking of protection measures. m Finally, the circumvention of technical protection measures does not concern free software that allows you to listen to music or watch a film with a program other than the one intended or on a computer other than the one intended.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1537

Tristan Nitot President of Mozilla Europe, an association for the development of free software. The blog: Standblog standblog.org Tristan Nitot, 39, is described by Technorati as an "evangelist" of Web standards. He is interested in browsers, and more generally in Internet technology. On his blog, the conversations focus a lot on free software, of which he is a fierce defender, as founder of Mozilla Europe. The Blogothèque Collective of about twenty bloggers, including Chryde, Manu, Lilou, Fandor... The blog: The Blogothèque www.blogotheque.net "Digressions, in-depth debates and mp3s": this is the menu of this collective and musical blog, which has been sharing its artistic passions since September 2003 and now attracts 50,000 visitors per month. Talking about music in a different way, in the blog way, always offering a link, an image, a video, an excerpt. Pierre Assouline Journalist, writer, critic. The blog: La République des livres passouline.blog.lemonde. fr/livres The former director of Lire magazine became a blogger somewhat by chance, but it didn't take him long to build up a good audience with his daily posts on books and art. La République des livres has become a must-see in the French-speaking blogosphere, attracting more and more readers each month. Philippe Bilger Attorney General at the Paris Court of Appeal. The blog: Justice au singulier www.philippebilger.com Attorney General at the Paris Court of Appeal, author of several books, including, with Bruno Gaccio, Le Guignol et le Magistrat (published by Flammarion, 2004), Philippe Bilger has been called upon to appear in a number of high-profile cases. On his blog, he shares his very pertinent thoughts on the state of justice, but also on the media and society. "Maître Eolas" Anonymous author, under the pseudonym of Maître Eolas. The blog: Journal d'un avocat maître.eolas.free.fr "Lawyer at the Paris bar, passionate about my profession and enjoying browsing the Web. I have often noted a keen interest in justice and law in general, an interest left unsatisfied by the opacity of the subject and the difficulty of understanding, for an untrained mind - unless it is deformed? - in law." This is how the anonymous Maître Eolas defines himself, who tells "the behind the scenes of the Palace" and has been following legal news since April 2005. "Versac" anonymous author The blog: Versac vanb.typepad.com/versac Versac wishes to maintain a "relative anonymity" which allows him freedom of tone, particularly with regard to his employer. The blogger gives some clues: "I had a political investment in 2001-2002, with Christian Blanc", first in his think tank (l'ami public), then in the political movement that followed (Energies démocrates). "I ran in the 2002 legislative elections", Versac explains in this notebook, devoted to politics, economics and emerging democracy, but which also allows for "digressions around more personal themes". Jean-Michel Billaut Creator of the Atelier BNP Paribas. The blog: Jean-Michel Billaut billaut.typepad.com Subtitled "vivre la retraite (à très haut disque, naturel!)", the blog of Jean-Michel Billaut, economist and computer scientist, pioneer of the Internet, within BNP Paribas, offers to discover and meet CEOs, creators, entrepreneurs, inventors, and films them in video podcasts posted online on his blog. Bernard Salanié Professor at Columbia (NY) and Polytechnique. The blog: L'économie sans tabou bsalanie.blogs.com Bernard Salanié opened his blog following the publication of his book of the same name L'Economie sans tabou (published by Le Pommier, 2004). He dissects and strives to make economic and political news accessible to all. Etienne Chouard Professor of computer science in Marseille. The blog: L'arc-en-ciel etienne.chouard.free.fr The site of this Marseille professor played a role during the campaign for the referendum on the European Constitution in 2005, where he sharpened the arguments for the no vote. Since then, his blog "for institutions written by and for citizens" has been full.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1538

Jean Véronis 50 years old, professor of linguistics and computer science (University of Aix-en-Provence) The blog: Language technologies aixtal.blogspot.com The subject may seem a little austere at first glance. Jean Véronis' blog was originally intended primarily for his students. But its success quickly extended beyond the university. Because it also talks about Google, search engines and keywords, the topic has become a central concern for many Internet users. 1,500 visits per day. Pascale Weeks 40 years old, former IBM employee, now a professional blogger The blog: C'est moi qui l'ai fait! scally.typepad.com/cest\_moi\_qui\_lai\_fait In two years, Pascale Weeks has carved out a nice reputation as a blogger with her cooking recipes and photos of small dishes. Her specialty: cookies, and British cuisine in general. Since its creation, she has written 390 posts that have generated 4,000 comments. She has also published a book, Cookies, Muffins and Co, 100 douceurs à la mode anglo-saxonne (éditions First, 2006). Loïc Le Meur 33 years old, HEC, netentrepreneur Blog: Loïc Le Meur www.loiclemeur.com “Traditional media broadcast messages. Blogs start discussions,” announces Loïc Le Meur in the header of his extensive blog, the French number one. Loïc Le Meur is obviously the reference for blogs in France: more than 150,000 visitors per month, 270,000 page views. His “podcats” - audio and video recordings - of Nicolas Sarkozy and Dominique Strauss-Kahn have been downloaded by 100,000 people each. Roland Piquepaille 59 years old, engineer specializing in supercomputers Blog: Emerging Technology blogs.zdnet.com/emergingtech An exception in this selection: a blog in English. But with his 15,000 page views per day, his 3 million page views in 2005, Roland Piquepaille is perhaps one of the most widely read French bloggers abroad and in all countries. His favorite topic: what new technologies will change in our lives. At the beginning, when he typed his name into Google, he got 50 references. Today, the query on his surname returns several hundred thousand responses. Laurent Gloaguen 39 years old, aka "the Captain", Paris, France. Blog: Embruns embruns.net On Laurent Gloaguen's blog, we talk about everything and nothing, politics, leisure, recipes, travel and lots of blogs. Two years ago, in derision, Laurent Gloaguen launched a committee and a comic anti-cat campaign. A success, which still earns him letters and comments on his site. Embruns receives up to 5,000 visitors per day, many of whom connect from their offices. Pierre Bilger 65 years old, former head of Alstom The blog: Blog Bilger www.blogbilger.com Initially, Pierre Bilger mainly conceived his blog as a correspondence with the readers of his book 4 million euros, the price of my freedom. Then he got into the game, all the more easily since in a few decades spent at the head of large state companies, the former head of Alstom had long been bound by a heavy duty of reserve. No more restrictions, now, on his freedom of expression: Pierre Bilger talks about the economy of course, but also about the construction of Europe, industry, business, history, romantic literature, etc. Tristan Nitot President of Mozilla Europe, an association for the development of free software. The blog: Standblog standblog.org Tristan Nitot, 39, is described by Technorati as an "evangelist" of Web standards. He is interested in browsers, and more generally in Internet technology. On his blog, the conversations focus a lot on free software, of which he is a fierce defender, as founder of Mozilla Europe. The Blogothèque Collective of about twenty bloggers, including Chryde, Manu, Lilou, Fandor... The blog: The Blogothèque www.blogotheque.net "Digressions, in-depth debates and mp3s": this is the menu of this collective and musical blog, which has been sharing its artistic passions since September 2003 and now attracts 50,000 visitors per month. Talking about music in a different way, in a blog way, always offering a link, an image, a video, an excerpt. Pierre Assouline Journalist, writer, critic. The blog: La République des livres passouline.blog.lemonde. fr/livres The former director of Lire magazine became a blogger somewhat by chance, but it didn't take him long to build up a good audience with his daily posts on books and art. La République des livres has become a must-see in the French-speaking blogosphere, attracting more and more readers each month. Philippe Bilger Attorney General at the Paris Court of Appeal. The blog: Justice au singulier www.philippebilger.com Attorney General at the Paris Court of Appeal, author of several books, including, with Bruno Gaccio, Le Guignol et le Magistrat (published by Flammarion, 2004), Philippe Bilger has been called upon to appear in a number of high-profile cases. On his blog, he shares his very pertinent thoughts on the state of justice, but also on the media and society. "Maître Eolas" Anonymous author, under the pseudonym of Maître Eolas. The blog: Journal d'un avocat maître.eolas.free.fr "Lawyer at the Paris bar, passionate about my profession and fond of wandering on the Web. I have often noted a keen interest in justice and law in general, an interest left unsatisfied by the opacity of the subject and the difficulty of understanding, for a mind not trained - unless it is deformed? - in law." This is how the anonymous Maître Eolas defines himself, who tells "the behind the scenes of the Palace" and has been following legal news since April 2005. 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The blog: Jean-Michel Billaut billaut.typepad.com Subtitled "vivre la retraite (à très haut disque, naturel!)", the blog of Jean-Michel Billaut, economist and computer scientist, pioneer of the Internet, within BNP Paribas, offers to discover and meet CEOs, creators, entrepreneurs, inventors, and films them in video podcasts posted online on his blog. Bernard Salanié Professor at Columbia (NY) and Polytechnique. The blog: L'économie sans tabou bsalanie.blogs.com Bernard Salanié opened his blog following the publication of his book of the same name L'Economie sans tabou (published by Le Pommier, 2004). He dissects and strives to make economic and political news accessible to all. Etienne Chouard Professor of computer science in Marseille. The blog: L'arc-en-ciel etienne.chouard.free.fr The site of this Marseille professor played a role during the campaign for the referendum on the European Constitution in 2005, where he sharpened the arguments for the no vote. Since then, his blog "for institutions written by and for citizens" has been full.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1539

Blogs, new masters of thought. On his site, in July 2002, Tristan Nitot, president of Mozilla Europe, an association dedicated to the development of free software, noted a tip every day for better use of Internet browsers. Around fifty Internet users were there every day. A small base of loyal followers, already, who encouraged him to persevere. Today, his posts on Web standards can attract up to 25,000 visitors per day. "I didn't do anything special for this," explains Tristan Nitot. "This craze is a surprise to me." Is the blog becoming a new vector of influence? Among the 6 to 7 million blogs listed in the French blogosphere, some have in any case become musts, essential, very influential. For the most part, their creators did not seek it. It happened like that, all at once, or on the contrary patiently, over the weeks, through the posts published, the comments and the responses left. On their blogs, they talked about new technologies, sustainable development, literature or music, cooking or simply the spirit of the times. Some told their life stories, confided their feelings. Some were already known, most anonymous. And then, one day, they realized that their words were read, that their opinion counted. They had acquired notoriety, they had become influential bloggers. "It wasn't intentional, but I'm delighted and I got into it," admits Jean Véronis, professor of linguistics and computer science at the University of Aix-en-Provence. On his blog, Aixtal, devoted to language technologies, 1,500 Internet users consult some 4,500 pages every day. Aixtal had his moment of glory: he was the one who pointed out some of Google's aberrations and demonstrated that the search engine was "inflating" its figures. The story was published by the New York Times, and Google corrected its press releases downwards. Success is often "a niche success", according to Chryde, one of the hosts of the Blogothèque, a collective blog dedicated to independent music, visited every day by 2,500 Internet users. For Chryde, the adventure began in September 2003. The young man had two passions: blogs and music. "The idea," he explains, "was to talk about music differently, in an intimate, transversal and offbeat way." It didn't take long for the music site to find success. "I think we've renewed the way we talked about music until then," analyzes Chryde. On the blogothèque, we don't talk about a piece of music if we can't give people a listen, show a clip. We were lucky to create something at the right time." Today, there are about fifteen volunteers contributing to the collective. Record companies, who can no longer ignore them, invite them to conferences and previews. The real influence of blogs is difficult to measure precisely. Because here as elsewhere, influence does not necessarily rhyme with affluence. "Audience is only one of the criteria we take into account to select a site, but it is far from being the only one," explains Sandra Albertolli, head of the Influence agency, which defines itself as an "agent of influential blogs and sites." "We also check its referencing in the main search engines. We observe the quality of the texts, the graphics. We also have to take into account the expertise of the blogger and evaluate that of his readers," she adds. There are only a few tools to precisely and objectively evaluate the audience of a blog. The rare measuring instruments are American and often ignore the small French blogosphere. The best known of these tools, Technorati - which is also a search engine dedicated to blogs - lists, to establish its ranking, the number of links and sites referring to a personal page. In the "top 100" established by Technorati, there are no French people. The blog of Loïc Le Meur, famous "netentrepreneur", is considered the reference of the French blogosphere: it was, at the end of February, in 598th position in the Technorati ranking, with 4,021 links from 1,111 sites. Embruns, the personal notebook of Laurent Gloaguen, one of the most popular blogs in France, was in 2,363rd place with 1,564 links from 447 sites. With a little digging, we could also locate Tristan Nitot's Standblog in 1,634th position, Jean Véronis's language technologies in 3,024th, or Roland Piquepaille's scientific blog - in English, however - in 3,121st place. A ranking that is certainly not set in stone. "A blog can have a large audience because it talks about a fashionable or current topic. This will propel it to the top of search engines, but it is not a quality criterion, and the effect can fade just as quickly," judges Frédéric Montagnon, one of the three founders of Over-Blog, one of the largest platforms in France. "Influence cannot be measured, but felt," believes Chryde. Pascale Weeks, creator of "C'est moi qui l'ai fait!", did not imagine having to deal with this somewhat complex and vague notion. Three times a week, she publishes cooking recipes. She must have found a pleasant tone, original recipes, because from 30 visits per week when the site opened in March 2003, her blog grew to more than 4,000 visits and 8,000 page views per day. Not enough, after all, to see herself elevated to the rank of opinion leader. However, one day, the former IBM employee mentioned in a post the name, brand and place of purchase of a paring knife that she particularly liked. The store mentioned quickly ran out of stock! With blogs, notes Pierre Assouline, author of La République des livres, "the impact is immediately measurable". Writer, journalist, columnist, the former director of the monthly Lire easily transposed into the virtual universe the influence he already had in the literary world. From the start, in September 2004, success was there: 4,000 page views per day on average. He has not denied it and today reaches 8,500 page views per day, 250,000 per month. "But you have to write every day," explains the literary critic. "There is in fact a very strong correlation between the rate of publication and the number of visits," confirms Pierre Bilger, the former boss of Alstom. His economic and financial blog initially focused on issues of high salaries, particularly following the publication of his book, 4 million euros, the price of my freedom (ed. Bourin, 2004). But since the summer of 2005, his posts have diversified, and Pierre Bilger no longer hesitates to talk about television or literature. Long bound by a duty of reserve, the former civil servant believes he owes the success of his posts to his finally free speech: each month, 8,000 to 10,000 visitors go to his blog.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1540

The term "free software" comes in the middle of a debate on copyright on the Internet. Explanations. - Free software is software like any other (word processors, image editing and video playback tools, etc.), except that everyone can use it freely, on any computer. But also, modify it and distribute it, just as freely. Most free software is free. However, it should not be confused with "freeware": for a program to claim free software status, its source code (i.e. the instructions that determine its operation) must be public. Everyone can thus study its action and adapt it to their needs. This is not the case for many free software programs, delivered only in the form of an executable file. - It was a former MIT programmer, Richard Stallman, who first stated the principles of free software in the 80s, inspired by the academic tradition of freely distributing research work. The best-known free software is undoubtedly Firefox, which is gradually replacing Internet Explorer: it is indeed faster, more secure and more ergonomic. But the most emblematic remains the Linux operating system (or more precisely GNU/Linux) whose latest developments, such as the Mandriva or Ubuntu versions, bring the user-friendliness that it sorely lacked. - Renowned for their quality and reliability, free software is increasingly used by companies and administrations to manage their servers and websites or equip workstations. Most of the applications at the heart of the Internet are also free software. Tested on a large scale, they also stand out for the responsiveness of their programmers in the event of a malfunction or security problem. With commercial software, the user must wait for the publisher to release a new version or a patch. - If free software is invited into the current debate on copyright, it is because it is the only one capable of simply and cost-freely solving a fundamental problem linked to what is called "interoperability". Both to protect copyright and for technical reasons, videos or digital music tracks designed to be played on Windows do not necessarily work with a Mac or systems like Linux. Some files can even only be opened by a given program and that program alone. Developers have therefore developed software to get around these incompatibilities and thus give users back... their freedom.DS

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1541

The law on copyright and related rights in the information society (DADVSI), adopted in first reading by the deputies on Tuesday March 21 (Le Monde of March 23), establishes fines targeting fraudulent Internet users according to the seriousness of their act. As the text stands, three of them will be difficult to apply. An Internet user who downloads a protected work for personal use is liable to a fine of 38 euros. However, technically, it is impossible to detect the act of downloading without requiring Internet service providers (ISPs) to systematically monitor the activity of their subscribers. However, this request is "excluded by the European directive of 2000 on electronic commerce", says Stéphane Marcovitch, general delegate of the French Association of Access Providers (AFA). An Internet user who makes a protected file available to the public, without commercial intent, is liable to a fine of 150 euros. This act can be detected by automated surveillance devices, independent of access providers. But, says Christophe Pallez, Secretary General of the National Commission for Information Technology and Civil Liberties (CNIL), "to be dissuasive, a large-scale system would have to be set up. We can ask ourselves questions about the feasibility of such a system" which requires a lot of personnel and significant technical and financial resources. Especially since ISPs charge the police or the courts "around 50 euros", says Stéphane Marcovitch, for each request to identify an Internet user. Another problem: the law does not say whether the holder of an Internet subscription is presumed responsible for an offence committed from their personal account. Authors' societies had submitted to the CNIL such a surveillance system limited to certain peer-to-peer (P2P) software - used to exchange protected files - but their deployment had not been authorised. "We are no longer in this framework," Mr. Pallez specifies, "but in that of offenses noted by the police." In this case, this surveillance would be authorized. The most difficult part remains: finding an automated and efficient system to note the offenses. "The wide variety of technical protocols for exchanging files makes it very complex, if not impossible, to set up a single surveillance system," says Christophe Espern, a member of the Fondation pour le logiciellibre, which opposes the bill. In addition, adds Mr. Espern, "Internet users will turn to encrypted and anonymous systems." Software such as Mute, Ants or Grouper make it impossible to systematically detect the availability of protected works. A specialist in the matter explains that the government could always choose to put a few judicial police officers in an office, who will manually issue tickets. "If that is the case," he comments, "the law will be counterproductive: the probability of being fined will be very low and the amount of the fines is not really dissuasive." The text finally provides that the publication, marketing or distribution to the public of software "clearly intended" for unauthorized exchanges of protected music or films is subject to criminal sanctions (up to three years in prison and a fine of 300,000 euros). But the majority of P2P software publishers are not French. In addition, the distribution of these programs is often done through websites hosted abroad. "Our greatest fear," says Mr. Marcovitch, "is to see court decisions forcing us to filter the Internet to make this or that site inaccessible, on the grounds that it makes certain software available." Such constraints would be "ineffective," according to him. "On the one hand, when we block a site, we block all sites hosted on the same server, including those that have nothing to do with the crime," he explains. "On the other hand, by the time we block the site, the software declared illegal will have migrated to other servers and will ultimately still be accessible."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1542

"We were waiting for Malraux, it was Maginot!" summarized the PS deputy Christian Paul, on December 21, 2005, in the middle of examining the bill on "copyright and related rights in the information society" (DAVDSI). The very late transposition of the European directive of 2001 into French law, narrowly voted on Tuesday March 21 by the deputies - the closest vote of the legislature -, has become one of the worst parliamentary nightmares of the Villepin government. The challenge was enormous: it was nothing less than adapting the law to combat piracy practiced by more than 10 million French people, accustomed to downloading music or films for free on the Internet. Few of them have been prosecuted so far, but all risked up to three years in prison and a fine of 300,000 euros. As in any good Shakespearean dramaturgy, nothing was spared: "traitors" blew up a seemingly well-oiled scenario; twists and turns followed one after the other; parties tore each other apart; lobbies maneuvered with more efficiency than discretion. The lack of preparation of the text and the litany of blunders reached new heights. Wednesday, December 21. The French are more busy with their Christmas shopping than looking at a technically complex bill. However, the deputies are there and already irritated by the methods used to hastily swallow a text that so closely concerns young people and the future of culture. The oldest remember that Jack Lang had succeeded, in 1985, in having the current law on copyright passed unanimously. This time, we are not taking that path. The fact that the Virgin group set up in the Assembly to demonstrate paid downloading has irritated more than one person. However, Pierre-Christophe Baguet (UDF) denounced en bloc "four years of delay, three nights devoted to this text on the eve of the end-of-year holidays, amendments tabled at the last minute". The session was stormy. Many deputies were beginning to understand that their children or grandchildren were in fact delinquents who did not know it. With the new bill from Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, the Minister of Culture, these sanctions will also apply to Internet users who bypass DRM (Digital Rights Management), these "technical protection measures" for protected works: before you can illegally download music or a film, a hacker must have bypassed the digital locks that protect these works. Which is unlikely to be very popular at a time when Santa Claus will be placing thousands of MP3 players under the Christmas trees. UMP MP Alain Suguenot and the Socialists are defending a similar amendment for once, which opens the way to the "global license": the first article of the law authorizes downloading in exchange for a monthly fee of a few euros for rights holders. First twist, the amendment is voted. Against the government's advice. Twenty-two UMP MPs have gone over to the "enemy". It is a resounding slap in the face for the Minister of Culture. The entire architecture of his bill is called into question. "RDDV" is pale. The global license, like the European question, has caused the parties to implode. The PS group and its "three musketeers" Patrick Bloche, Didier Mathus and Christian Paul, are in favor of it. The party's leading lights, François Hollande, Jack Lang, Catherine Tasca and Anne Hidalgo, in charge of culture, are hostile to it: the global license would, in their eyes, contribute to quickly burying the record and film industry. Anne Hidalgo organizes a counter-fire as soon as the amendment is voted on, by bringing together musicians and filmmakers at the Café Le Bourbon, a stone's throw from the National Assembly. The government is furious, but Bernard Accoyer, the president of the UMP group, is not in favor of a second deliberation - a second vote - which would amount to making the rebellious deputies eat their hats. Frédéric Lefebvre, Nicolas Sarkozy's parliamentary advisor, called to the rescue, suggests in vain to rewrite the article and vote again during the night. The government decides to suspend examination of the project indefinitely. "RDDV" is asked to review its copy. It is suggested at Matignon to considerably ease the sanctions against Internet users who download illegally. While waiting for the debates to resume, an intense lobbying activity begins. For two and a half months, each side will jealously defend its interests. On one side, Public Alliance Artistes, ardent advocate of the global license, brings together family associations, performing artists' rights management companies, Spedidam and Adami, who hope to manage this new tax for the benefit of their members, the consumer advocate of UFC-Que Choisir and the EUCD.Info association, which campaigns for free software. On the other side, representatives of the music industry, cinema, and all other authors' societies, led by Sacem, are very hostile to this tax. Each camp mobilizes thousands of artists. "Sacem has clearly manipulated them," Didier Mathus told the PS. "We have only heard the profession's bank accounts. » In violation of the Assembly's rules, Jacques Blache, the Sacem lobbyist, repeatedly discussed with members of the Minister of Culture's office in the Salle des Quatre-Colonnes, reserved for parliamentarians and the accredited press. An amendment aimed at penalizing publishers and promoters of software distributing unprotected files was even somewhat cryptically named the "Vivendi amendment". For their part, the representatives of the cinema industry proved effective: as if by magic, the global license suddenly only concerned music. The world of Internet service providers (Wanadoo, Free and others) also escaped in extremis a tax for cultural creation copied from the obligations imposed on televisions to finance cinema. Manufacturers were not left out. Equipment manufacturers were working behind the scenes to continue marketing DVD and CD copiers. Apple, backed by the enormous success of its iPod, is up in arms against "interoperability" - the ability to play a song on any device. The manufacturer will ultimately not win its case: two amendments will be voted on in the snatch on March 17 at dawn. Before the debates resume, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres tries to explain that his revised bill has found "a good balance" between creators, Internet users and cultural industries. Fraudsters no longer risk prison, but a simple fine: 38 euros for a simple pirate download, 150 euros when these files are available to others - which is almost always the case with software currently in circulation. To convince, the minister launches a dialogue site, téléchargement.com, inaugurated with great fanfare at the Palais de Tokyo on February 22. Very quickly, it was the tables turned: the supporters of the global license swooped on the site to say all the bad things they thought about his bill. In the Assembly, Bernard Accoyer restored a bit of discipline to the UMP and reached a consensus to abandon the global license, the principle of which had nevertheless been adopted. Christine Boutin remained alone, joined late by UMP Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, to defend this license with the Greens, the PS and the communists. "I didn't mind voting like them, but they had to stick to it," she said. When the text returned to the Assembly on March 7, there was another dramatic turn of events: the government announced the withdrawal of the first article, which had paved the way for the global license. Martine Billard (Greens) and Christian Dutoit (PCF) had every right to denounce the "government's forcing through". The President of the National Assembly, Jean-Louis Debré, was forced to embark on a course in constitutional law: "It was probably the procedure most likely to ensure the sincerity and clarity of the debates," he assured. The opposition went wild and promised to lodge an appeal with the Constitutional Council. On the government bench, the Minister of Culture swallowed the snakes one after the other: Pierre Mazeaud, President of the Constitutional Council, telephoned him on March 8 to inform him that the withdrawal of an article currently under examination might indeed be unconstitutional. The next day, with a gloomy face, the Minister announced in session that he was reintroducing the article withdrawn two days earlier. A godsend for his opponents. And, on March 9, began one of the most absurd episodes that parliamentarians have ever experienced: the government asked them to examine a text in order to better vote against it. After hours of socialist obstruction, UMP MP Yves Bur, who chaired the session, blurted out into the microphone, exasperated: "But what the hell is this?" Despite the mind-boggling nature of the chosen procedure, the global license was buried early in the evening. Article One was rejected in the absence of PS, PCF, Green and UDF MPs, who left the Chamber ranting: "You are dishonoring the Assembly!"; "It's scandalous!". Once the storm had calmed, everyone was passing the buck for the fiasco. But the one who came out of the ordeal the most exhausted was the Minister of Culture. He will have to resume examining the text in May, this time in the Senate.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1543

London special correspondent As they have done every month for the past five years, they meet at LimeHouse TownHall, in a remote corner of the East End, near the Thames docks. In the large, icy hall of this former disused town hall, taken over by groups of artists and activists after having been a boxing club in the 80s and an emergency shelter for the homeless, a motley crew, albeit mainly male, and "trendy" in the literal sense, swarmed last weekend. Bearded and bushy with greasy hair and shabby sweatshirts, coder in colorful pants and dreadlocks, intellectual and arty nerds, engineer fussing over his worrying installations, or bald guy with glasses in quilted gabardine, checking for the umpteenth time the suspicious connections of his machines, they wouldn't miss a Dorkbot for anything in the world (dork for "poor guy", and bot for automaton). From Berlin to Bahia. Launched in New York in 2000 by Douglas Repetto, research director of the Center for Computer Music at Columbia University, Dorkbot is an informal club of artists, tinkerers and geeks "who do weird stuff with electricity," according to their slogan. The club has spread throughout the world, with more than thirty cities (from Berlin to Bombay, from Medellín to Melbourne, from Sofia to Bahia) opening their cells, offering a platform to all these mad scientists, half-artists, half-genius tinkerers, whose "works" elude any attempt at labeling. This weekend, the London cell, the first international replica of "Dorkbot NYC," founded by the artist programmer Alex McLean and the netactivist Saul Albert, celebrated its fifth anniversary. "In London, lots of people were tinkering in their corners, but there was no event open enough to welcome their inventions: too weird for art galleries, and not serious enough for science museums. At Dorkbot, we often present unfinished projects, the intimate and friendly context gives people confidence", explains Saul Albert. The underground event, organized by volunteers which initially brought together around fifty aficionados, is attracting more and more people. There were more than 200 on Saturday, and almost as many the next day hanging out at Dorkfest, one of the many events of Node.London, a multimedia season held throughout the month of March (read opposite), jargoning resistance, high voltage and binary poetry, discussing free software and recycling with the gurus of electricity. "Precious garbage". Among them, the excellent James Larson, a 38-year-old bachelor, a Dorkbot London veteran; he has attended almost every session assiduously. "I come here because I have nowhere else to go," laughs the electronics engineer with the shiny skull, pulling his trousers up to his chest, in front of an audience charmed by his very "British" humour, his nerdy jokes, full of self-mockery, and his crazy inventions. A passion for machines that goes back to his early childhood. Most of the objects he uses, his "precious rubbish", he picks up in the street, "before the dogs have corrupted them". "Often, they are a little broken, but they are rarely completely dead", explains this specialist in random connections. He does not seek to repair them but rather to find new unusual functions for them. Connect an amplifier with a CD player and an old sixties TV to obtain magnificent vector arabesques (or how to transform your TV into a Vectrex), or a musical keyboard, with an amplifier and an old computer screen, to generate synchronized psychedelic visuals. "In the early 80s, the CD player was an exotic, glamorous thing, only the rich had one, today it's nothing. We throw away equipment every two years to buy new ones, we consume more and more. 99% of things thrown away can be reused, we can learn with them, have fun. My mission is to come to their rescue." In front of a hilarious audience, he reveals how to create a sophisticated clock from a rotting shrimp mayo sandwich. To avoid blunders during his (rare) romantic dates, he has developed a system for detecting his partner's stress, by stuffing a fork and knife with sensors. An invention that he tests, in the absence of a romantic date, "on [his] mother" one Christmas Eve. His next challenge, to build a "Romulan Disrupter", a nod to Star Trek fans, a weapon based on energy discharge. Poetic prototypes. Unlike the Lépine competition, the "works" presented at the Dorkbot, despite their high sophistication and the hours of work involved, have no commercial application, prototypes without functionality, beautiful, funny, poetic and most of the time totally useless. Mike, aka Dr High Voltage, is a fan of Larson's shows. His specialty? High voltage, as indicated by the slogan on his garish yellow T-shirt. The electronics engineer is active like a battery around his display, manipulating ultra-dangerous electrical systems before the terrified eyes of the audience. "The Destruct-O-Tron (1) is an accumulator that stores enough energy to kill you instantly," he warns, almost electrocuting himself, not to be done at home. Mike's thing is to smash everything. After connecting a coil to his Destruct-O-Tron, the festival begins, crushing cans, disintegrating CDs, spectacular explosion of guitar strings that the audience can admire in slow motion thanks to a makeshift camera that dissects the movement up to a thousand frames per second. In life, Mike does "boring stuff for industrial companies," and, since the age of five, he has spent most of his free time dismantling machines: "When I buy something, the first thing I do is take it apart to see what's inside. Today, kids prefer to press buttons." Mr. 1 million volts has also imagined an unusual instrument, the Spark-O-Phone, or how to make electrons jazz, lightning-making machines, flame tubes, based on Jacob's ladder and flammable gas. Mike discovered Dorkbot on the Net, finds that their slogan applies perfectly to his experiments. Even if it would be more accurate to say "people who do weird things with technologies in general". Young people are more likely to work on software than hardware, they too get their hands dirty, dexterously manipulating computer code. Strongly represented at Dorkbot, the free software community, artists and developers who create their own open source tools (to copy, distribute and modify freely). Like Fluxus, presented by Alex McLean and Dave Griffiths, which allows you to program sound and image live. The audience can read the score live and appreciate the result simultaneously. Another audiovisual performance, the hypnotic one by Chun Lee and Oli, from the artistic collective Goto10, using other software such as Processing or PureData. The (two) girls on the program proved that female under-representation was not inevitable. "We had a competition one day to see which Dorkbots had the highest percentage of girls. London came out on top by a wide margin, with 15%, rejoices Saul. The women who come to present their projects are often accomplished artists, we would also like to invite those who tinker in their bedrooms. That's why we put out a call for Dorkettes. Our goal is to reach 50-50." The pretty Mileece captivated the audience with her musical philodendrons (2). Stuffing the green plant with electrodes, she exploits their electrical potential. "Plants react to their environment, I wanted to transform their reaction into music." Fiddling with a sheet of paper, she shows how stress alters the result. "It's really weird, what happens with plants, they react to my emotional state, or when I have my period." The audience, who bombard her with questions, will also learn that some plants are punkier than others and that the only recipe for plants to stay alive is love. Three-headed dragon. More poetry, although below the belt this time, with the ineffable Yoshi, the undisputed star of the evening, the only retiree who has a resident card at the Ministry of Sound club, "they like my look and my way of dancing drum & bass," he laughs, parading around in his customised orange work trousers with flashing LEDs and embroidery representing a woman's body. "Since I'm an old pig, the hairy Velcro on the back pocket immediately inspired me." Unveiling his new sculpture, the Japanese with the long ponytail presents his version of Cupid. Two automatic arms that bend a bow with a penis topped with an inflatable condom as an arrow. He also has a motorized dinosaur skeleton to his credit, a three-headed dragon that moves, a sculpture of women's legs that wiggle when air is blown in... Formerly a photographer, the inventor, passionate about botany and a sociology graduate, tinkered freelance with sophisticated prototypes for the big Japanese photo labs (Canon, Minolta, Pentax). Labs that ended up criticizing him for working for the competition. "I decided then to move away from these commercial considerations, and to do only useless things. Art is not a commercial activity, it is a pure intention, devoid of any commercial ulterior motive," analyzes the creator, a follower of Zen Buddhism. photos Michael Grieve (1) www.electricstuff.co.uk (2)www.mileece.net

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1544

London special correspondent Throughout the month of March, electronic arts are taking place online, in the galleries and streets of London. Despite a thriving scene, no major event has ever been dedicated to it. This is now the case with Node.London ("node" being the acronym for "networked, open and distributed events"). Node.L takes the opposite approach to the big gatherings of the genre, by proposing a collaborative, voluntary and completely decentralized organization model, inspired by the open source philosophy. "Anyone can join through the website, become an organizer and propose an event in turn. There is no theme, no curator," explains Tim Jones, coordinator. "The aim is to make visible the diversity of proposals and to establish a dialogue between the different actors." The season brings together more than 150 projects in forty locations in the city, crossing alternative venues and institutions such as the ICA, the Tate and the Science Museum. "No star system, everyone had their say," says Ruth Catlow, from the Net-art group Furtherfield.org, curator of the HTTP gallery, "it allows for the cross-fertilization of circles, artists, programmers, hackers, activists working locally with communities." A gentle chaos that is the charm and the puzzle of the festival, the public must also fit into this project and find its way among the workshops, performances, conferences, scattered throughout the four corners of the megalopolis. A look at the ICA, which is showing Everlandia, a tool that lets you create your own virtual paradise and print it on a postcard; a romantic audio tour of the former Wapping docks; a cutting-edge evening devoted to sound and video experiments at the very chic Whitechapel Gallery; an exhibition of Andy Deck's artistic software at the HTTP gallery, set up in a warehouse in north London; a trip to Dorkfest in the East End; a trip to the noise workshop at the premises of Mongrel, pioneers of net-art who have exiled themselves to Southend, in the "least fashionable county in England", an hour's train ride from the capital. Their Jelliedeel Shed studio is located in an industrial complex surrounded by plumbers' and construction workers' workshops. "Typical Mongrel," smiles Graham Harwood. Far from the London hype, the committed collective, working with the underprivileged and the left behind, is preparing a new project with the Congolese community, Telephone Trottoire, a system that allows Congolese news to be circulated and commented on by telephone, launched tomorrow, as well as Hairy MPs, a website that allows the assiduity of British parliamentarians to be monitored: the more they attend sessions, the more their hairiness grows. "Node.L is a great initiative," Graham emphasizes, "because it brings together large institutions and small groups. As the organizing "node," we were able to involve people who are usually excluded from this type of event." This weekend, the collective of sound tinkerers AP and Kingdom of Piracy are organising Plenum at Limehouse TownHall, a twelve-hour "tour de force" around free software, the recurring theme of Node.London, also on the programme of the Takeawayfestival, dedicated to "Do-it-yourself media", from 21 to 31 March. The festival closes on 1 April with Sum(1,4,6), a festive evening including a cyber-fight between two legends of Net-art, Arcangel vs. Subculture, who will face off by hacking a web page live.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1545

Adopted! The deputies voted solemnly yesterday on the highly contested bill on copyright and related rights in the information society (DADVSI) defended by the Minister of Culture, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres. In the two-thirds filled hemicycle, the text was adopted by 286 votes for, 193 against. The opposition deputies voted against, as did a majority of the UDF. The UMP voted for but seven of its members including Christine Boutin and Nicolas Dupont-Aignan voted against, and 14 abstained. The socialists reiterated that they would refer the matter to the Constitutional Council and did not fail to point out that the DADVSI had been adopted by less than 50% of the 577 members of the Assembly. This was the closest vote of the legislature that began in 2002. A nightmare. While the text voted by the Assembly after some sixty hours of often epic and passionate debates is heading to the Senate, where it will be examined from the beginning of June, many voices have not waited for its final adoption to say all the bad and/or good things that this "balance" law inspires in them, according to RDDV. With the next nightmare of the DADVSI in the background: the implementation of a text that, by dint of trying to reconcile the most contradictory requirements, has become totally ineffective. In the camp of the cultural industries, of which RDDV has been the tireless defender by promoting paid platforms for the distribution of cultural goods, the first reactions are rather positive. After the resounding slap in the face that was the temporary adoption of a global license paving the way for the legalization of P2P exchanges, the vote on a system of sanctions by fines that could be applied massively is a crucial point. "This law provides weapons that, if used, in particular by sanctioning each downloaded file, explains Jérôme Roger, of the Upfi, the main association of independent producers, will help to overcome the feeling of impunity with regard to downloading." A drastic application of sanctions that Gilles Bressand, of the Snep, the majors' union, also wants. "This is not the big night of the end of downloading," he emphasizes, "but between the fines, the reinforced information for Internet users and the development of legal offers, things should improve." Satisfied with the legalization of the anti-copy protection measures placed at the heart of the law, the producers fear on the other hand that the cause of interoperability, which is primarily the responsibility of technology providers, has been pushed a little too far. "Under the guise of achieving a balance between user comfort and the necessary protection of works, we may have taken the risk of weakening the status of DRM," continues Jérôme Roger, "clarification will be necessary in the Senate." The tone of voice is symmetrically opposed among consumer associations. "At best it will be inapplicable, at worst it will lead to a clash between Internet users and the world of culture," predicts Julien Dourgnon, of UFC-Que choisir, according to whom this law "will accentuate the migration towards encrypted and anonymized P2P networks." After the advances obtained for free software by the stricter supervision of DRM, the supporters of this open model seem to hesitate between two attitudes. On one side, the refusal front, camped by the FreeSoftware Foundation, opposed to any legalization of software locks; on the other, the "pragmatists" of the Association of Free Software Users (Aful), who, like their leader Bernard Lang, believe that the text marks "regressions", such as the outlawing of P2P, but also advances. "The right to publish source code and the obligation to make interoperability possible preserve the fate of free software," he explains. "And then all this is so vague, so applicable to anything, that it can become a defense argument." Having become Ségolène Royal's copyright advisor, Aziz Ridouan, 17, from the "Audionautes" collective, still does not believe that the DADVSI can change anything in the increasingly established practice of 10 million French people. "This law is a waste of time," he says, "which reconciles no one. The attention with which Internet users followed this debate is the only real positive point, and it bodes very well for the presidential election."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1546

Ten million French people, about one in four households, download illegally from the Internet. If the National Assembly strictly followed the contours of French society, a good hundred deputies would engage in activities that the law condemns. Many of them assure us that this is not the case, let's admit the omen. During the discussion on the so-called "DADVSI" law (copyright and related rights in the information society), Libération questioned some of the thirty most assiduous deputies about their Internet practices during the debate, which was also the first interactive debate in parliamentary history. "I don't download," says Laurent Hénart (37, UMP, Meurthe-et-Moselle). Neither do his daughters, they are only 10 and 3 years old. "I don't download and I don't have an MP3 player," says Martine Billard (55, Green, Paris), who says she "prefers to listen to a CD in a comfortable armchair." "I remain attached to the pleasure of buying a physical medium, CD or DVD," adds Patrick Bloche (49, PS, Paris), who is nevertheless a great critic of the government's project. "I don't have the time," says Alain Suguenot (54, UMP, Saône-et-Loire), who admits that his children (18 and 21) "have already had to do it, like 80% of Internet users today." It's like the Bayrou family: François (54, UDF, Pyrénées-Atlantiques) doesn't practice, but his offspring... "I think so. With all the compilations they have, I imagine they download." "But they buy CDs, too," the UDF leader is quick to point out. The oldest (21 and 23 years old) of the five children of Dominique Richard (51 years old, UMP, Maine-et-Loire) promised their father that once the law was passed they would go "on legal download offers" and those of Richard Cazenave (30 and 25 years old) are "aware that copyright is respected". Like their father. "Neither thugs nor delinquents" On the other hand, at Christian Paul's (45 years old, PS, Nièvre), "we have legalized P2P in the family circle". Concretely? "We go to the cinema, we buy DVDs (on fnac.com...), but between the release in theaters and the release of the DVDs, my two daughters (13 and a half years old, and 10 and a half years old) download The Inconnus and Harry Potter which they watch with their little brother (6 and a half years old).... We are a family quite emblematic of the cohabitation of models." As for Henri Emmanuelli (60 years old, PS, Landes), he claimed the record for the number of titles downloaded on his MP3... to the point of provoking emotion among those around him: "They're going to put him in prison for us!..." "For once, in the hemicycle, we were dealing with delinquency that affects the children of MPs", smiles the Green Martine Billard. All hands on deck. Even in the ranks of the most resolute opponents of peer to peer, the most ardent defenders of copyright, there are parents and grandparents with tender hearts. This is demonstrated, for example, by several interventions by the president of the UMP group, Bernard Accoyer (60 years old, Haute-Savoie): "No, our children or our grandchildren who occasionally download a song or a piece from the Internet are neither thugs nor delinquents who should be tracked down, apprehended and punished." And he added: "France is faced with enough delinquency and violence for us not to make a mistake about our target or our fight." But there is more to life than family. Blood ties can soften the national representation, lobbies ensure that deputies do not forget the interests of the cultural industry. The lobbies, therefore, were omnipresent throughout the parliamentary debate, trying to take things back in hand. In December, at the invitation of the Minister of Culture and Communication, Fnac and Virgin held demonstrations of their commercial platforms near the hemicycle. Leaflets in dubious taste circulated on the Internet, such as this fake Top 10 called "The defeats of music (2006 awards)", awarding, among other things, a "prize for female interpretation" to Christine Boutin (62 years old, UMP, Yvelines), because "she only knows the chairs when it comes to files". The left attributed the unsigned pamphlet to Sacem (Society of authors, composers and music publishers). For being the author of the (defunct) global license, the socialist Patrick Bloche was threatened, again on the Web, by the competing candidacy of a singer (Patrick Bruel) in his constituency in 2007. Alain Suguenot, UMP rebel and opponent of the government text, is convinced that the Rencontres cinématographiques de Beaune, organized every year in October by the ARP (Civil Society of Authors, Directors, Producers) in the city of which he is mayor, are threatened with disappearance: "It's almost done," he says. Unleashed on the forums The discussion on the DADVSI bill is coming to an end and Internet users, who understand that the die is cast, are unleashed on the forums. Laurent Wauquiez, the youngest member of the National Assembly, had gotten into the habit of coming to chat every evening of debate on one of the most active, Framagora. That night, the resentment boiled over. "Come on, goodbye Mr. Wauquiez and good luck. Think about your career change." March 17, 00:28, signed "morgoth". "Now it's time for me to go underground, since my country is taking on water, forcing me into hiding and turning me into a criminal." March 17, 00:34, "SixK". Thousands of Internet users followed the long sessions of the DADVCI debate live on the National Assembly website, with up to 17,000 simultaneous connections. They reacted in real time, with each elected official finding in their office computer, at each of the session interruptions, the batch of messages intended for them: "Wauquiez, on this amendment you are still off the mark! You shouldn't have sub-amended, you should have voted against it!!!!" (March 16, 23:59, Framagora, signed "jahrynk"). They tried to understand the art of the amendment: "How is it possible to vote for amendment 272 if article 1 is rejected, since [...] amendment 272 is attached to article 1?" (email addressed to Martine Billard). On their forums, they echoed the best of the classiest formulas (like: "Removing Internet users' freedoms is like trying to put a thong on a whale", Henri Emmanuelli). They discovered a political world that they did not know, or knew badly. When Laurent Wauquiez registered on Framagora, they were suspicious. The MP rebelled: "What dismays me is to see the limits of your openness and of electronic democracy among some people." "Guys, he's not wrong, for once an elected official comes to get his hands dirty on a forum with direct access, we should try to welcome him a little better", replied "drkarma". On the other hand, the young MP's efforts to explain the complexity of his work were in vain: "It is impossible for an MP to master technical subjects in all the details [...] You are right, it is one of the big prob [sic] of French democracy, we pass laws that are too technical, but you have not missed the fact that it is the government that proposes them and that the power of Parliament is very limited," argued the elected official. "So if the subject is so technical there must be a way to deal with it differently to allow experts to give their (enlightened) opinion and thus allow legislators (who have become enlightened) to legislate," replied, imperturbable, "goldoraf." With the Internet, everyone can see who is or is not in the chamber, and who says what. "But we must legislate for the general interest and not for a category of voters in particular," worries Richard Cazenave, a user of free software. "It's not because I receive a dozen emails that all have the same meaning that I'm going to follow them," continues Dominique Richard, who is wary of his colleagues "who take up the arguments of Internet users and turn the Assembly into a café." The voter and the Internet user The deputies who support the Internet users' cause have won critical acclaim. They have even, sometimes, managed to change their correspondents' view of the political world: "I wanted first to congratulate you on your knowledge, which I must admit really surprised me for a politician, of everything related to the Internet and IT in general" (email to Patrick Bloche). "Despite the almost foregone conclusion, I am happy to see deputies present who are working and getting involved. It's really nice to see" (an IT specialist from Aix-en-Provence to Patrick Bloche). "Mrs. Billard, I love listening to you [...] and we, the Internet users, can clearly see that you have mastered the subject. Mrs. Billard, keep it up, you are a golden MP" (message from Karim, 21 years old). The voter is never far from the Internet user. The UMP is taking a beating, others can hope to reap the benefits: "I will remember this during the upcoming elections", writes a correspondent to François Bayrou, a friend of Internet users and free software, to congratulate him. "I never thought I would one day support left-wing MPs, but the action of the right in this affair has truly scandalized me and for the first time my vote, however small it may be, will not be for them during the next elections", states "Alexandre" on Christian Paul's blog. For the socialist Didier Mathus (53 years old, Saône-et-Loire), the passion of the exchanges recalls the vigor of the discussions prior to the referendum on the European Constitution: "Internet users believe that the powerful want to dictate their law to them. The project was perceived as challenging the right to technological progress." In all the texts that touch on freedoms and private life "the relationship with Big Brother", says Richard Cazenave, civil society invites itself into the debate and blurs the right-left divides. This one also mixed up the bobos of Paris and the rural dwellers of Saône-et-Loire.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1547

On Friday morning, March 17, at 4 a.m., the deputies completed the examination under emergency procedure of the twenty-nine articles of the bill on copyright and related rights in the information society (DAVDSI). For Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, Minister of Culture and Communication, the transposition into French law of the European directive of 2001 was akin to a parliamentary nightmare. This very complex text, largely revised since the first debates on Christmas Eve 2005, must still be approved by a solemn vote on Tuesday, March 21 in the National Assembly before being examined in May in the Senate. What will it change for Internet users, artists and the cultural industries? Graduated and reduced sanctions for Internet users. The Minister of Culture has considerably reduced the sanctions regime compared to the first draft of his text and compared to current legislation. Illegal downloads will no longer be punishable, as they are today, by three years in prison and a fine of 300,000 euros. Three levels of sanctions are provided for in the event of circumvention of technical protection measures (TPM) against illegal downloading. Fraudulent Internet users will risk a fine of 38 euros. A fine increased to 150 euros if they share the illegally downloaded works. This is likely to be the case often, since almost all piracy is carried out via peer-to-peer (P2P) software, based on this principle of exchange. The scope of the sanctions is still unclear. The minister simply specified that "the infringement reports will be carried out by P2P software that downloads the address of the offending Internet user". The offence will be noted by a judicial police officer, and Mr Donnedieu de Vabres announced the creation of "specialized State services", similar to those that fight cybercrime. When will the fault be admitted? From the first offence? These questions should be decided by decree and by the Council of State. For the most serious cases, graduated sanctions complete the system. The holder or user of MTP circumvention software is liable to a fine of 750 euros; a "hacker" who decrypts these MTPs risks a fine of 3,750 euros. Providers of circumvention means are exposed to six months of imprisonment and a fine of 30,000 euros. A severe crackdown on illegal downloading software. Still in this logic of fighting piracy, it was decided, via an amendment, to punish with three years of prison and 300,000 euros of fines the fact of publishing and making available to the public "knowingly" software allowing the "illegal downloading of protected works or objects". This provision, which makes the PS and the Greens fear "the death of free software", does not however apply to software intended for collaborative work or research. A college of mediators to decide on the right to private copying. The number of authorized private copies - made for one's own use from legally acquired works - is ultimately not included in the law. A college of mediators, composed of three members including two magistrates appointed for six years, will settle disputes between rights holders and users, and will establish the terms of exercise of private copying. A way of following the recent case law of the Court of Cassation and not excluding the possibility that these copies, at least for DVDs, may be purely and simply prohibited. This new administrative authority will have four months at most to rule on each case, and an appeal procedure is planned. "Interoperability" between media is favored. In the interests of transparency, sellers and publishers of protected products will have to inform users of the possibilities of reading and copying. Another advance in the text compared to its first version, the notion of "interoperability", which allows an Internet user who has legally downloaded a file to be able to read and copy it on all the media of their choice, is included in the law. MTPs "cannot hinder the free use of the work within the limits of the rights provided for by the intellectual property code and those granted by the rights holders", states the text of the law. To address suspicions of "Internet policing", an amendment was adopted "to prevent copyright management from de facto compromising the security of individual users, businesses and administrations". The legal license abandoned. The most controversial point, the legal license project, which deeply divided the political parties, was however abandoned. Such a hypothesis, consisting of legally downloading music in exchange for a monthly fee paid by Internet users to artists, was widely opposed by the government, the music and film industries, many artists and almost all authors' societies. However, it was supported by PS, PCF, Green and part of the UMP deputies, two rights management societies for performing artists, Adami, Spedidam and by UFC-Que choisir. In the same vein, another proposal from the opposition, consisting of taxing Internet service providers so that they finance culture, in the same way that television must invest in cinema, was also rejected.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1548

If you want to publish your videos and create your own online TV channel, you start by downloading Broadcast Machine. "It's simpler than most podcasting methods, and it's easier to install on your site than most blogging tools," Holmes assures. Broadcast Machine, like Democracy TV, integrates a P2P program called BitTorrent, which allows you to distribute large video files to a large audience without the broadcaster breaking the bank in bandwidth costs, each person who receives the file shares the burden of distribution. The other star software is Democracy Player, a video player available on Mac and since February 24 also on Windows (Linux version in progress). "Word of mouth in the blogosphere is very strong, the Windows version was downloaded 100,000 times in one weekend," Holmes Wilson rejoices. When you launch Democracy Player, you access a catalog of more than 340 channels. With a single click, he can subscribe to the channels that interest him. Pick from the videos offered or opt for automatic downloading each time a new video is posted. To watch them in full screen, it's just as simple, just sit back in your chair and press "play" without fear: Democracy Player plays almost all formats: Windows Media Player, Quicktime, Flash, Divx... "Unlike iTunes, which doesn't interpret most popular formats," notes Holmes. "Apple wants to force people to use its own formats, while Democracy Player integrates the open source VLC player (1), so it can interpret almost anything. This example also helps us understand why it was so important for the software to be free; big companies like Apple or Microsoft share the market to exclude the others. But, with open source software, the code itself is in the hands of the community. If we hope that software will help democratize media, the software itself must be democratically controlled." The project was developed with the help of developers from the United States, Canada, India, and France. Luc Heinrich, a Parisian, developed the Mac version of Democracy Player, enthusiastic about "the social aspect of the project, its activist side, its potential impact." (1) VLC is an open source video player. A project initiated by students at the Ecole Centrale de Paris, it has become a complete video streaming platform supporting a wide range of formats and which works on all platforms.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1549

"We were promised a minefield, and we got it." This joke from a regular MP in the debates on DADVSI, the copyright law that is currently stirring up the Assembly's nights, was illustrated again yesterday with the vote on amendment 150, renamed "Vivendi-Universal" on P2P sites. Supported by the majors, this highly controversial provision, including within the majority, punishes with three years' imprisonment and a fine of 300,000 euros the act of "knowingly" making software available to the public that allows the illegal downloading of "protected works or objects". It is inspired by the ruling of the American Supreme Court that outlawed Grokster, the P2P software. The opposition opposed this measure in vain, which it believes will lead to the end of the development of peer-to-peer sites in France. "I am devastated, it is a black day for free software", declared the Green MP Martine Billard while the socialist Patrick Bloche fears "the expatriation of our inventors". It consecrates the abandonment of the principle of software neutrality: only its illicit uses could be repressed by placing the responsibility on Internet users. A real sword of Damocles for the creators of these new means of exchange in full boom, to the extent that the responsibility for the circulation of illegal P2P files on their sites could be attributed to them. This drastic measure was then softened by MPs from the majority, supporters of free software. They tried to limit its impact by specifying that it does not apply "to software intended for collaborative work, research or the exchange of files or objects not subject to copyright remuneration". A correction which did not prevent UMP member Bernard Carrayon, author of the addition, from mentioning the “detestable VU amendment” on a forum.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1550

Dad's television is over (or almost). Télématin at 6:30, Le Pernaut at 1:00, soap opera at 2:00, cartoons at 4:00, the news at 8:00 and the film at 8:30, domestic life has long revolved around the small screen (now competed with by the Internet, video games and DVDs), punctuated by its relentless programme schedule. A schedule that is in the process of being shattered. "The proliferation of channels, BitTorrent and broadband are radically changing our habits", analyses Rachel Baker, a British net-artist in her project Unscheduled Television (1) which lists projects by artists and activists around television culture. For her, "reality TV and football are the last bastions of these great television masses, but," she specifies, "if, at the office, we discuss the latest Big Brother, home computers frantically download entire series of Lost watched on the chain during the weekend." The convergence of the Internet, television and cinema is disrupting consumption habits and gradually erasing the division between production, consumption and distribution. Anyone with a computer, a digital camera and a good connection can today very simply make their own videos, edit their images, and put them online on their website. Video blogs (or vlogs) are increasingly popular, and their number is growing, accelerated by the release of portable video players. Audiovisual communication is now within everyone's reach, and some already dream of creating new programs independent of the big TV channels or cable networks. Commitment. TV by all and for all, that's the goal of the Participatory Culture Foundation, a non-profit organization that wants to make television on the Internet a new open and independent mass medium. At the helm of this ambitious project, a group of young activists based in Worcester, a city of 160,000 inhabitants an hour from Boston: Holmes Wilson, 26, Nicholas Reville, 26, Tiffiniy Cheng, 25, and Nick Nassar, 24. All have a history of political engagement, supporting initiatives to fight sweatshops, or participating in operations to provide free access to technology for kids. They were especially talked about in 2004. Their collective, Downhill Battle, led the campaign to defend Danger Mouse's Grey Album. The DJ found himself at the heart of a storm for having mixed without authorization The Black Album, by rapper Jay-Z, with the White Album by the Beatles. What followed was a showdown between anticopyright activists and the major record label EMI, culminating in Grey Tuesday, a civil disobedience operation orchestrated by Downhill Battle, in which 170 sites participated, making the entire album available for free download for twenty-four hours. Once the excitement had died down, the free music activists focused their energy on a new major project: making video publishing accessible to the general public. This was achieved with the launch in February of Democracy, their Internet television platform, open source and completely free to broadcast videos to tens of thousands of people. The kit offers several software programs, one to watch videos online (Democracy Player), another to share them (Video Bomb), a third to create personalized channels (Broadcast Machine), and finally a guide that lists more than 340 free channels to date. Child's play. "Television on the Internet will be a huge opportunity to democratize the media. Anyone with a good connection will have the same power that is jealously guarded by traditional broadcasters. Currently, mass media is in the hands of a small number of large companies or the government. This is especially true for the largest, most popular and most influential of them: television. The only chance to make television better is to make it compete with the productions of individuals, by facilitating the distribution and viewing of videos online, believes Holmes Wilson. A diffusion slowed down until now by tools too complicated, too difficult to use by most Internet users. With this platform, it becomes child's play (read opposite). "As easy as turning on a TV," judges Cory Doctorow of the very prescriptive blog Boing-Boing. In the channel guide, you can find everything, animation, news, indie video clips, sitcoms, documentaries, science shows, politics ... arranged by genre or popularity. For now, English-language productions make up the bulk of the channels available. Like Rocketboom, one of the most popular vlogs on the Internet (130,000 downloads per day), hosted by the bubbly blonde Amanda Congdon. A daily three-minute clip that talks about current events and Internet culture, made with zero budget, a camera, a computer, two lamps and a world map as a backdrop. Co-director of the show, Andrew believes that the success of the show is linked to the craze for "personalized media. We don't all wear the same clothes, why should we watch the same shows? These little niche shows give us choice." Sitcoms, documentaries and game shows. Those who are annoyed by Amanda's grimaces can fall back on TikiBar, an alcoholic sitcom featuring characters whose main occupation is getting drunk, which attracts 200,000 viewers every week, or treat themselves to the Finnish feature film Star Wreck, a parody available on Death to Hollywood which lists the best homemade films. Learn more with Nova, a science show, or browse CurrentTV, Al Gore's participatory TV which offers all sorts of unformatted documentaries and reports. Have a laugh with It's Jerry Time, a great animated series evoking Lecointre-style digital collages which tells the daily misfortunes of a likeable loser. Or try your hand at burlesque with the game show This or That, hosted by buxom pin-ups with feathers and suspenders. Americans prefer the French maids of FrenchMaid TV (first to hit the channels) who teach with the purest French accent, the sexy art of videopodcasting. Europeans gently point out Zepberlin, a Berlin video art channel that emerged from the web thanks to Videobomb.com (everyone can propose a video, Internet users vote and propel the favorites to the head of the gondola). Dialogue with the public. If the Democracy platform is a dream tool, the content offered oscillates between the worst and the best, but the important thing for the collective is that everyone can participate by producing. "The same thing happens on blogs, everyone can have one, everyone can publish what they want and the most interesting material comes to the surface." Unlike traditional television, which is a one-way medium, Internet television favors dialogue with the public. As traditional broadcasters migrate online, the foundation is more interested in making sure that Internet television doesn't get taken over by them. The activists are now working full-time on developing the tools, with grants from Mitch Kapor and Andy Rappaport. "Both are entrepreneurs, Mitch Kapor is the illustrious founder of the Lotus software company in the '80s, he also supported Mozilla and Creative Commons. They're both very political. They know that small pieces of software can have a big impact on the way people work together and communicate." (1) www.ambienttv.net/content/?q = unscheduledt

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1551

THE LAW on copyright in the digital economy will ultimately not mention a minimum number of private copies. On Tuesday, March 14, on behalf of the National Assembly's Law Commission, MP Christian Vanneste (UMP) withdrew the only amendment that was supposed to allow a legally acquired work (CD, video, etc.) to be copied at least once for private use. This withdrawal, which spiced up the debates again on Wednesday, is the consequence of a recent ruling by the Court of Cassation that reiterated that private copying of DVDs is not an automatic right. "You are the Terminators of private copying!" MP Christian Paul (PS) told the Minister of Culture, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres. It will be up to a "college of mediators" to set the number of private copies possible for each medium. This new administrative authority, a "gas plant" for Martine Billard (Greens), who regretted that Parliament was thus relinquishing its role as regulator, will be the "34th" created in France, according to Didier Mathus (PS). Composed of two magistrates who will choose the third mediator, this body will be able to be seized very broadly by Internet users in the event of a dispute. Refusing to broaden the debate to the long-term financing of culture, despite a shower of amendments from the opposition, the minister did not consider taxing Internet service providers. The most beautiful barbs were fired on Wednesday evening on what is already called the "Vivendi amendment", a sign of the influence of the lobbies. The fact of "knowingly" making available to the public software allowing the downloading of "protected works or objects" will be punished by a fine of 300,000 euros and three years of imprisonment. "The aim is to punish software publishers who allow or facilitate the provision of protected files" and "not to make peer-to-peer technology illegal," said Mr. Vanneste. "This is a dark day for free software," deplored Ms. Billard. Patrick Bloche (PS) once again stressed the risks of unconstitutionality of this amendment. The minister had difficulty persuading all the deputies that this new way of monitoring and punishing was not aimed at Internet users but only at "those who want to circumvent copyright for commercial purposes."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1552

The global license is buried in the National Assembly, but the intense battle between supporters and opponents of the legalization of downloading is far from over. After three days of heated debates marked by the government's rather confused conduct on its bill to adapt copyright to the information society (DADVSI), the deputies were given a break. The examination of the text will resume from Tuesday and the vote on the entire text, initially scheduled for Wednesday, has been postponed. "We will hold out until Easter, or even Trinity," jokes the socialist Christian Paul, who promises "a few more great moments" when the deputies will address the regulation of private copying, the famous DRM or technical protection measures, or the fine system developed by RDDV (Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres) to punish Internet users still tempted by downloading on P2P networks. Explosive subjects likely to put the government in difficulty again. The parliamentarians will have to resolve issues such as those related to interoperability (for example, it is currently impossible to play music purchased on a site other than Apple on an iPod). The debates also promise to be lively around the access of free software to these new markets, which Microsoft or Apple's protection systems risk making impossible. Accused of satisfying the interests of the music industry lobbies by the left and a handful of MPs from the majority, RDDV intends to provide proof of the bright future that awaits "legal" platforms in a legal framework "secured" by its law. This reasoning is the opposite of that of the supporters of the global license, who are calling for participation by Internet players in the financing of culture. The UMP rapporteur Christian Vanneste has constantly called for a more "personalist" conception of copyright, against the so-called "collectivist" approach. "Collective management of copyright has nothing to do with collectivism," replied UMP MP Christine Boutin, who is pro-global license.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1553

IN LESS than a year, the craze generated by the Google Earth site and, to a lesser extent, by its main competitors, Microsoft's Windows Local Live or NASA World Wind, has disoriented the small world of geography. "It's a revolution of the same magnitude as the one that occurred at the beginning of the 20th century," analyzes Thierry Rousselin, spatial imaging consultant for Géo 212. Fuel brands or automobile equipment manufacturers, such as Michelin, had then launched into the production of maps, which had nothing to do with their field of activity, to give the first drivers a taste for travel. A first democratization had just freed up cartography, until then mainly confined to the services of the ministries of war. "A hundred years later, sites whose job it is not, and whose primary motivation is to place advertisements and business addresses, are shaking up the geographic information systems reserved for specialists. Everything that until now seemed extremely heavy and complicated suddenly appears easy to all users, even beginners," says Mr. Rousselin, who will organize the first French conference devoted to these upheavals in Paris on May 17. For the time being, this revolution is not yet due to the freshness of the images displayed on screens. To cover its virtual globe with an initial mesh of views taken from space, Google Earth used a fund of old photos taken by the first Landsat satellites and made available free of charge to developing countries, starting in 1999, by the American government. This substrate has since been partially covered by other layers made up of "recovered" free images, more or less recent and precise, which give its heterogeneous appearance to the whole. "CHILD'S PLAY" More recently, the site reached an agreement with the operator of the private satellite Quick Bird to use its photographic archives "by weight", i.e. at a low price. "Customers willing to pay, such as the oil industry or the defense sector, need fresh images," says Mr. Rousselin. "By buying data that is barely more dated at a low price, Google Earth opens it up to potential users who could not afford it, such as researchers, environmentalists or development specialists." The change often mixes technical advances with a mass user base. The general public was won over by the simplicity of the interface and the fluidity of 3D navigation. Since the end of June, when the free version of Google Earth went online, millions of Internet users have tried to locate the roof of their home. The site has further increased the familiarity of images taken by satellites. Scientists, for their part, are beginning to realize the uses they can make of its open-source philosophy and the simplicity of its computer language. "It has become child's play to give a new spatial dimension to your research by aggregating your own data with Google Earth images," explains Declan Butler, a reporter for the journal Nature, who devoted a report to this subject on February 16. "For the moment, it is only a question of allowing you to visualize your work on animal migrations or melting ice, but soon, new software will allow data cross-referencing and geographic analysis." Frustrated by the absence of a structured database, the journalist thus devoted a site to the avian flu epizootic, where Internet users can follow the global progression of the virus by browsing Google Earth (http://declanbutler.info/blog). PUBLIC FREEDOMS It was also another disaster that demonstrated the new power of the virtual globe. Two months after it went online, the consequences of Hurricane Katrina could be followed, almost in real time, on the site. The American government had indeed authorized that aerial images of the New Orleans region, taken daily, be consultable on Google Earth. Shortly after, this consecration was however put into perspective by the blocking, for ten days by the Pakistani authorities, of images of the earthquake that ravaged the north of the country. Virtual freedom of movement on the site remains restricted by the goodwill of those responsible for the dissemination of the images. Questions about the jamming of sensitive military bases, not only in the United States, continue to animate the community of enthusiasts of the site. Similarly, debates have not failed to arise on the risks of such a network for public freedoms. Sites using Google Earth to designate the homes of sex offenders in the United States highlight the devastating effect of the geographical "staging" of public data. These debates do not prevent Google Earth from establishing itself today as the obligatory reference for spatial information. Even an institution as venerable as the National Geographic Institute (IGN) has just made explicit reference to it, by announcing the online publication of its aerial photographs on its future "geoportal", which will open this summer. It will finally be possible to zoom in on photographs with a resolution of 50 cm, covering the entire national territory, including the French overseas territories. The 3rd dimension, integrating relief, will have to wait until 2007. Google and its competitors will have had time to capitalize on their advance.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1554

The real societal debate opened by the parliamentary discussion on copyright is all the more important since the Internet is revolutionizing access to culture, particularly to the music and films we love. The stakes are high because, if more than one in two French people are Internet users today, in time we all will be. The digital era creates an unstable balance between cultural industries and their methods of production, distribution and consumption. This is the case each time a new method of communication is established. What we must seek and achieve is a new virtuous balance that preserves and stimulates cultural creation and diversity. Two simple principles must guide the action of public authorities to build the future. The first is that copyright is a fundamental and intangible right. Heir to the Enlightenment, it has been able to adapt to technological innovations, such as the invention of the record and video. The second essential principle is the freedom of Internet users. This is the freedom to access works in the digital world. The challenge of the bill is to reconcile these two principles through a series of concrete measures, and this is the challenge that the text that I presented to the National Assembly yesterday takes up. I have always listened to everyone. This is why I wanted - in addition to the many new consultations since the suspension of the parliamentary debate - to open a website (lestelechargements.com) for dialogue between supporters of all possible systems. The surprise adoption of an amendment to establish a global license, the multiple positions taken and discussions, led me to propose to the deputies a clearer, bolder text offering more guarantees. These guarantees concern both Internet users and creators. And, among the creators, the most fragile and the most independent. Contrary to certain caricatures, what I defend is first and always the author and his work. It is legitimate to maintain a high level of punishment for all those who commit acts of counterfeiting and in particular those, individuals or legal entities, who trade in them. But, for Internet users, risking prison and a fine of 300,000 euros for an act of illegal downloading makes little sense. It makes so little sense that it is simply not applied. From now on, an Internet user who illegally downloads music or a film from the Internet for their personal use will no longer risk prison! They will incur proportionate and graduated fines. It is an undisputed fact: illegal downloading of music and films threatens, in the long term, musical and cinematographic creation. It is not the fact that they are free of charge in itself that is at issue: an artist can very well decide, if they wish, to make their works available for free on the Internet. This can be an interesting way for young talents to make themselves known. It is the illegality of making music and films available that must be combated, otherwise all of French creation will disappear and very quickly, because it will be suffocated. The global license, whether optional or not, is not a solution for Internet users, who would continue to be exposed to tracking and sanctions. A single model that - by law - would be imposed on everyone, whether optional or not, is not the highway that would lead to an ideal world, but a dead end for French creation and cultural diversity. Some Internet users have become accustomed to an unlimited offer. I hope that, for them, the flat-rate model will develop. But not everyone has the same expectations and everyone must find the offer that suits them on the Internet. I am thinking in particular of "streaming", which in French should be called "listening online", for example for a live concert; to online rental, which allows you to download a film from home to watch it for 24 hours; to discovery offers, which will allow you to listen to an artist for free for a certain period, or to have others listen to it. The bill creates precisely the conditions for the multiplication of these quality, secure, diversified offers, at reasonable prices and readable on all media. This last point is major: the bill will guarantee interoperability, which is a new freedom. If the technical measures for the protection of works - often cited by their English acronym DRM (Digital Rights Management) - are absolutely necessary for copyright to be preserved, they must not prevent interoperability. In the same way, technical protection measures must not prevent the copying, for oneself and one's loved ones, of a legally acquired musical work. The bill will therefore guarantee "private copying". To this end, it creates a college of mediators, who will assess it according to the types of media. DVDs must remain outside this provision for the time being. Finally, while it is essential to give everyone the freedom to use the medium of their choice, to choose free or proprietary software, it is necessary to criminally sanction software publishers who are clearly intended to make protected works available to the public, without authorization to do so and who enrich themselves through this activity. Why should employment, why should the remuneration due to work have a different value depending on whether or not they are of an artistic nature? This is, for me, the central issue, the societal issue, of this text. It is also at the heart of the interprofessional negotiations currently underway on employment and unemployment insurance for artists and technicians in the film, live performance and audiovisual sectors. It is at the heart of the cultural policy that I have been pursuing for two years. Let us not be mistaken: the two debates are closely linked. Finally, I would like to reiterate the obvious fact that nothing prevents the free, unprotected circulation of works, if the author has given his or her consent. The Internet can, and must, be a vector for discovering new talent, as it is also a tool for innovative creation. Of course, nothing prevents works that are free of copyright from being made accessible. This is the purpose of the digital projects that I have opened at the Ministry of Culture and Communication and of the European digital library, launched by France, which will soon make our immense literary and cultural heritage available on the networks. Copyright is an essential conquest, freedom and emancipation factor for creators. The "DADVSI" bill makes it possible to adapt it to the Internet era, while respecting the freedoms and rights of each individual. The resumption of discussion of this text is an opportunity for creation, for the influence and attractiveness of France in the digital age. \* Minister of Culture and Communication.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1555

THE GOVERNMENT played the element of surprise and caused a stir yesterday on the benches of the National Assembly. Less than twenty-four hours before the start of the session to examine the bill on copyright, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, the Minister of Culture and Communication, chose to withdraw Article I of this bill, which was considered controversial. Indeed, it was during the discussion of this article that the global license was voted on 23 December last, by a majority of the deputies present. A measure that authorises the downloading of cultural works on the Internet for a fixed fee. The seriousness was deemed such that the discussion was urgently interrupted at the end of the year, only to resume yesterday. For the government, the unilateral withdrawal of this article and its replacement by an additional article on the eve of the debate was the only way to avoid the risk of a feverish second reading before the deputies, probably at a late hour of the night. Jean-Louis Debré, President of the National Assembly, did not fail to highlight yesterday evening the dangers of "a second reading in a virtually empty chamber". The real beneficiaries of this first manoeuvre will be the disabled, who will now benefit from an exception to copyright, but also the press, which will be able to reproduce without risk of infringement "works in the public domain". The presentation, at the start of the session, of the text to replace Article I did not prevent the submission, by socialist deputies in particular, of sub-amendments calling once again for the establishment of a global licence. During this first debate, Patrick Bloche, who spoke on behalf of the PS, reiterated his attachment to the global licence system, which "cannot affect cinema". He also denounced a system of fines that "paradoxically trivializes free services and nationalizes copyright since the proceeds of fines will fall into the state budget" and not into the pockets of creators. For his part, François Bayrou, on behalf of the UDF group, hammered home his desire to defend "free software". Finally, Bernard Accoyer, president of the UMP group in the National Assembly, paid tribute to the "tremendous work of consultation" that took place throughout the months of January and February. And he considered that the new proposed text now puts forward "a balanced and free solution" with in particular a "fairer scale of sanctions". A point of view that does not seem to be shared by all deputies.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1556

After a two and a half month interruption, the examination of the highly controversial bill on copyright resumed late in the afternoon at the National Assembly in stormy conditions and the greatest confusion. Before a packed chamber, the President of the Assembly, Jean-Louis Debré, opened the debates in an atmosphere of parliamentary guerrilla warfare after a real coup de théâtre by the government. In order to avoid a new vote on the global license, which would have forced several members of the majority to change their minds after rallying to this solution in December, the government chose to purely and simply remove the first article from the text. A provision authorized by the regulations, but very rarely used during the examination of a bill. This crucial article, partially voted on, opened the way to legalizing downloading on the Internet for private use (against payment of a fee) and completely unraveled the architecture of the bill developed by Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres (RDDV). "Counterfeit". While the points of order multiplied on the opposition benches, Jean-Marc Ayrault, the president of the socialist group, denounced a "snub to the national representation" and demanded the withdrawal of a "counterfeit" text once again put on the agenda in an emergency procedure. The tone rose again when Bernard Accoyer, leader of the UMP deputies, denounced the "double talk" of the PS. Mocking, to the applause of his camp, the absence in the hemicycle of the former Ministers of Culture Catherine Tasca and Jack Lang opposed to the global license, he drew in return a scathing reply from the leader of the socialist deputies along the lines of "the deputies of the majority bow down to the dictates of the executive". After this first round of fighting, the debate calmed down when RDDV once again defended a text that he described as "balance" between copyright and the 250,000 jobs that depend on it on the one hand and Internet users' access to culture on the other. Stating that the monitoring of illegal exchanges is "monitoring of works and not of Internet users", he sought to reassure the latter by adding that it was not "conceivable" to risk prison for having downloaded a title for personal use on P2P networks. On behalf of the UDF, François Bayrou launched into a broad defense of free software, which he believes is largely threatened by the legalization of DRM, these technical anti-copy protection measures. However, he did not follow the socialist MP Patrick Bloche in defending the principle of the global license. The latter argued for the need to "authorize and remunerate rather than prohibit and sanction" not without reiterating his demand for the withdrawal of the entire text "which has become incoherent". "Article after". After new skirmishes over the new first article proposed by the government, which Henri Emmanuelli ironically described as "an article after the article that no longer exists", the examination of the text itself was able to begin. But the debates could last at least three days.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1557

n Excerpts from the speech by the Minister of Culture and Communication to the National Assembly: - "This text provides a solid guarantee of interoperability, to give everyone the freedom to use the medium of their choice, to choose free or proprietary software". - "Preserving the right to private copying is part of the new balance of the text". - "A clear distinction must be made between the Internet user who downloads a piece of music for their personal use, the people who encourage illegal downloads of works and those who profit from works illegally put online". - "It is inconceivable today that an Internet user who illegally downloads a piece of music for their personal use could risk going to prison. It is therefore necessary to graduate the sanctions". - "Access providers must contribute to prevention by widely transmitting electronic messages to their subscribers informing them of the obvious dangers of piracy for artistic creation".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1558

On December 22, a few meters from the National Assembly and in the middle of the TV cameras, it was at the Café Bourbon that the "resistance" gathered, according to the expression of the head of the Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers (SACD). Among others, we came across directors Claude Zidi and Pierre Jolivet who castigated the vote, the day before, by deputies from the right and the left, of the first stage of the legalization of peer-to-peer exchanges for a monthly fee, the famous "global license". A little earlier, the record industry, mixing producers and artists, had protested at the same place. "Witchcraft trial". These press conferences marked the beginning of hostilities: for two and a half months, the global license received truckloads of garbage dumped by record companies, the film industry and some authors and artists. In the offices of the Ministry of Culture, in the National Assembly, in the media and on the Internet, the same message was hammered home: a "creaticide" project, "demagogic", technically impractical and incapable of ensuring the financing of the cultural sector. "I didn't take it too well. The deputies voted according to their conscience to find a system that reconciles the remuneration of authors and the freedom of Internet users, and they were put on trial by witchcraft", says the leader of the UMP's global pro-license, deputy Alain Suguenot. The "celebrities" were widely mobilized to bury the license: from the end of December, the record companies sent lists of prominent artists opposed to this mechanism to the editorial offices, with quotes from Johnny Hallyday ready to use. Then the politicians multiplied the meetings: we saw Goldman and Calogero at Sarkozy's. Or Zazie and Julien Clerc with Dominique de Villepin. The Alliance public-artistes, the collective bringing together civil societies of performing artists (Adami and Spédidam) and consumer associations (UFC-Que choisir, CLCV), at the origin of the global license project, had a hard time making itself heard in this din. "The rise of the stars shocked me a lot. They are bound by contract with the producers, and cannot say much else than they do", explains Lionel Thoumyre, spokesperson for the Alliance. The collective tried to respond point by point to the "caricatures". No, the global license is not "all free": a royalty of 5 to 7 euros per month on each Internet subscription would raise several hundred million euros for creation. Yes, it would be possible to redistribute this money to authors and artists, etc. The Alliance also presented a petition from 13,500 performing artists in favor of the global license. But it lacks stars: they are more likely to be musicians in the shadows, those who play behind the stars and get little from record sales. Less sexy. Guerrilla. A second lobbying front has opened up on the Internet. Because that is where the agit-prop against the bill had been the fiercest. It is also where the collective of activists for free software EUCD (named after the directive transposed by the French text) has collected more than 150,000 signatures against the text. From blog to blog, sometimes outrageous, sometimes very specific accusations are circulating against the "Dadvsi code", the nickname given to the bill on copyright and related rights in the information society. This guerrilla warfare is not limited to a schoolboy mobilization: EUCD activists were listened to by the UMP MP Bernard Carayon, for example. Internet collectives such as the Audionautes (whose president, Aziz Ridouan, is 17) have been received by the deputies. Gag. Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres says he "underestimated the information campaign, very effective if not objective, conducted on the Internet". On February 22, he launched a "debate" site entrusted to Publicis so that Internet users and artists could talk there (1). "It is not a propaganda site", he assured during its inauguration, a party with punch at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris, where Eddy Mitchell (who came "to please [my] record company"), Alain Chamfort and Tété, but also global prolicences, showed up. The very next day, the affair turned into a gag: mischievous Internet users mocked this "180,000 euro blog", a sum spent by the Ministries of Culture and Economy. But speech was free there: one only had to read the dozens of messages that responded virulently to one of the first artist videos put online, that of Marc Lavoine warning against the destruction of "300,000 jobs". Since then, the site has been modestly reorganized to spare guests from being torn to shreds by visitors. (1) lestelechargements.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1559

The deputies who voted for the global license on December 21st actually raised a problem that many wanted to hide: it is about much more than the remuneration of authors, performers and producers of artistic works, downloaded from the Web, until now completely illegally. As proof, the heavy fines and sometimes even prison sentences that have been handed down to Internet downloaders. We thought, as legislators, that it was just a simple adaptation of the intellectual property code to new technologies. Not at all! In fact, without really being aware of it, we were shaking up colossal economic interests and placing the fundamental principles of our Republic at the heart of the debate: individual and creative freedom, respect for privacy, economic intelligence, even national defense and thereby the sovereignty of the State! It was only through the violence of the passions and pressures expressed following the surprise adoption of the famous amendment in favour of the optional global licence that we gradually saw the veil lifted on these enormous issues. But let us leave aside today the major issues, which would justify, by their magnitude, the creation of a parliamentary information mission on the place of copyright, creation and people in the age of the knowledge society. Let us stick here to simple copyright as such. Astonishment in the ranks of the National Assembly! Artists with established reputations who, believing themselves to be solidly protected in the cultural industry by their publishing house, or their major, suddenly start to use their dominant position to play the defenders of their vested interests. To do this, they show themselves ready to use arguments drawn from conceptions that date from another era, that of before the Internet, that of the late 20th century. While others, smaller, less known, less audible due to their weaker means of pressure, and who are not themselves "established" or protected, turn out to support the optional global license. In their burst of all-out communication, the "established" in the cultural sector do not fear using caricature, claiming that we would defend the total free nature of works, which is false. Internet users would be "thieves" and the redistribution of rights impossible. In fact, these pseudo-arguments are fallacious and mendacious. Concerning the so-called free nature: the optional global license is a remuneration! The optional global license would amount to "letting consumers help themselves for free in a bakery", like thieves? To take up this metaphor of works on the Internet compared to the baker's bread, we must rather note that the current position of the baker (publishing houses) consists of refusing to sell his bread! Or rather, to force people to buy only a certain pre-established choice of breads. More seriously: for artists, authors, composers and producers, the global license consists of setting up, in a very pragmatic way, fair remuneration through a distribution of the sums collected, defined according to the audience of the works, itself determined by the observation of flows and the organization of surveys carried out among panels of voluntary Internet users. It would not concern cinema. Since the debate did not really take place, the positions became radicalized from the start, even poisoned, which would justify the postponement of discussions to approach this bill with more perspective and calm. However, if the debate takes place, the future of the optional global license is already seriously compromised, due to pressure of all kinds. In the National Assembly, like Mr. Seguin's goat caught in a trap, we will fight all night. In order to affirm that behind these exchanges relating to copyright, it is much more our model of society that is at stake. As the specialist in new technologies Joël de Rosnay explains, we must move from the era of mass media to that of mass media. We are probably in the process of changing paradigms. It is about defining a digital cultural policy in which the relationship of the French to culture would be based not on constraint but on the plurality of the offer, voluntary adhesion and the recognition of talents. The question is to know with what perspective we envisage this change: with the glasses of yesterday, those of material supports, or those of tomorrow, of the immaterial? Fortunately, the Economic and Social Council, Spedidam and Adami, UFC-Que choisir, Unaf, Professor Lucas, audionauts, the entire galaxy of free software and many others have already put on the glasses of tomorrow. Do we want to build a society of freedom, diversity and our ever-rebellious and prophetic French identity or, on the contrary, one of inquisition and confinement? For our part, we choose freedom and responsibility. Christine BOUTIN, MP (UMP) for Yvelines, President of the Forum of Social Republicans

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1560

Having been pushed into the background during the first reading of the copyright law in the National Assembly, the highly controversial DRM (technical protection measures) should this time be at the heart of the debates. These technological "locks" have a dual objective. To curb the possibility of copies, which is almost infinite, by organizing the management of digital rights. And to facilitate for a few large groups dominating these markets an efficient and lucrative distribution of their content on the networks. This technological framework is not without risks. First, it could considerably complicate the maintenance of the private copy exception, the right to copy a work for personal use. The management of this right will, according to the bill, be entrusted to a "college of mediators". In addition, the legalization of these DRM by law has so far had as its main effect the multiplication of standards and formats, which is particularly harmful to the consumer. Fines. A central point of the law, these systems of control and opening/closing of digital rights will be recognized and legally protected. Circumvention will be prohibited and punished. Using software designed to bypass a DRM, as is widely available on the Internet, will cost a fine of 750 euros. An Internet user who proceeds to neutralize a DRM system himself, thus revealing a motivation that is undoubtedly greater than that of a simple user of a prohibited program, will be fined 3,750 euros. It is the provision of anti-DRM software to allow its distribution on networks that will be the most severely punished, with sentences of up to six months in prison, accompanied by fines of 30,000 euros for what will be treated as counterfeiting. Far from being limited to the role of anti-copy devices protecting copyright, DRM can be used to lock consumers into captive paid download systems. Opponents of the law have pointed out the paradox of legalizing DRM without first imposing on manufacturers the "interoperability" (i.e. compatibility) of their technical devices. The DRM promoted by Apple, which today holds 80% of the legal download market with its iTunes Music store, prevents, for example, playing a track purchased from its online store on a portable music player other than an iPod. Sony, and to a lesser extent Microsoft, are doing the same thing. And the players in free software are excluded from this new market. Exception. Powerless to impose interoperability on manufacturers with global strategies, the government promises to "guarantee" it by mentioning it in black and white in its law. It will not sanction Internet users who circumvent them for the sole purpose of implementing interoperability. Those who remove Apple's DRM not to copy the latest Madonna, but to be able to listen to it on their digital portable music player of another brand would therefore not be sanctioned. A real headache.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1561

This is the last chance vote. Tonight, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, the Minister of Culture and Communication, will present his text on copyright reform in the digital age to the National Assembly. In December, the Prime Minister himself decided to artificially suspend the discussion in order to calm the parliamentary storm. Indeed, on Christmas Eve, MPs from all parties adopted an amendment establishing the global license. That is to say, the possibility of downloading sounds and images at will on the Internet without this practice giving rise to real remuneration. One way of legalizing piracy. Yesterday, the French government decided to withdraw the first article of the bill on copyright, which should be completely rewritten. In addition, the rue de Valois amended its text and attempted a little education with a very divided national representation. The new text, which provides for relaxations compared to the first version, also gives assurances. The private copying exception is strengthened and sanctions in the form of simple fines are preferred to the graduated response system which could lead to prison sentences. Finally, the government has declared itself in favour of "interoperability", in other words the possibility, in certain cases, of being able to read works regardless of the distribution platforms. Twenty or so amendments presented Will these advances be enough to convince the deputies? Nothing is less certain. One first unknown remains, the position of the UDF. No one knows whether the parliamentary group will follow François Bayrou, a supporter of free software and total interoperability, or rather Pierre-Christophe Baguet and Jean Dionis, more measured in their amendments. The Greens, like the communists, who initially would have preferred a postponement of the discussion, would support the global license. In this, they follow the socialist group, led by deputies such as Christian Paul, Didier Mathus and Patrick Bloche, all in favour of free access. A position that they defended despite the opposition of François Hollande and Anne Hidalgo, head of culture on rue Solferino. Like some of the dissident UMP deputies, they should present around twenty amendments freely inspired by Adami and Spedidam, two authors' societies that defend the global license. In addition to the latter, they recommend taxing access providers and advocate the broadest possible interoperability. The success of Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres therefore depends on the ability or not of the UMP to vote as one and follow the instructions of the government and Nicolas Sarkozy. But nothing is less certain. On a trip to the Antilles, the head of the UMP and his lieutenants will not be there to enforce parliamentary discipline, at the height of the discussion. Moreover, personalities like Alain Suguenot, Bernard Carayon or Christine Boutin could end up convincing the thirty or so undecided deputies who are not exactly won over by the text's complications. Especially since the very influential National Union of Family Associations, the counterpart of UFC-Que Choisir, has reportedly come out in favour of free education.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1562

After an initial series of debates in December, the bill on copyright is now back before the National Assembly. There is no point hiding it, the previous discussions were moments of great tension, not to mention doubt and confusion. Each of the three of us was in the chamber at the time and we took part in this debate with our respective sensitivities. The deputies hesitated between a global license and copyright. The version that was then proposed to us had the advantage of highlighting the protection of copyright, but it passed over a reality a little too quickly: the Internet has been a space of boundless freedom and without rules for at least ten years. A whole generation of Internet users has adopted habits of free access, exchanges and unlimited access to all data. Returning to this balance can only be done by taking into account all the parties concerned: creators, Internet users, independent creation... We must succeed in reconciling this freedom, which is the strength of the Internet, with the necessary protection of artists' rights. The project, whatever its many positive aspects, could have been flawed by a form of imbalance and the center of gravity seemed too far removed from the habits adopted by Internet users. A hemicycle is a capricious beast. Even without all being keen on downloading or peer-to-peer, we preferred, after the vote on the amendment on the global license, to put the work back on the table. It is often said that the National Assembly is too submissive. This time, that was not the case. Since then, we have all taken up the bill to remodel it. At the UMP level, Nicolas Sarkozy, whose intervention was decisive in bringing back a little serenity, brought together the world of artists in its diversity to better make their expectations heard. Within the government, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres carried out the necessary clarifications of the text, to better reconcile the freedoms of Internet users with respect for the work and remuneration of our creators. In the Assembly, the working sessions on the parliamentary amendments alternated with meetings with artists. This is the state of mind with which we will approach the debate that will open again on March 7. First of all, the question of artistic creation is primary. This involves the protection of copyright and its fair remuneration. This is not a purely accounting approach or a reduction of music or a film to a supermarket product protected by a patent like any other. But a more fundamental evidence: creation involves the protection of the work, by its valorization in what is unique about it, and it alone guarantees cultural diversity and the emergence of young authors. This position excludes the global license which is based on this slightly crazy idea according to which, with a flat rate of 10 euros, you would have access to all products as in a magic supermarket. This would be the death of creation and its leveling down. It is not about the checkbook of great artists but quite simply about the balance of a creative system which, without it, would no longer even have the audacity to give new talents a chance. The Internet is a formidable tool for dissemination and cultural openness. We must start from this strength. But at the same time it must be tamed, otherwise the Janus can take on another face and become a terrible threat to artistic creation. This is the balance we must find. Once the protection of creation has been guaranteed, it remains to open up spaces for Internet users. First, the right to private copying. We say the right, and not the exception of private copying. Because the acquisition of a work, especially musical, must be accompanied by the recognized right to use it freely within the family circle. The tendency to limit or even exclude all private copying must be clearly rejected, because it would take us back to restrictions even before the time of the BASF cassette. Downloading and then copying a CD onto your computer, laptop and MP3 player must remain open and free practices. This is a fundamental point for us. This right will most likely extend to five copies, even if it will be up to a college of mediators to set it. With regard to DVDs, the right to private copying would nevertheless assume that all guarantees for its real and optimal protection are ensured. Secondly, interoperability. To put it simply, it is about preventing Windows or Mac from locking the use of files for the sole benefit of their software through DRM (digital rights management). In other words, we must keep the space for free software. This is an economic priority for France where the free software industry is important while we are sorely lacking a Gallic Windows, economic patriotism obliges. We must therefore avoid any form of latent trust; in IT, big brother is never far away. But it is also a guarantee in terms of cultural diversity. Third, refuse the implementation of arbitrary surveillance of the Internet. In its first version, the bill spoke of a graduated response and focused repression in particular on the Internet user. The minister's concern was to get out of the current legal confusion, which could lead directly to prison, handcuffs on the hands, an Internet user downloading excessively. We could share this concern. However, the risk, by focusing the action on the Internet user, was to have an ineffective system and to lead to an opposition between the Internet community and the community of artists. The initial version of the bill did not sufficiently mark the difference in treatment between the Internet user and the organizers of the fraud. The new version proposed by the minister changes philosophy and we must applaud his work on this point. Instead of tracking down the individual Internet user, we will turn to the fight against illegal download sites and the Internet users who organize it. This is both more effective and less liberticidal. These different points, compared to other European countries and even to the United States, represent an undeniable step forward: protection of artists' rights, guarantee of the right to private copying, defense of free software and fight against piracy centered on software rather than tracking the Internet user... these are points that France would be the first to protect. No country in Europe has put it forward so far. As if even the transposition of a European directive leaves a significant space for creativity. Finally, we must have the lucidity to tell ourselves that once the law is written, it is only the beginning of a story. The most important thing remains to be done. On the one hand, we will have to implement download platforms. If content providers do not play the game, all this will have been useless. The announcements of the implementation of the first download site in the field of cinema are excellent news. Similarly, the signing of an agreement recently negotiated by Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres between content providers and the National Education system is a step in the right direction. On the other hand, we will have to ensure the diversity of content. If it is to impose American blockbusters on us endlessly, we will have lost everything. But from this point of view, through its richness and ease, the Internet is rather an opportunity for cultural diversity. The Internet represents a cultural revolution of a magnitude that takes us back to the time of the first tentative steps in printing. It is not abnormal that we, as legislators, approach this subject with a minimum of caution. The challenge is considerable: to domesticate its extraordinary contributions in terms of cultural diffusion without this leading to a drying up of artistic creation. The doubt of the legislator sometimes has its good side. After the confusion of the first leg, it is time for the second leg. Françoise de Panafieu, MP, national secretary for cultural issues at the UMP, Dominique Richard, UMP MP, spokesperson on the bill and Laurent Wauquiez, UMP MP.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1563

Radiant complexion, not a hair out of place, not an ugly dark circle betraying a drunken evening, a curvy back that would make one pale, golden thighs without cellulite, a neckline without creases, a sort of perfect body, almost supernatural. An unbearable observation when turning the glossy pages of fashion magazines, fortunately counterbalanced by this intimate conviction that all the photos have been largely retouched by skilled manipulators of digital images. However, it is difficult to prove: these retouching artists, like good plastic surgeons, leave no trace of their scalpel strokes, of the additions and erasures made to make bodies more seductive. Thanks to a project developed by Evan Roth, a member of the Openlab research department of the New York digital creation center Eyebeam, these invisible manipulations come back to haunt perfect images. "The Art of detouch" allows the user to explore very precisely the way in which these images have been modified. The application, which uses Processing, an open-source programming language, allows you to compare images before and after retouching, pixel by pixel. A bra strap that pops, a thong that gets shorter, a swollen chest, whitening teeth, added curls, fuller lips, a raised look, a shaved face, a smoothed thigh. If these modifications can escape the naked eye, the Detouch program allows you to immediately see the places where the manipulations are concentrated (buttocks and breasts, but not only). A project that casts a critical eye on the representation of the female body. "I had a lot of trouble finding photos of retouched men," admits the author of the project (1) in an interview with a New York radio station. (1) http://www.blog. ni9e.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1564

A new player in the music app market is openly trying to shake up iTunes by combining the functions of a music player with those of a web browser to "play the web." It's called Songbird, and its developer, Pioneers of the Inevitable, of San Francisco, built it using Mozilla's engine, the father of Firefox, and its open-source philosophy. The application is still in its infancy—version 0.1 is not even beta, but proof of concept!—and several features are missing. For example, Songbird can't read CDs yet—that's strange—and it doesn't seem to recognize the tags on all your mp3 files, including Apple's m4a files. Its main asset is that it channels the ways of listening to music on the Web into a single tool: streaming radio, podcasts, downloading files from paid sites, mp3 blogs, etc. The application has received mixed reviews (wouldn't a Firefox extension have done the same job?), but its development is being closely monitored. www.songbirdnest.com Cheney's Got a Gun! You knew it was coming: some comics were quick to seize on the story of the American vice president unloading his shotgun in the face of his 78-year-old millionaire lawyer friend to create a parody that quickly spread across the Web. The Bob Rivers Show, Seattle's equivalent of the Yé trop d'bonne heure radio show, offers their version of Aerosmith's hit Janie's Got a Gun, renamed Cheney's Got a Gun, a short two-minute parody for your viewing pleasure. www.bobrivers.com Seventies Gold Mine Famous American concert producer and promoter Bill Graham has put a captivating radio show online on his website, Wolfgangsvault.com. Wolfgang? That's the real first name of this Berlin native who fled the Nazi regime to settle with his family in the Bronx. The rest is rock history, and for the first time, his impressive archive is available for free to fans of good old rock. The owner of the legendary Fillmore Auditorium in Denver, Colorado, hosted the biggest names of the era, recording their performances for posterity. Once on the site, click on Vault Radio and enjoy. When I last visited, a live version of Dock of the Bay was playing, performed by Booker T. & The MG's and recorded at Winterland in 1968. Santana (Persuasion, at Filmore West, 1968), Frank Zappa & The Mothers (Peaches En Reglia, Fillmore East, 1971) and a jam session with Taj Mahal, Elvin Bishop and Boz Scaggs had just been broadcast. www.wolfgangsvault.com Random... Montreal netlabel Archipel, run by Pheek, has been offering its 15th release for a few days, the mini-album Cycling Through Red Light EP, by Scandinavian duo Kabale und Liebe. Four tracks of bubbling minimal techno that Richie Hawtin (Plastikman) would have already adopted... and all for free, according to the philosophy of the virtual label. www.archipel.cc The online store Amazon.com is reportedly about to launch its own online mp3 store to take on the market dominated by Apple/iTunes. Amazon, which is currently negotiating with record labels to give birth to a monthly sales and subscription service, has also reportedly sounded out Samsung, which is reportedly making its own mp3 players with the Amazon logo. Leaked on the Web: about half the songs from The Flaming Lips' new album, At War With the Mystics... Three songs from Calexico's new album, Garden Ruin... In the nightmare category: an excerpt from the first albums of Kevin Federline (Popozao) and Nicole Richie (Dandelion).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1565

Director of the Libreville digital campus, Richard Aubry has been a member of the Agence universitaire de la francophonie (AUF) since 1993. He lived for several years in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Gabon. What is the objective of these French-speaking digital campuses? They are technological support points installed within 43 French-speaking universities, more than half of which are in Africa. These campuses, co-managed by the AUF and the host university, aim to develop the use of information and communication technologies in universities in the South and to facilitate access to them for students, teachers and researchers in these regions. The objective is to integrate the Internet and new technologies into their work habits but also to promote the circulation of knowledge in the French-speaking university space. We want to offer academics from the least technologically advanced regions the opportunity to be connected to universities in the North and to exchange their expertise. What is your assessment of the different functions of the digital campus? It depends on the regions of the world, but in Africa, our first objective of increasing the number of Internet users is achieved everywhere. Distance learning or on-site training on campuses is booming. We started small but we intend to strongly develop this aspect of our program. However, we regret that the production and dissemination of knowledge by researchers in the South is currently lagging behind. What types of university production could be encouraged by new technologies? We offer the possibility of creating online journals, by providing subsidies and training. For the moment, in Libreville only one journal, on African philosophy (http://exchoresis.refer.ga), has seen the light of day. The creation of institutional or scientific sites for the university is not very successful either: only one site is online, bringing together texts, sound and visual elements on traditional music from Central Africa (www.musiques-traditionnelles.ga). We also offer professors the opportunity to put their courses online, without much response for the moment. The same assessment is true for research: apart from doctors, few researchers or PhD students are interested in the databases that we offer. We need to strengthen the promotion of these programs. Are digital campuses also a response from the French-speaking world against the Anglo-Saxon world? Another ambition of the AUF and digital campuses is indeed to compete with the American technological dream and to show that Europe can do the same thing, in French if possible! For example, we promote the French online publishing software Spip. But the financial aspect is also very important: there is the digital divide but also the digital bill! Software and other programs sold commercially are expensive, especially for African countries. We promote free software, accessible to all on the Internet, such as Linux. Our computers are configured under Linux in the campus spaces. But we have put Windows back in the university's cyberspaces because the students asked for it, there were compatibility problems. Our fight for free software is not yet won!

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1566

www.platoniq.net/burnstation www.clubtransmediale.de Berlin special envoy It looks like a mutant Jamaican sound system, even if the powerful speakers spit out electronica or breakcore rather than dance-hall. However, that is not the main attraction of this high-tech mobile discotheque imagined by the Barcelona collective Platoniq. Burn Station is a nomadic station that allows you to freely copy music and burn it free of charge onto a CD. This project, which has just been awarded a prize by the Transmediale, a Berlin digital art and culture festival, does not, however, promote piracy unbridled: Burn Station only offers legal content made available by netlabels. "We were looking for a way to give visibility to these label productions that only exist online," explains Olivier, documentary filmmaker and founding member of Platoniq. "To find a distribution system that would be a sort of mobile self-service." The project began in 2003, when Platoniq invited webradios and netlabels to participate in events, during which they made tracks from their catalog available to the public. "People could come and burn CD-Rs, at first, it was artisanal, long and laborious, we said to ourselves that we should develop software to make it easier." The Burn Station was born, a non-commercial project entirely developed in open source that "brings the culture of the Net to the streets." "Culture of the free." The copy station embedded in a van invests the parking lots, streets, bus stations, toilets, the metro, bars, galleries, in Graz, São Paulo, Madrid, Bogotá, Mexico, Zurich, Halle or Berlin, establishing a bridge between the Internet and physical places. "In the street, we find all sorts of people, children, grandpas, who are not necessarily aware and who come to see us, ask questions, explains Susana, a bubbly developer. It's much more interesting than in media art festivals. It allows us to spread the culture of free software and to raise awareness among a public of non-experts." Before being published on the Net, the software was also tested in the street, later developments were made at the request of users who wanted, for example, to be able to forward the files to their friends. "We organize commando operations, wild posters to warn people that the station will be at such and such a place at such and such a time, we plug in the generator and off we go." The cops have indeed turned up sometimes, eyeing the CD burners suspiciously. "But we don't need to run away like street vendors, everything is legal and free, you just have to explain to the police that it's copyleft music. That's maybe the hardest part," laughs Olivier. Personalized compilation. At the Transmediale, the Burn Station was on fire all weekend. With headphones screwed on their ears, visitors to the Academy of Arts, equipped with blank CD-Rs, spent hours manipulating the joystick to navigate through the directories of netlabels (about twenty to date, mainly Latin American and European and almost exclusively electronic), listening to the tracks, reading the related information, selecting their favorites from a playlist and finally burning their personalized compilation. "Burn Station is both open source software, a database of copyright-free music and also a social event where people come to share their files," summarizes Olivier. Which is summed up in their slogan "From peer-to-peer to face to face." Each appearance of the Burn Station is accompanied by performances, DJ mixes like last Tuesday at the Club Maria am Ostbahnhof, where Platoniq had set up its "burning camp" and invited the Barcelona netlabels Alku (read below) and Racapapu, or Jahtari from Leipzig. "In each city, we try to stay a few weeks to meet the local scene, discover the producers, involve them in our project", says Susana. A group of cultural producers, curators and software developers, Platoniq combines technological expertise and social commitment. Not very fond of institutions, they prefer to spread their philosophy of free software and the gift economy on the street, working as closely as possible to people's needs during workshops and cultural events that are often self-financed. After its Berlin stop, the Burn Station is back on the road and setting up in Malaga, in the south of Spain, from March 9 to 12. photos thomas meyer. ostkreuz

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1567

It is not really a time for laughter, as the scandal caused by the publication in the Danish press of the caricatures of Mohammed seems to indicate, revealing the degree of tolerance of our contemporary societies. In this world strongly shaped by technologies where the mechanical laughter of the small screen resonates, humor is the tactic adopted by certain artists to provoke disruptions and salutary dysfunctions. They are the subject of "Smile Machines", an exhibition at the Academy of Arts in Berlin organized as part of the Transmediale festival. The international high mass, in the midst of an identity crisis, is attempting to emerge from its "media art" festival ghetto to address digital culture more broadly. "Smile Machines" bears witness to this attempt to place digital arts in a historical continuity. From Fluxus to the Yes Men, from Filliou to Jodi, it examines the relationships between art, humor and technology. "Smile Machines" is not an exhibition about humor, but a common spirit runs through it, an attitude of disrespect, of provocation, mainly in the guise of derision and irony," explains its curator Anne-Marie Duguet, professor at Paris-I. Indeed, the Smile Machine by Fluxus artist Georges Maciunas, a small torture instrument dating from 1971 that is placed in the mouth, does not dilate the spleen but spreads the lips to constantly keep the smile. A hideous smile that looks more like a grimace. Disrespect. This training of the smile by the machine can be found in the installation Cheese by Christian Möller, women filmed at length who, as soon as their smile fades or becomes disconnected from the rest of the face, are called to order by an emotion detection system. The overplayed smile, or "oversmilling", as a sales argument, as a driving force of the market economy. "Smile machines" is partly a metaphor for this forced hedonism and the mutation of behaviors shaped by the consumerist model," explains the curator. The two useless robots Petit Mal by Simon Penny and The helpless Robot by Norman T. White sound like insults to a society dominated by the ideology of performance and efficiency. The first, endowed with sophisticated artificial intelligence, put to the service of nothing, sometimes comes to rub against the visitor like a young animal, the second enslaves man to his whims and insults him when necessary. "The objective today is to eliminate all errors," observed Norman T. White at the Mystakology conference, "we want to control everything, and we thus protect ourselves from any surprise, we should relearn to appreciate this lack of control." They are adepts of chaos and computer accidents, favoring these moments of rupture that reveal the ideology inscribed in technology. The Dutch duo Jodi accumulates software malfunctions to the point of absurdity, such as the very popular video game Max Payne. A mockery of technology itself, which can be found in the self-proclaimed "techno-idiot" Nam June Paik, recently deceased, who has devoted his entire life to desacralizing it. The same disrespectful attitude of Agnès Meyer-Brandis, who mocks the myth of space conquest and scientific experimentation, by demonstrating the existence of underground icebergs. In a tent set up outside, the frozen visitor could slide a camera attached to a wire into a bottomless hole dug in the ground, and observe on a screen the "re-enchanted" world that was hidden beneath his feet. Interferences. The "jokes" of the Yes Men have something tragically funny. In April 2004, these aces of media imposture infiltrated an international conference of bankers in London, where they had been accidentally invited through their site dowethics.com, a parody of that of Dow Chemical, to whom we owe Agent Orange and the Bhopal disaster. Posing as representatives of the multinational, they presented a revolutionary technique for optimizing financial risks for companies whose activities are likely to cause significant human losses and other ecological disasters. This calculator makes it possible to evaluate the acceptable number of deaths, in relation to the company's profits. An outrageous, unvarnished liberal speech that the bankers applauded enthusiastically before posing for a photo with the mascot: a golden skeleton. By pushing capitalist logorrhea to the point of absurdity, the Yes Men set out to correct identities and show the perversions of globalization. With its bitter laughter and black humor, "Smile Machines" invites us to look at the world with the critical shift advocated by Filliou: "Whatever you think, think something else, whatever you do, do something else." Internet activists have made humor their main weapon, not to detach themselves from reality but to seize it head-on; hence the theme of the festival this year, "Reality Addicts," explored in numerous conferences, screenings, and installations. In this hyper-mediatized world of screens, mp3 players, and surveillance cameras, these committed artists try to create disruptions, to provoke interference. Inconsistencies. Like Human Browser, a Wi-Fi performance by Internet artist Christophe Bruno, who sows confusion in the crowded corridors of the Academy of Arts. A pretty blonde wearing headphones tries to engage in dialogue with bewildered visitors, a stream of incoherent words punctuated by insults. Her words do not belong to her, they are dictated to her by a synthesized voice that reads snippets of text from the Internet in real time. The young Barcelona collective Platoniq shares the same desire to bring the Internet to the streets with the Burn Station project, a mobile CD burning station, installed during commando operations in bus and train stations, in the street. People can come and listen to music from labels that exist exclusively on the Internet, make their playlist and leave with a CD. It is also a way to promote free culture (open source software, copyleft licenses) to the general public. The main attraction of this very popular edition remains the granddad of "happy music" and "crazy loops", the ineffable Jean-Jacques Perrey, 77 years old, who came to tell his incredible life as a pioneer of electronic music in a stormed amphitheater. Same rush at Club Maria, Monday evening, where the hammy ondioline player, supported by Dana Countryman, performed his flashy electro-pop anthems in front of a laughing and benevolent audience. New album expected this summer. Photos: THOMAS MEYER. OSTKREUZ

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1568

For five years, Mains d'OEuvres, in Saint-Ouen (Seine-Saint-Denis), has been experimenting with a unique artistic project: hosting artists (choreographers, visual artists, musicians, etc.) in residence, focusing on emerging disciplines and projects that address social issues. Art is not an end in itself; it is also an instrument of social transformation. Mains d'OEuvres is also a place of celebration where concerts and performances take place one after the other. Rather unknown to the general public, Mains d'OEuvres has become a reference in the landscape of cultural wastelands that developed in France in the 1970s and 1980s, at the initiative of individuals who considered the offering to be too compartmentalized, elitist and leaving aside a whole field of contemporary art. They began to occupy empty spaces, often former factories, as one conquers a territory. Housed in the premises of a former social committee of the Valeo factories, the Mains d'OEuvres association is both a large machine, with around twenty employees, and a precarious object. The budget is 1.1 million euros, including 484,000 euros of own resources (ticketing, restaurant, rental of recording studios, spaces for events, etc.), essential to the survival of the wasteland. The artists also fuel the turbine by paying rent in return for the provision of the premises, and by renting out the rehearsal spaces. For example, a theatre company pays 80 euros per month for an office and an Internet connection. Public subsidies (city, state, department, region) amount to around 400,000 euros. The support of the town hall is essential, even if the place does not cost it very much: the town pays 83,500 euros but receives 69,000 euros in rent in return. Fazette Bordage, who has been running Mains d'OEuvres since January 2001, is one of the pioneers of wasteland. In the 1980s, she created Confort moderne in Poitiers. She founded Mains d'OEuvres with Christophe Pasquet, who has led various occupation projects, and now runs Point éphémère in the 10th arrondissement of Paris. To feel the soul of the place, you have to wander around the immense 4,000 m2 brick building, spread over four levels. In the basement, along the recording studios, you can hear all sorts of music. One floor above, residents are taking a break in the restaurant. A little higher up, a choreographer is preparing her creation. An employee pokes his head into a workshop to fix yet another technical problem... The project is centered on hosting artists, researchers or associations defending a "citizen" project in residence for a period of one year, renewable. "The current crisis is not economic, I analyze it as the result of a narrowing of the frameworks. We compartmentalize people and reduce possibilities," summarizes Fazette Bordage. RESIDENTS, COLLEGE STUDENTS, ARTISTS The occupation of the place was negotiated with the communist town hall of Saint-Ouen, which is the owner. "They arrived in September 1997. Their artistic project was of quality. They were ready to pay rent," remembers Eric Hervieu, elected delegate for culture. The two parties set themselves common objectives: "Complement the local cultural offer; reach the young people of Saint-Ouen, the innovative actors," he adds. Five years later, he believes that the contract has been fulfilled, even if, "intuitively", he thinks that the audience of the place is "not mainly from Saint-Ouen, but Parisian". Some projects, such as that of the Studio de sculpture sociale, which does writing and video work with residents of Saint-Ouen and the 18th arrondissement of Paris, help to raise awareness among the population. Artists also organize workshops with the Michelet college. "For some students who have difficulty finalizing a work, seeing the artists rehearse and construct a creation is very stimulating", summarizes Laure Laborde, the principal education advisor. The conditions for welcoming the artists are not luxurious. Mains d'OEuvres does not have any budget to support the creations. The artists benefit, however, from the skills of the team and its contacts. The Ktha company, in residence since the end of 2003, will leave the place in October. For this young company, which rehearsed "in hangars or apartments", the time spent at Mains d'OEuvres was "a springboard": "Here, we found acceptable working conditions. The team supported and advised us, it changed our lives. We found co-productions with other places. Outside, the Mains d'OEuvres label is important", says Nicolas Werken, who directs texts by Christophe d'Hallivillée with Lear Packer (Sens and Tonka editions). "The team did a lot of communication work to bring in programmers. Mains d'OEuvres does not put itself on the fringes of institutions", says choreographer Kataline Patkaï, who has just presented her creation as part of the Faits d'Hiver festival. The Art Sensitif association, which produces digital works using free software, is not about to leave. Mains d'OEuvres has just won a grant of "35,000 euros" that will allow it to develop a resource center on site. "I finally found a place that understands my project. Instead of everyone working at home, we exchange ideas, we move forward," says Jean-Noël Montagné, who develops his inventions with CNRS researchers. They travel all over Paris to come here. It's good that something is happening..."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1569

Bandits-Mages, a digital arts festival, is focusing on "Television, the media, gaming" for this ninth edition. A theme dissected over four days by a rich video program, a focus on Danish creation, performances, digital installations (including Trigger by Michaël Sellam, an interactive version of the film Elephant by Alan Clarke), round tables on alternative televisions, free software, and the relationship between gaming and cinema. Everything is broadcast on the satellite TV channel Lalocale and streamed live on the Internet, so as not to miss a crumb. As part of the Spectrographie program, a panorama of visual and sound creation based on the electromagnetic spectrum, the Ellipse association proposes to remix digital satellite television, to reprocess intercepted images live and to make small television interludes (Zapsat). On February 3, she is organizing an evening of concert-performances with, among others, Rodolphe Burger and Yves Dormoy, who will present a creation around their album Planétarium. Students from art schools will compete in a friendly manner during the Videodemoparty 0.1, where they will have to create a video on a set theme. Charles Pennequin and Joël Hubaut will delight fans of sound poetry who will also be able to listen to Poulpe, an installation by Apo33 that captures sounds in different locations in Orléans, Bourges and Tours, streams remixed and rebroadcast in situ or online on their webradio.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1570

FRAUD. Customers of Crédit Lyonnais, beware: criminals are sending emails imitating those of the banking group in order to steal your login details. This is the first time that this type of scam, known as "phishing", has targeted the French public on such a large scale. Written in questionable French, the letter headed by LCL claims that a new security system is being tested and that the customer must click on a link to connect to their bank's website, which is also a fake. TELEPHONY. Internet service provider Alice has announced that its AliceBox plan will now include calls to numbers starting with 087, i.e. the numbers of subscribers to the Free (FreeBox) and Wanadoo (LiveBox) offers. These calls will therefore be free, as will calls to landlines and emergency numbers. This news has the effect of a bombshell for operators who, like Free, boast about their free telephone offer but charge for calls to direct competitors. INTERNET. After the Ministry of Culture and other administrations, it is the National Gendarmerie that has decided to replace Internet Explorer with Firefox on its 70,000 computer workstations. Main arguments: reliability, security, compliance with Internet standards and adaptation to different types of computers (Windows, Mac and Linux). In addition, the Thunderbird messaging software, also published by the Mozilla Foundation, will replace Microsoft Outlook. The gendarmerie had already decided to adopt the OpenOffice office suite, also from the free software community.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1571

This is the country that invented reality TV, Big Brother and its offspring that have colonized all the small screens on the planet. It is also in the Netherlands that "Exploding Television" is currently being held, the experimental section of the Rotterdam International Film Festival that, for eleven years, has been rummaging around the margins of cinema (clips, Internet, video games, sound) and scrutinizing the mutations of audiovisual culture. This year, "Exploding" deciphers television, reversing the logic at work in reality shows: "We are not dealing with innocent victims, prey to voyeuristic cameras," explains curator Edwin Carels. "Here, the camera changes hands." The building that houses the TENT. visual arts and Witte de With contemporary art centers has been transformed into a teeming, flashing hive. Five collectives from Copenhagen, Bologna, London, Vilnius and Rotterdam have set up their studios there, amidst artistic installations, organising workshops, screenings and conferences broadcast on the Internet and on Dutch cable. "We are now witnessing a proliferation of channels, but the content is the same everywhere," notes the curator. "Satellite of Love" is not a meta-exhibition on television, observed from a distance, but rather an active, productive gesture. A place where television will be made but also rethought and perhaps modestly reinvented. It is time to regain this public space, monopolized by the State and then by merchants." Demystify. Production methods long reserved for professionals are increasingly being questioned by amateurs. "The idea that television is a simple propaganda machine only persists until we realise that television is not there to manipulate but to be manipulated," analyses Rachel Baker, a net artist. It is therefore not surprising that the Telestreet phenomenon (Libération, September 9) broke out in Berlusconi's Italy, in reaction to the suffocating situation resulting from the collusion between power and the media (read below). Creating your own station is not reserved for nerds. Tetsuo Kogawa, a Japanese media artist, set about demystifying the technology by giving a short practical course on "how to build a micro TV transmitter" (1) to young, hard-working people who came in large numbers to handle the soldering iron in the Silent\_TV workshop run by Adam Hyde. Andy from the Yes Men, kings of media imposture, also got involved. "Is it legal?" asks one of the participants. "As long as you don't use it," smiles Adam. Tv-tv, a network of independent producers from Copenhagen, who have the advantage of having an official broadcast channel, raises the difficulty of escaping the television aesthetic, of inventing new forms. CAC-TV, a program from the Vilnius Contemporary Art Center broadcast on a commercial channel, and piloted by Rai, a sort of Lithuanian Andy Warhol, sees television as a playground and experimentation ground. The motto: "Each program is a pilot. Each program is the last." The result (produced by people who have no experience in the field) is pleasantly wobbly and original, summed up by a local newspaper, which headlined when it was launched a year ago: "Beavis and Butthead do Dogma in Vilnius." In Rotterdam, CAC-TV invites the public to a TV evening where they will try to communicate with the spirits of deceased stars of the small screen. On the same floor, visitors can practice the art of teletext, rehabilitated by Lektrolab (2), which is enthusiastic about this aesthetic reminiscent of old video games. Thanks to free software, made available, anyone can tinker with a teletext that will be displayed on pages 450 to 455 of Dutch public television. "Satellite of Love" brings together in the same space two environments that rarely meet, media activists who have their hands in the grease and visual artists who cast an oblique glance at the black box, the frenzy of some and the almost contemplative detachment of others: deserted TV sets by Michel François (Fox TV) and Melik Ohanian (Hit), behind the scenes (the special effects on a blue background by AL & AL or the models by Pierre Bismuth and Michel Gondry), perpetual television flow transformed into visual abstraction (Sauter & Khan) or reduced to luminous pixels (Bulloch). "I wanted to create areas of contrast, to see how these two approaches could feed off each other," explains the curator. The video The Night Watch by the Belgian artist Francis Alÿs, which follows, through the eyes of the museum's surveillance cameras, a fox lost in a portrait gallery, echoes AmbientTV.net's Broadband Highway (3), a road movie made from images from webcams monitoring global road traffic, video streams diverted by a program and edited live to make a real-time film that generates itself 24 hours a day. The London collective has also just launched a Manifesto for CCTV Filmmakers, a charter for a new kind of filmmaker who does not shoot with their own camera but uses recordings from the video surveillance cameras that are proliferating in the United Kingdom. The manifesto is based on the legislation protecting private data that allows people filmed to request a copy of these recordings. Practical guide. "The convergence of the Internet, television and cinema is changing our habits," says Rachel Baker of AmbientTV. "Multiple channels, file-sharing software and broadband are radically changing the way we watch television. For her, the latest TV masses are reality TV and football. "But while at work we talk about the latest episode of Big Brother, at home our computers are frantically downloading entire seasons of Lost." The division between production, consumption and distribution is also collapsing. More and more people are producing their own videos and posting them on the Web. The programming schedule has exploded. In Unscheduled Television, the net-artist opens a repertoire of projects by artists who experiment with available technologies, remixing existing TV shows, found footage, video blogs, online archives, like this hilarious remix of horror films, How to Survive a Zombie Epidemic, a practical guide to resisting an attack by the living dead. So many paths for an alternative television, also on the program of the Bandits-Mages festival which begins today in Bourges, and which will be linked to the Internet with "Exploding Television" at 3 p.m. for a discussion on the interactions between art and television. (1) http://anarchy.translocal.jp/microtv/howtotvtx.html (2) http://projects.lektrolab.com/microtel (3) www.ambienttv.net/unscheduledtv

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1572

The Compagnie Larivée, Cabot, Champagne (La Tribu, Parallell, La Tulipe...) has finally put the new version of its website online. The old site, frankly quite ugly, had been announcing a redesign for several months already. The wait will have been worth it: the design is pleasant and reveals news about the artists of the La Tribu / La Factrie / Paralell stable, the calendars of events at the different venues managed by the group and a link to the online store. In addition, you have the leisure to watch (in streaming) the clips of the artists, and, above all, to create your own "radio-Tribu". More than fifty songs from which you can create a personal playlist. Only problem: during our visit, the Listening Post did not work under Firefox, forcing us to return to Internet Explorer to be able to enjoy it. Hadn't the Cowboys Fringants espoused the cause of free software? Ah, no, maybe not that one, after all... www.latribu.ca and www.getfirefox.com Mercora Following the buzz of personalized radio stations like Pandora and Last.fm, here is Mercora, the web radio where you become the broadcaster. Simply put, it is a (free) application that you install and through which you make your collection of music files available to other Mercora users. The difference between this application and P2P networks like Limewire or eDonkey is that instead of downloading the files, you stream other users' collections and allow them to listen to yours without being accused of piracy. Mercora also includes an instant messaging system and hosts discussion forums - during my visit, more than forty Quebec users were online. However, several observers question the usefulness of Mercora: would music lovers prefer to have the file on their hard drive rather than listen to it in streaming? You be the judge. www.mercora.com Paid plagiarism Ben Gibbard, of the band Death Cab For Cutie and frontman of The Postal Service, accuses Apple of plagiarizing the video of his song Such Great Heights for his TV ad promoting the Intel chip in its new computers. On his website, Gibbard accuses Apple of having retaken "shot by shot" his video, in addition to having hired the same directors. The irony of this little controversy is that the video for Such Great Heights now occupies the number one position in sales of clips on the iTunes Music Store... A visit to The Postal Service's site will allow you to download the single and its version remixed by John Tejada for free. www.postalservicemusic.net Random... His name is Mitch Benn, he is a British comedian and with his band The Distractions, he launched the "hit" Everything Sounds Like Coldplay Now. He even bought the domain name www.everythingsoundslikecoldplaynow.com , where you can see the parody video of his song. Anyone offer to become the buyer of www.everythingsoundslikefranzferdinandnow.com ? Speaking of Franz Ferdinand, Sony has just put on the market a limited edition of its pretty Sony NW A-1000 mp3 player (which now accepts WMA formats) featuring the design of the popular rock band. Quietly launched in Canada just before the holiday season, the NW A-1000 seeks to compete with Apple's iPod Mini/Nano (which, incidentally, had launched the iPod U2), with its 6GB hard drive. Only 1000 copies of the Network Walkman Franz Ferdinand were shipped to retailers. Find all the columns on www.cyberpresse.ca/musique IN THE DIGITAL MUSIC CHARTS TOP 5 SINGLES SALES 1- Check On It Beyoncé & Slim Thug 2- Dance, Dance Fall Out Boy 3- LOVE Ashley Simpson 4- You're Beautiful James Blunt 5- Hung Up - Madonna Source: iTunes Canada, 01/26/06 TOP 5 ALBUMS SALES 1- iTunes Originals: Barenaked Ladies (compilation) Barenaked Ladies 2- Brokeback Mountain (meh) Various artists 3- Lights and Sounds Yellowcard 4- Testify POD 5- Back to Bedlam James Blunt Source: iTunes Canada, 01/26/06 TOP 5 SHARED MUSIC FILES 1- Check On It Beyoncé 2- Grillz Nelly 3- Dance, Dance Fall Out Boy 4- Run It Chris Brown 5- In Love With a StripperT-pain Source: Big Champagne from January 16 to 23, 2006

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1573

The recent debate on copyright eludes a crucial question: what vision for digital culture in ten years? Internet users are in daily contact with online music, for which they invent new practices: exchanges, listening and participatory discoveries are already the reality of the 5 million French people who own MP3 players. Alongside the locked legal offers, which the Minister of Culture has championed, an incredible proliferation of cultural initiatives is developing: artists of the MP3 generation, web radios, participatory architectures, of which peer-to-peer is only the tip of the iceberg. The culture of 2010 is already being invented today. Here are three proposals to support this vigorous movement that urgently deserves an ambitious policy. 1. Create a real digital public service. Ten years after the democratization of the Internet, it is time for the State to assume its responsibilities in the face of History: it is the totality of knowledge in the public domain, the entire French cultural heritage, financed by the State, that must be put online without delay! By encouraging its appropriation by the public. In the name of equal opportunities, but above all to affirm our cultural independence and influence. Open formats without locks, free software, peer-to-peer and collaborative architectures are already the foundations of a new relationship between the citizen and culture. The State must seize them to become a catalyst for new industrial and cultural jobs. 2. Establish a regulatory authority. In an economy of cultural abundance, the State must play a leading role in getting cultural industries to adapt to the realities of the Internet. In a world where access to everything is becoming the rule, it is essential to bring the flexibility and inventiveness of new players. The main obstacle to the development of online music is that supply does not meet demand, because it is subject to the sole arbitration of the record industry and its monopoly on copyright. How could we have imagined the revolution of free radio stations without the creation of new radio stations? As with telephony and Internet access, a regulatory authority must be created capable of imposing in stages access to the entire music catalogue for the commercial services that are waiting for it. Otherwise, who can blame those who prefer to turn to peer-to-peer? 3. Help cultural industries stay in the race. Digital music is above all a profession of innovation and an opportunity to create jobs. They should be encouraged massively by opening up innovation support mechanisms to them: tax credits, aid for new professions, support for digital distribution and export, digitization of difficult catalogues, etc. What is France waiting for to play a leading role in convincing its European partners to do the same? We are not legislating for 2006, but for 2010, or even 2015, and for a world of innovation, culture and knowledge. This new century of Enlightenment must not leave our country a mere supporting role. Tariq Krim is the founder of the Netvibes.com service and the editor of GénérationMP3.com, a French-speaking community dedicated to music on the Internet.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1574

Brussels - The European Commission, which condemned Microsoft in 2004 for abuse of a dominant position, yesterday played down the group's new concessions. The day after the media event organised by Microsoft just a stone's throw from its offices, the Commission abandoned its caution of the day before. "Source code is not the ultimate documentation of anything, and that is precisely why programmers must provide comprehensible documentation in parallel with their source code", said Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes yesterday at the Davos Forum, quoted by her spokesperson Jonathan Todd. The source code "offered" by Microsoft on Wednesday is a set of instructions written in a computer programming language. To ensure, as the Commission demanded two years ago, the harmonious and efficient operation of Windows with computers using other operating systems, and thus allow competition, Microsoft had so far provided 12,000 pages of documentation and offered 500 hours of technical assistance. "They could give us half a million pages, but if it's not the right information for competitors to write software that's compatible with Windows, then they're not meeting our requirements," Todd said yesterday. The European Free Software Foundation (EFSF) said the mountain of data would "cause more problems" than it would solve. "Because the source code is copyrighted, programmers who read it will not be able to reuse it in their free software," it said, without being sued by Microsoft for copyright infringement.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1575

In literature, they are called negroes; in IT, ghost-programmers. Whether they line up letters or numbers, they work in the shadows in the service of their employer. An artist, for example, who we like to imagine as handicapped with the keyboard, quick to delegate the technical aspects to the code stokers. Not at all, artist programmers are a developing species in digital arts, more and more numerous to get their hands dirty to forge their own tools. Handling computer code with ease, they strive to master the entire chain of creation. They are in the spotlight at the Make Art festival, launched by the young Poitevin association Goto10, created in 2003 by Aymeric Mansoux, digital artist, and Thomas Vriet, passionate about electronic and experimental music, host on the associative radio Atmosphère (1). In addition to events dedicated to digital arts, Goto10 regularly organizes software tool design workshops for artists and brings together a collective of a dozen artists scattered across Europe. A commendable desire. From Tuesday to Sunday evening, the festival is working to introduce these programming artists and, more broadly, the culture of free software through workshops (Pure Data), conferences (streamed on the Internet), performances and concerts, in line with cutting-edge festivals such as Placard, Piksel (Norway), Pixelache (Finland) or networks such as Nettime, Dorkbot (where people do weird things with electricity), Riereta and Hackitectura (Spain). "We wanted to take the time to gently introduce the general public, and not just connoisseurs, to this culture, with conferences that explain what free software is, what a tool is, what a license is. Show them the approach of a software artist, both his programming work which is a form of artistic creation and its result, whether it is music, visuals, games... explains Aymeric. We want to try to explain in a simple way why a line of code can be validated as a poetic expression." A laudable desire, because these works are often complex to understand. The best way to understand a work is to show how it was created. The performance by Dave Griffiths and Yaxu, tomorrow night at the Confort Moderne, is emblematic in this respect. The two artists will program their sounds and images as they go along. The lines of code typed in their interconnected environments are projected, the audience can follow what is happening on their screens, read this improvised score and appreciate the result. The opposite of a laptop concert. They will share the bill the same evening with another figure of this underground scene, Tom Betts, aka Nullpointer, a multi-talented English artist, author of collaborative network projects, video game hijacking, musical performances and even an automatic radio station on the Net, Rand () %. The educational will of the festival is coupled with a political intention, the tools used are never neutral. "The guest artists are registered in communities that develop free software, they are also people who refuse to be registered in copyright systems, who arrange to self-disseminate their works on Internet labels, under Creative Commons license. They are completely independent, explains the festival programmer. We all come from the alternative electronic scene, where the use of Linux and free software is very widespread, it is obvious to us." They observe this "offbeat" fight against piracy, intellectual property. "We have moved to the next level where the question of authorship of a work no longer arises, where we favor exchange and collaboration," says Aymeric. "There is an effervescence and a desire to develop collectively that we do not find in commercial software," adds Thomas. Utopian society. Spring\_alpha, a network game presented this evening by Simon Yuill, imagines what a society could be like in the era of free software (2). This game under free license, in development for two years, tells the story of an urban community's attempt to create its own utopian society, with the possibility for users to change the rules that govern life in society, by hacking and altering the code that simulates this world. No joystick: the only way to interact with this universe is to manipulate the usually hidden code and immediately observe the consequences on the game. "It allows you to enter this hacker's universe, to empirically test how it works. The 15-16 year olds are completely comfortable with it, they all program small scripts, create game modifications like Quake. For them, P2P, file sharing, is not a crime. That is also why there is a generational conflict, a clash between the proprietary world and the free world, for the moment the two coexist, but within ten years, this culture will be integrated into people's daily lives." Goto10's commitment to the free software field is also reflected in the imminent launch of a live CD (3), produced with the help of the Italian rasta coder Jaromil (http://rastasoft.org) to facilitate access to this free software, a real nomadic workstation, of professional quality, for audio and video creation, whose release is planned within two months. (1) atmosphereradio.free.fr (2) www.spring-alpha.org (3) CD Rom which automatically loads an operating system with a set of software when the computer starts up without affecting the hard disk.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1576

To meet the requirements of the European Union, Brad Smith, Microsoft's legal director, revealed on Wednesday, January 25, that the company would offer a license for all source codes (the equivalent of software keys) concerned. The source codes in question have nothing to do with those of Windows XP or even with those of the Windows Server operating system. Thaima Samman, Microsoft France's legal and public affairs director, specifies that this opening is limited to "Windows Server communication protocols." The announcement therefore concerns software that allows servers, these computers located at the heart of networks such as the Internet, to communicate with each other. It will allow Sun and publishers of free software such as Linux, competitors of Bill Gates' company, to make servers using their operating system communicate with those running Windows Server. These competitors will thus access the market of companies wanting to use Microsoft servers and those of other brands on the same network. "We had proposed 12,000 pages of documentation and 500 hours of training," says Ms. Samman. But this was not considered sufficient by Brussels. Hence the decision to go as far as opening the source codes. HEARINGS EXPECTED IN APRIL This announcement constitutes a new stage in the conflict between Microsoft and the European Commission. In March 2004, the latter fined the American software manufacturer 497 million euros for abuse of a dominant position. Mario Monti, the competition commissioner at the time, accompanied this record penalty with "corrective measures" in order to force Microsoft to change its commercial practices. The company has appealed this decision before the European Court of Justice. The hearings will take place in April. The appeal is not suspensive but, twenty-two months later, the decision has still not been implemented in its entirety. On 21 December 2005, Brussels had ordered Microsoft to respond, by 15 February, to a "statement of objections" noting the "non-compliance" with the sentence. The provision of the interface specifications proposed by Microsoft was considered "incomplete and inadequate". The Commission had even threatened Bill Gates' company with daily fines of 2 million euros. After Microsoft's announcement, the entourage of Neelie Kroes, the Competition Commissioner, remained on its guard: "They sent a letter ten minutes before their press conference; but we don't know in detail what they plan to do", they say in Brussels, promising to "carefully examine" Microsoft's offer. On the other hand, in Washington, the Association for Competitive Technology (ACT) considers that "being able to access the source codes of Windows Server goes beyond what the Commission could have dreamed of".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1577

IT. The European Commissioner for Competition is not convinced by Microsoft's (Bill Gates in our photo) decision to provide the Windows source code: "The source code is not the ultimate documentation of anything. That is why programmers must provide understandable documentation [with it]", she said at the Davos Forum. The European Free Software Foundation sees it as "a new marketing plot: Microsoft has acted like a thief who, when asked to drop his gun, takes the opportunity to throw a grenade at you".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1578

Brussels - Slammed by the European Commission, the American software giant Microsoft created a surprise yesterday in Brussels by opening up to software publishers the sacrosanct Windows source code, the true DNA of its flagship operating system. "We will issue licenses for the Windows source code itself," announced Microsoft's director of legal affairs, Brad Smith, during a press conference, explaining that the group "was taking this step voluntarily in order to respond categorically to the problems raised by the Commission on December 22." Convicted in March 2004 by the Commission for abuse of a dominant position, the world's number one software company has already paid a record fine of 497 million euros. It was also forced to disclose certain computer protocols necessary for dialogue between Windows and competing products. On 22 December, Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes raised her voice, judging that the documentation provided by Microsoft was as "inadequate" as it was "incomplete". Tired of this incessant haggling, she issued a written order to the American group to comply immediately with her demands, under penalty of daily fines of up to two million euros. The group had until 15 February to justify itself, but it finally got ahead of the call by going "well beyond the Commission's requirements", according to it, by deciding to open up its precious source code to purchasers of Windows licenses, at no extra cost. The source code brings together all the information at the origin of a computer program. A computer scientist can modify the program using this source code. "This code is the DNA of the Windows operating system [...], it is the ultimate documentation that we can provide," said Mr. Smith, but ruled out communicating it to free software publishers, who could then distribute it freely. "The requirement for clear and appropriate documentation should be clearly satisfied," considers the number three at Microsoft. Cautious reaction Far from being pleased, the Commission limited itself to saying that it would "carefully examine" this announcement. Earlier in the day, it had firmly reiterated that it was up to it and not Microsoft to decide whether its requirements were met. For Brad Smith, "setting aside questions of technical conformity" was an essential prerequisite before "progressing seriously on the substance of the case". In June 2004, Microsoft asked the European Court of Justice to annul the conviction handed down by the Commission. The hearings will take place between April 24 and 28 in Luxembourg. Mr. Smith considers this step crucial because the judges in Luxembourg will "establish the law that will determine whether companies that own popular technology products can integrate new features into them" and when they must provide their competitors with licenses on certain intellectual property rights. While one might have expected cries of victory from Microsoft's opponents, yesterday it was quite different. For Me Thomas Vinje, who represents several opponents of Microsoft, this concession "has no value and resolves nothing." "These millions of lines of code are useless because they are incomprehensible; it's like looking for a needle in a haystack!" he laments. "It's as if we were given all the technical data of an Airbus, without providing the plan," adds a source close to the case for whom "it's difficult to use." Above all, he notes, this greatly damages the credibility of Microsoft, which for two years cried wolf, claiming that revealing its source code would be monstrous, even technically impossible.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1579

MICROSOFT Microsoft's move is not lacking in panache. Yesterday in Brussels, Brad Smith, the director of legal affairs for the world leader in software, announced that he was ending the standoff with the European Commission that had been going on since March 2004. "We are going to provide access to the Windows "source code", which is a bit like the DNA of the server," declared Brad Smith. "This will not change the price of our licenses." The source code groups together all the information that makes up a computer program. However, Brad Smith specified that it was not a question of offering an "open source" solution, i.e. one that is free of rights. The American giant had until February 15 to respond to the injunction from the European Commission, which had demanded, on December 21, that Microsoft provide all the technical documentation on Windows in order to allow its competitors, server manufacturers, to have access to the Windows interfaces. The sanctions set by the Commission were impressive: 2 million euros per day. "We are putting our most valuable intellectual property on the table," said the legal director. "In this way, we are calming down technical disputes and we can move forward with a serious discussion on the substance of this matter." Instead of providing thousands of pages of technical documentation, Microsoft is therefore pretending to throw open the doors of its vault. The question is what the world leader will really reveal to its competitors. Especially since Bill Gates' company is preparing the advent of a new operating system that is to succeed Windows: Vista. Will the source code of Vista also be revealed? The news received with caution The European Commission has welcomed the statement by the American leader with caution. "The European Commission will carefully examine the announcement made by Microsoft once it has received all the details," the press release explains. Microsoft believes that this measure goes "well beyond the Commission's requirements. "Even though we believe we are in full compliance with the 2004 decision, we want to dispel any suspicion that Microsoft's technical documentation is insufficient," said Brad Smith, hoping that the European executive would refrain from imposing new fines.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1580

In Brussels Faced with the threat of daily fines of 2 million euros from the European Commission, Microsoft has given ground. Its director of legal affairs, Brad Smith, announced yesterday that the American giant would communicate to software publishers the sacrosanct source code of Windows, the operating system for PCs. The source code is the top secret element that Microsoft has been defending tooth and nail for years, because it translates into understandable language the information that is the source of a computer program. To understand the dispute that is currently opposing Microsoft to the European Commission, we must go back two years. In March 2004, the IT group was convicted of abuse of a dominant position. The latter imposed a record fine: 500 million euros. And demanded that Microsoft disclose certain IT protocols allowing "interoperability" or compatibility between the Windows operating system and competing software publishers. Faced with Microsoft's unwillingness, Commissioner Neelie Kroes raised her voice in December, adopting a "statement of objections" against Microsoft, for non-compliance with its obligations, and the fines. The software leader was due to explain itself by 15 February at the latest. Microsoft did not wait for the axe to fall and decided to take a step towards Brussels. Specifying through Brad Smith: "This code is the DNA of the Windows operating system. It is the ultimate documentation that we can provide to Windows license purchasers, at no extra cost." But the services of the European Directorate-General for Competition remain reserved. Because the source code is still inaccessible to free software publishers. In a weary press release, the Commission renews the meeting of 15 February.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1581

Initially, you wanted BitTorrent to be free software, and you let Internet users create a free exchange network. Why did you suddenly decide to create a paid and controlled service? Suddenly, BitTorrent was so in demand all over the world, its popularity became so massive, that it was ridiculous. The opportunity to make a lot of money was simply too huge, psychologically I found myself almost forced to take advantage of it. Following your first agreement with the Motion Picture Association of America [MPAA], what do you want to obtain from the Hollywood Majors? My plan is simple: BitTorrent will obtain distribution licenses from copyright holders, and I will sell their films on the Internet. Technically, this is not a problem. I cannot speak about the current negotiations, but they are progressing. The acquisition of cultural products via the Internet is a given. Habits are formed, the system is in place. Soon, the majority of consumers will want to obtain their music and films online, without leaving their homes. The film industry is starting to realize this, its attitude is changing rapidly. But in the meantime, other BitTorrent servers will continue to offer pirated videos for free? Piracy will always exist, and besides I'm not sure that it will make producers and artists lose a lot of money. The right tactic is rather to offer, in parallel, a paid and legitimate offer. If it is well done, it will attract customers and make money for copyright holders. If there are no buyers today, it is only because there are no sellers. We will offer a huge catalog of films of all kinds, our offer will be more varied than that of unlicensed sites. My site will be very pleasant and very cool, transactions will be easy and without risk. So, everything will be fine for producers? No, at least not for the music industry. Its business model is obsolete, for reasons related to new computer tools, but which have nothing to do with piracy. Music is becoming a hyper-competitive market: soon, a lone musician will be able to record a quality product in his dining room, with equipment that is both cheap and efficient. Production costs are collapsing, it will become difficult to make big profits in such an overcrowded environment. Good old competition will hurt the record industry much more than piracy. Moreover, for distribution companies, the end is near, even if they have not yet accepted it. The cost of bandwidth is tending towards zero, and hard drives are becoming so huge and so cheap that, soon, all the music and movies you will ever own will fit in a single box. All this heavy logistics of burning CDs and DVDs, storing them in warehouses, transporting them in trucks, stacking them in stores, driving to buy them, all of this will soon be obsolete. When you think about it, it is completely ridiculous and irrational to distribute digital products on physical media. Are you in favor of installing protections to prevent CD and DVD buyers from making copies? Today, in the United States, not only is it illegal to break these protection systems, but it is illegal to conduct research on theoretical ways to break them. This is abusive: in a free country, we should have the right to conduct any type of scientific research. Moreover, the only way to know if a protection is effective is to test it, that is to say to try to break it. Otherwise, the authors of protection software will be able to sell to producers and the public any poor quality product. Besides, any protection is doomed to be broken. Personally, I think that the only way to reduce piracy is not to punish potential customers, but to offer on the Internet all existing works, at a reasonable price, with easy and pleasant purchase systems. What do you think of the current French debate on the global license and private copying? From what I understand, the reasoning of the supporters of the global license is based on completely outdated notions. The analogy with radio does not hold. On the Internet, we do not need to make rough estimates: if we have a good system - like BitTorrent -, we can obtain precise information on everything that users do, and charge each according to their consumption. The flat-rate license on the Internet would create an unfair system, both for customers and for rights holders. It could also be a corrupt system: the distribution of money would be decided arbitrarily, and this kind of decision cannot be properly audited. If you met French parliamentarians, what would you have to say to them? To those who voted for the law on the global license, I would say: your goal is to make culture accessible to all through the Internet, that's very good, but for that, there is no need to interfere with market forces. Technical progress and economic development will push producers to sell their products online, it is a natural process. This state interference is useless. And to the professionals who dream of blocking this evolution, I would say: by delaying putting your products online, you are condemning yourselves. You will not be able to artificially maintain a situation inherited from the past, your loss of earnings will be enormous. In fact, you will lose everything.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1582

After the precursor Napster, then Kazaa, Gnutella, eDonkey, we are now witnessing the arrival of the third generation of "peer to peer" systems, which allow Internet users to exchange unlimited quantities of music and videos for free. Among the newcomers, the BitTorrent network holds a special place: thanks to its highly innovative fragmented architecture, it allows large files to be downloaded quickly, including copies of high-quality feature films. BitTorrent was created in 2002 by Bram Cohen, a self-taught mathematician now aged 30 and living in Seattle. From the outset, he decided that the software making up his system would be free and open to all. Within a few months, hundreds of other volunteers, American, European and Asian, took it over to set up a vast network with relay servers on every continent. Immediately, millions of Internet users decided to use it to exchange music and especially video: works by independent and amateur artists, but also many commercial films pirated from DVDs, and all the major recent American television series. TOOL PROVIDER From the end of 2004, the American music and film majors launched legal actions and succeeded in shutting down several BitTorrent servers located in the United States. On the other hand, those located in Europe and Asia remained out of reach of American justice. Furthermore, no one directly attacked Bram Cohen: he did not distribute pirated products himself, and only provided a computer tool with countless "legitimate" uses. Today, BitTorrent has established itself as the main sharing network in the United States and in many countries, from China to the United Kingdom and Norway. It is steadily gaining ground on all continents: BitTorrent files alone represent on average between 35% and 50% of all global Internet traffic, all categories combined. The French are starting to discover it, and could adopt it quickly in 2006. For two years, Bram Cohen was content to live modestly, thanks to donations sent by grateful Internet users, and the sale of T-shirts bearing his favorite motto, "Give, and you will receive". In addition, he had created a specialized search engine on his website, allowing beginners to easily find all the films and pieces of music existing in BitTorrent format. But, in 2005, he changed his philosophy and decided to become an entrepreneur: he created a company in San Francisco, found $8 million from an investor and joined forces with a young manager, Ashwin Navin. In November 2005, Bram Cohen reached an agreement with the MPAA, an association of major American film producers: BitTorrent agreed to no longer list pirated films in its search engine - a measure that was mostly symbolic, since there are a thousand other ways to find them. In exchange for this gesture of goodwill, several major Hollywood studios entered into negotiations with BitTorrent to create a paid film distribution service. Ashwin Navin, however, is keen to point out that the major studios are not their only potential clients: "We also want to distribute the works of small producers who lack the means to distribute themselves through traditional means. Already, on BitTorrent, independent and amateur films are probably more numerous than copies of Hollywood films. Look, for example, at the global success of the Finnish independent film Star Wreck (4 million downloads in a few weeks). We are going to level the playing field, create a real equality of opportunity between large and small producers."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1583

ON A global scale, peer-to-peer (P2P) networks, which allow unlimited quantities of music, films, software and video games, often pirated, to be exchanged free of charge, represent 75% of Internet traffic. According to a September 2005 report by the Canadian company Sandvine, which specializes in Internet traffic, France is above average: file exchanges represent 90% of the volume of "upstream" traffic (leaving individuals' homes) and 85% of "downstream" traffic (arriving at individuals' homes). France does not control the operation of P2P networks, which, by definition, are global. It has very little influence on their economic and legal development, compared to the power of the United States and the dynamism of Northern Europe. The French massively download Anglo-Saxon music and films, and their online behavior imitates that of Americans and Northern Europeans. At the end of 2005, the French people's favorite system was eDonkey, created by MetaMachine. Threatened with lawsuits by American music publishers, this American company stopped distributing its free software. But eDonkey is still thriving thanks to eMule, its improved replica created by a young German, then perfected by volunteers from various countries and used by nearly 90 million Internet users. The French still use Kazaa, but are turning away from it. Since its Swedish inventor sold it to Australian businessmen, its programs have been loaded with spyware and clandestine advertising. The birth of Kazaa Lite, free software stripped of Kazaa's undesirable functions, has not stopped this decline. French Internet users are also adopting Gnutella, created by an informal network of American and European libertarian hackers. A group made up of Britons, Freenet, is preparing an encrypted system protecting the anonymity of users. The legal attacks by the major music and film companies against commercial P2P software publishers are in fact causing users to migrate to purely associative and voluntary systems. France is discovering the latest of the major exchange networks: BitTorrent, invented by a young autodidact from San Francisco, which allows you to quickly download good quality copies of films. The original BitTorrent software has already been downloaded by 53 million Internet users, not counting the dozens of clone software programs created by independents, distributed in millions of copies. At the end of 2005, BitTorrent represented less than 5% of P2P traffic in France, but 35% in Great Britain, 50% in the United States, 55% in China, 60% in Norway, etc. In November 2005, BitTorrent sealed an agreement with the MPAA (association of major American film producers), and promised to remove links to pirated works from its search engine. It hopes to launch a paid movie download service with the Hollywood majors. But the many pirate sites created in Europe and Asia using BitTorrent technology still offer free movies to Internet users around the world.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1584

At a time when the bill on "copyright and related rights in the information society" is causing a stir in the French chamber, L'Avenir des idées is making a significant contribution to the debate. A law professor at Stanford University, Lawrence Lessig is the founder of Creative Commons (1), an alternative to copyright launched in 2001 and applied in France since November 19, 2004. It provides artists and software creators with a flexible protection system, allowing each author to define the rules of use that they consider acceptable. The book by this supporter of free culture, published in 2001, reminds us how much freedom of creativity has strengthened the Internet. How much the freedom of cyberspace was inherent in its architecture. However, the effervescence of innovation is undermined when "dinosaurs" get involved. This study, perfectly documented, is intended to be a warning signal. Lawrence returns at length to the free software movement, the FreeSoftware Foundation, created in 1985 by Richard Stallman, which aimed to encourage the development of software distributed with its source code. "It is not thanks to intellectual property that the great advances of the computer age have occurred, but in spite of it," he notes. For him, the digital world is closer to the world of ideas than to the material world. And seen from this angle, the extreme protections proposed by the law are "neither necessary nor advantageous." With case studies to support his argument, he retraces the history of technologies, illegal at their inception, which have facilitated consumer access to music: MP3.com, launched in 1997, which spread the file format that has become commonplace; or Napster, the free MP3 file exchange service, the first P2P (data exchange between Internet users) general public service. The legal reaction of the majors was immediate. She continues: lawsuits against P2P enthusiasts, lobbying governments to strengthen laws, technological measures to curb copying... With the democratization of the Internet, fears are growing that digital technologies will render the rights enshrined in law obsolete. To better protect their industrial interests, cultural dinosaurs are trying to lock up the Internet. The major risk, according to Lessig: that innovation will end up controlled by the big owners of networks, licenses and copyrights. That our creativity will be straitjacketed by a centralized control architecture. The current issue is being played out on the legal level, where the old model of intellectual property protection no longer meets the needs of the networked society. Lessig advocates a free culture in which creators are paid, and proposes pragmatic and legal solutions. So that the door to a future of ideas is not closed, at a time when technology makes the extraordinary within reach. (1) http://fr.creativecommons.org/index.htm

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1585

The time when Google was "only" the most insatiable of all search engines, with a billion queries per day, will soon be long gone. After a 2005 marked by the explosion of its advertising profits and a market capitalization that reached 125 billion dollars, this beginning of 2006 marks an acceleration in the diversification of the new Silicon Valley magnet towards the all-out provision of online services to Internet users. Speaking Friday evening at the CES in Las Vegas, the major consumer electronics show, its co-founder Larry Page announced that Google is now also an online video distributor, a direct competitor to cable operators and new players like Apple, and a software supplier launched to attack the Microsoft citadel. Advertisement. Revealed by Libération (July 26, 2005 edition), Google's projects in video on demand give rise to a service for selling and renting films, series or reports to be viewed on your computer, television or portable music players such as the video iPod. At a time when alliances between content providers and broadcasters are multiplying, Google has notably joined forces with CBS to offer access to its catalog of series at $1.99 per episode and with the NBA to broadcast basketball games at $3.95 each. "It's the marriage of content with the means of reaching this content," summarized CBS president Leslie Moonves. The offer, which should be enriched daily, already includes 3,000 programs. Google promises to work so that anyone, professional or amateur, "can tomorrow distribute any video content" via its site, in paid or free form, by using advertising. While rumors of a low-cost Google PC sold at Wal-Mart or a Google operating system have faded, the massive arrival of the search engine on the software application market has been confirmed. Free and downloadable from its site while waiting to be pre-installed on computers tomorrow after signing agreements with manufacturers, the Google pack includes a set of software intended to "make computers easier to use." War. The pack is a real declaration of war against Microsoft since it includes, in addition to a classic antivirus (Norton) and Adobe image software, in-house products such as Picasa (image) or Google Earth (mapping) and products from free software such as the Firefox browser. A set soon to be completed by the free office suite Open Office, which challenges Microsoft at the heart of its model: the tied and fully integrated sale of its products in PCs. An "all-in-one" strategy that Microsoft has announced it will strengthen with the next Vista operating system. By emphasizing these new activities extended to the entire digital economy, Google has just made official the start of an all-out war with Microsoft.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1586

On the home page, the counter is ticking relentlessly. It takes that much to count the 10,000 to 15,000 new blogs that are added every day to the multitude of others. On Thursday, December 29, 2005, Skyblog thus passed the 3.5 million blog mark. These contain more than 170 million articles and 260 million comments. Skyblog thus confirms its status as the leading blog publisher in Europe. A real community: in total, some 2.5 million teenagers who keep their diaries online on the website, associated with Skyrock radio. This radio, particularly at the forefront at the time of the suburban riots, is already aimed primarily at 13-24 year-olds - there are 9 million of them in France - a generation that has quickly adopted the new tools for dialogue and exchange. "They are digital natives," explains Pierre Bellanger, the boss of Skyrock. This is the first time that a generation is addressing itself without an intermediary." More generally, according to a Médiamétrie study published on December 15, 2005, 8 out of 10 bloggers in France are under 24. The teen radio, with its very free tone and adept at interactivity, has quite logically captured a large number of them with Skyblog, which is far ahead of the platforms of the two Internet giants MSN and Google. These 3.5 million small personal diaries represent 500,000 to 1 million messages per day and approximately 1 gigabit of data that transits each second on the network. A large-scale sociological database, on which the CNRS (National Center for Scientific Research) is currently working. While waiting for the results, at Skyrock, we already know that girls - who keep more personal diaries on paper - publish more than boys. The Médiamétrie survey confirms the trend: according to the institute, 54% of bloggers are female. The blogging phenomenon is widespread, even if it is difficult to pinpoint precisely, as the counts are complicated and random. According to sources, there are between 50 and 70 million blogs in the world today. At a conference held in Copenhagen in June 2005, cross-referencing the data made it possible to draw an approximate map of the European blogosphere. With its 3 million participants, France was then well ahead of Great Britain (900,000 blogs) and Russia (800,000). A little over six months later, there were 6 to 7 million "active" blogs in France - or one in ten French people who had created their own blog! -, generating about as many visits per month, according to figures from the Heaven consulting agency, matching those of Médiamétrie. Which would make it the second largest Internet community in the world after the United States. And "the blogosphere continues to double every five months," they say at Heaven. The French blog already has its radio shows ("Revue de blogs" on Europe 1, "Blogs à part" on Inter), its TV shows ("Blog 6" on M6, "Le journal du blog" on France 5...). It will soon have its magazine, Netizen, on newsstands from January 26. Published by Editions Astrolabe (Rockson Group) and produced and written by pointblog.com, the online blogging magazine, this 84-page journal will have an initial print run of 80,000 copies. Its goal: "to understand and report on the revolution we are currently experiencing," explains its editor-in-chief, Cyril Fiévet, co-author of Blog Story, the first book in French devoted to the blogging phenomenon. For him, the blogging phenomenon is obviously the opposite of a passing fad. "There can certainly be a ripple effect," he explains. "But here's the thing: there are millions of people who didn't express themselves before, who didn't necessarily have the means to do so, and who decide to speak out. It's a global and fundamental movement." The rise of blogs has also benefited from the removal of technical obstacles to expression on the Net. "A few years ago," recalls Tristan Nitot, president of Mozilla Europe (foundation for the development of free software), "to create your Web page, you had to use an HTML editor, master the language, choose a host, upload to FTP... Today, writing a blog is as simple as writing a post or an email. » As a result, according to Médiamétrie, "one in ten Internet users claims to have created their blog". However, creating your blog is not enough to be read. According to the publisher Overblog, the fourth platform in France, only 1% of blogs generate 80% of the audience. Some bloggers have carved out a solid reputation for themselves in the French blogosphere, generating significant traffic on their blogs. Very influential with their readers, they can attract 3,000 to 10,000 visitors per day around unifying themes. The blog of the host Jean-Marc Morandini, hosted by the Canalblog platform, thus extends his Europe 1 show dedicated to the media onto the Internet. It is therefore not surprising that advertisers are taking a close interest in this new sector, which is seriously shaking up the traditional codes of communication. For over a year, the Influence agency has been operating in this promising niche. Its role: to connect influential bloggers with companies wishing to communicate in this new space. The agency has already taken on around thirty bloggers "who have economic potential", explains the agency's manager, Sandra Albertolli. The latter are given an agent in the image of athletes or artists. He can help the blogger who needs it to improve his audience in the blogosphere and thus allow him to earn money. For brands, the agency suggests different types of advertising presence adapted to the customs and traditions of the blogging world, its direct and instantaneous mode of contact. For advertisers, the investment is still modest: around 10,000 euros for a one-week campaign on a blog. A blog that attracts 5,000 visitors can generate a monthly turnover of 10,000 to 15,000 euros, assures us at Influence. Where we never stop scrutinizing the blogosphere to spot the star bloggers of tomorrow, future opinion leaders.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1587

The great smokescreen that took place during the night of December 21 in the National Assembly, during the discussion on copyright on the Internet, drew its strength, and its at least temporary success, from the combination of two arguments that were allied for the occasion but were in reality different. If this convergence only clashed with logic, it would not be so serious. The real problem is that one of these approaches is stupid, and the other is dangerous, and that if they have nothing to do with each other, the stupidity of one and the harmfulness of the other have used each other as masks to allow this sleight of hand. The first approach says that pieces of music, films, books should be accessible for free on the Internet. The second argues for compensation for rights holders through a lump sum like a royalty levied on Internet users. The first approach is just stupid. There is no reason for these goods to be free, no reason other than the regressive demagogy that our mercantile environment so well encourages, including under the cover of a libertarian utopia. We can want a world where everything would be free, a generalized potlatch, the disappearance of exchange value leaving room only for use value. Good theorists of a political economy of the break with the capitalist system have outlined the issues. But to believe, or to make believe, that this could only happen on the Internet, and for cultural goods alone, is a stupid deception. Why don't the defenders of this charming program also demand to be able to do their shopping at the grocer's online without paying, or to get their medicines for free? The arts live in the world, this world, which is a world dominated by capital and the market. The arts can play a decisive critical role there, they cannot exist outside of it. Wanting to exclude the arts from the world of merchandise is not liberating them, it is killing them just as surely as wanting to submit them entirely to the law of merchandise. It is not just demagogy to claim that remuneration for works will only benefit the biggest, the major record or entertainment companies, when it can and must benefit the millions of people who work in relation to the artistic sectors. There is also a total misunderstanding of the place of the arts in society, by idealizing them through naivety or stupid interest, at the level of the greed of the child who gets locked up at night in a pastry shop. But if there was only the sole thesis of gratuity, it would never have been able to accomplish the coup of December 21. The ambush could only succeed, at least temporarily, by joining forces with forces that are in fact opposed, those who argue for a flat-rate remuneration. Behind the brave brute of free are the crooks of the paid flow. This second approach is not stupid, it is dangerous, and even doubly dangerous. On the one hand, this is where the real danger of a new aggravation of the concentration of money and power in the hands of large groups lies. Who does not see that they will have a more favorable balance of power to appropriate the bulk of the product of a flat-rate tax, since there will no longer be a direct link between a desired "object" and the money put into circulation to acquire it? On the other hand, such a procedure represents a considerable step in an already dominant direction: the preeminence of the logic of flow over the logic of the work, since the "objects" in question are also works. Digital, as a mode of production and as a mode of broadcasting, multiplies the opportunities for this fluidification that was already the hallmark of traditional television. No more question of free here, we are ready to pay for the pipe, especially since more and more things can pour out thanks to it, but not what comes out of it. So what? Is it serious? Yes, it is serious. Because it ruins the singularity of the relationship carried by these particular objects that we call works, which means that they are not merchandise like the others. A work results from an act, a gesture accomplished by a person, or a small group of people, who propose a form. A work is a formatting (of sounds, images, words, etc.) capable of opening up to each other person who confronts it a space of sensations, and of thought developed from these sensations. The construction of each person as an individual, as a person with free will, is played out in the encounter with such objects, whose particularity is to be both identifiable, capable of being distinguished from one another, and open, since they must leave each person the possibility of doing something for themselves, something that is not already programmed. Flows can bring about all sorts of useful and pleasant things in better conditions. But there is an extreme danger in the dissolution in the logic of the flow of what, by definition, must remain of the order of the singular, of the distinct and this is, in principle, the case of any piece of music, any film, any book, even if most of them do not fulfill their promise, and the majority of them are consumed according to a desire that is not to confront the openness of art. While this is not the case for many other fabrications, including "immaterial" ones, and this is not the case for software, a field of high inventiveness and great importance, but which should in no way fall under the regime of works. Yes, we must defend free software, as we must defend generic drugs. But not by destroying the singularity of what defines works of art. The definition and defense of these, and of the particular rights of their authors, imply the distinction with this other logic, which is that of the patent. In seeking cultural recognition linked to artists, patent manufacturers (particularly for computers) are not only in the wrong field, the confusion they generate threatens the world of works, at the very moment when they claim to enter it. They should know how viruses work. Jean-Michel Frodon, editorial director of Cahiers du cinéma.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1588

Dear Bénabar and dear Vincent Delerm, reading Libé, you are angry with me as with all the other deputies who last week wanted to include the exchange of music files in the intellectual property code. I buy all your CDs as soon as they come out, I do not practice peer-to-peer to download your songs, I prefer to share and keep in my own memory unique moments like listening to Quatrième de couverture on a cool evening in the park next to Rouen Cathedral. Wanting to be understood and to convince those you admire is a natural feeling. The difficulty then lies in the demands imposed on oneself to achieve this. This is the exercise I am engaging in today by sending you this address. To be fair, should you not first be angry with the current government that made the disastrous choice of summoning us to the hemicycle just before Christmas to legislate in a hurry and above all in the most total improvisation. First of all, it is this ministerial amateurism that must be pointed out: a bill that had been dormant in the National Assembly for more than two years, France sanctioned twice by the European Commission for late transposition, a report from the Law Commission that was six months old, government amendments arriving in the middle of a general discussion, such as the one, with its whiffs of the Cold War, on graduated response to Internet users... This is the reason why the socialists had expressed their refusal to examine the text under these conditions. It is a pity that they were not heard. After this false start and once faced with a fait accompli, we resolutely opposed a liberticidal bill that went well beyond the mere transposition of the European directive and mobilized teachers, researchers, academics, librarians, archivists, promoters of free software, consumer associations and many others against it. I also remember that at least one of you, not so long ago, expressed by signing a petition his refusal of all-repression on the Web, in order not to turn more than 8 million of our fellow citizens into potential delinquents. Just as serious in our eyes is the fact that this bill was written to serve powerful interests, first those of the major record companies incapable of promoting a new economic model in the service of musical diversity, but also those of Microsoft and Apple by wanting to kill interoperability. It is normal, in fact, that the president of Medef, forgetting the fate that her organization reserves for intermittent workers within Unedic, suddenly says she is "on the side of the artists" against the deputies... In this context where the lobbies are powerful and the climate historically passionate when it comes to literary and artistic property, the deputies, going beyond the usual political divisions, have sought the path of general interest: the one that reconciles freedom and responsibility, to use Jean-Marc Ayrault's phrase, access for all to knowledge, learning and culture, and the desire to pay authors and artists. We know full well that, no more than the others, you do not live on love and fresh water, even if since June 2003 many professionals excluded from annexes 8 and 10 of unemployment insurance have had to return to a bohemian life that today we more prosaically call precariousness. In this regard, let us reestablish the truth. And there is no need to requisition the local baker or, even stranger, to discuss the criminalization of cannabis consumption. Legal proceedings against the public, legal uncertainty for millions of people, lack of remuneration for downloaded and exchanged works: this situation could not continue. At the antipodes of a logic of free access that we reject, faithful to Beaumarchais and to collective management, we simply did not want to delay the periodic adaptation of copyright to technological developments. Because it is in return for the identification of a download on the Internet for limited and non-commercial use with an exception for private copying that, without any possible ambiguity, we were able to enshrine in law the very principle of your legitimate remuneration. This legal certainty which respects the provisions of the European directive that it is up to us to transpose and which responds to a demand of a jurisprudential nature applies just as much to artists as to Internet users. How, indeed, can we prohibit without sanctioning? Is it not better to authorize in order to remunerate? As for the amount of this remuneration, which the law is not responsible for setting, as for its method of collection and its necessarily equitable distribution, the debate is before us. It is all the more so since the examination of the bill in the National Assembly was fortunately interrupted. The model of the legal license has worked well, for some time now, for radio. Is it adaptable to the Internet for music and cinema, being naturally excluded by the socialists because of the chronology of the media in the form of a flat rate collected in addition to the subscription to the access provider, and optional so as not to forget Internet users who do not download? Are there other models? A transitional regime could accompany the music industry in its digital transition. Should we not, in fact, consider legislating cautiously for a provisional period of three years? All these questions are asked. They deserve answers. There still needs to be prior and constructive consultation, bringing together and not dividing all the stakeholders concerned. The Minister of Culture did not know how or did not want to conduct this consultation before the parliamentary debate. This is probably his main mistake. Louis Bertignac, during a radio show in which I just took part, made this promising observation: "It has accelerated and, at least, now there is the debate." The debate, the socialist deputies, who are on the side of the artists and who are viscerally attached to copyright, have been waiting for this, since November 2004, the date on which they asked the President of the National Assembly to create a parliamentary information mission that they have not yet obtained. So, let's go, and quickly! Your latest album, dear Bénabar, is it not called Resumption of negotiations... See you soon. Kind regards. Patrick BLOCHE, deputy (PS) for Paris.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1589

Since March 2004, the European Commission has been demanding that the American giant provide complete documentation of its systems in order to allow competing software to function properly with Windows. On Thursday, Brussels threatened the publisher with daily fines of 2 million euros if it did not respond favorably to its injunctions within five weeks. Bernard Benhamou, lecturer at Sciences-Po, analyzes the issues related to this legal guerrilla warfare. Why is it so difficult to get Microsoft to comply with the court decisions that have been notified to it? Microsoft knows that time is on its side. For Bill Gates' firm, it is often preferable to incur financial penalties rather than put itself in danger in a constantly evolving market, as demonstrated, for example, by the position taken by Google in just a few years. How can the measures requested by the European Commission really hinder Microsoft? To be able to work with competing software, developers need access to what are called APIs, which are the articulation between their programs and the systems that will work with them, such as Windows. Microsoft maintains that if it gives more information about these APIs, it would be possible to create clones of its servers and, eventually, to reduce its lead to nothing. Access to Microsoft's source code, revealed under pressure from antitrust authorities, is not enough in itself to make competing software as competitive with Microsoft. Without the documentation that allows us to know how these systems work, this code is practically useless. Have we entered a new phase of confrontation between Microsoft and its competitors? Free software has become the only serious competitors to Microsoft, with an open model as effective as proprietary software whose economic model was created by Microsoft. The European Commission's injunctions come at a time when the Internet is undergoing profound changes and is moving from a network of computer machines to a network that will soon connect all everyday objects (telephones, cars, etc.). In this perspective, the need for European players to generate competition will be all the more important as it will correspond to a massive diffusion of these technologies in all economic sectors of our societies. In this sense, the interoperability of the systems present on the Internet will be the essential condition for creating new markets.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1590

In France, defending a law on copyright often allows you to leave your name in history. After Le Chapelier, rapporteur of the very first one, in 1791, and Jack Lang in 1985, the Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres is no exception to the rule: for two days, the beating up of his bill on the reform of copyright in the information society by deputies from all sides is already historic. "We were waiting for Malraux, we got Maginot!" said the socialist Christian Paul the day before yesterday. Like the line of the Minister of War in 1930, "RDDV" is being overwhelmed by a parliamentary revolt against a text described as "liberticide" by the UMP Alain Suguenot and a "carte blanche to the major record labels" by the socialist Patrick Bloche. Until the improbable revolt of a majority of the deputies present on the night of Wednesday to Thursday, when a right-left alliance voted for the first stage of a legalization of peer-to-peer exchanges against the payment of a fee. A measure vigorously opposed by RDDV, whose text seeks on the contrary to drive millions of Internet users towards commercial platforms thanks to a mixture of technical measures and repression. It reeks of lobbying. To arrive at this quagmire, the minister has multiplied the blunders on a subject that appears to be consensual: the political class is in fact unanimous in reforming a law overtaken by the intensity of massively free exchanges on the Internet. But the government's project, a late transposition of a European directive (2001), ended up reeking too much of lobbying by a part of the cultural sector. Among the dozens of examples, an amendment originally written by Vivendi Universal is supported by the government. When the debate began on Tuesday evening, RDDV's first blunder: socialist MPs complained about the presence of representatives from Virgin and Fnac, badged "Ministry of Culture", who were demonstrating paid download sites a few metres from the chamber. The very next day, left-wing MPs rejoiced at the publication in Libération of a column by UMP MP Bernard Carayon, who castigated a law tailor-made for "oligopolies apostles of technological obscurantism". Speakers from the right and the left paraded on the podium, who hammered away at the main measure of the text: the legalisation of technical protection measures (TPM) intended to control the use of works to stem piracy. UDF member Jean Dionis du Séjour, who was rather in favour of the law, warned that TPMs "do not become a weapon of war against free software" to which the manufacturers of these technologies (Microsoft in the lead) refuse access. PS Didier Mathus speaks of an "astonishing Christmas present to Microsoft". Socialist Pascal Terrasse of an "anti-youth law". "Graduated response". They were heated by all those who felt ignored by the Ministry of Culture: librarians, consumer associations, certain artists' unions, Internet users' collectives... The attempts of UMP Dominique Richard to save Private RDDV by waving the spectre of "the drying up of creation" have little effect. The anger of the deputies is also fuelled by the conditions of examination of the text: passed in the Council of Ministers almost two years ago, it arrives in the National Assembly on Christmas Eve and "urgently", which means a single parliamentary reading. The minister defends himself, reaffirms the "balance" of his text, denounces "the illusion of everything free". He castigates the "caricatures" and the "disinformation". He denies wanting to lead a "repressive crusade" and cites as proof his solution of "graduated response" to piracy, a progressive chain of warning emails, registered letters and then fines that should put an end to the current criminal law. Not so simple: the "graduated response" is an unprecedented legal system, which requires continuous monitoring of networks and gives power to an administrative authority to impose fines. It raises serious questions about respect for privacy or the rights of the defense. In addition, the deputies only discovered the first versions of the amendment once the debate had begun... The leader of the UDF, François Bayou, rushes into the breach by emphatically criticizing "an Internet police with exorbitant powers". Visibly pleased with his effect, he ends his speech with a tap on his microphone, which makes an elegant U-turn. Johnny Hallyday in the heat of the Palais-Bourbon. Wednesday evening, it's the final blow. Around 11pm, two identical amendments presented by the UMP's Alain Suguenot and the socialist deputies are studied. They concern the main project of the opponents of the law: the "global license", a legalization of the exchange of works without commercial purpose, in exchange for a fee of a few euros taken from the Internet subscription (read opposite). The happening is at its height: while the UMP rapporteur Christian Vanneste describes this measure as "irresponsible" and "archaic", he is tackled by the UMP's Christine Boutin, who does not want a "race to the bottom" to see "who is the most reactionary". And affirms that "young people, that is to say the France of tomorrow, support this proposal!" Phone calls. The opponent of the Pacs is applauded by the socialist Patrick Bloche, one of the promoters of the Pacs in 1999. At the time of the vote, the improbable happens: by 30 votes to 28, the amendment is adopted. The session is interrupted. RDDV's entourage multiplies the phone calls to mobilize the UMP deputies and regain control. There are still several amendments to vote before the complete global license project becomes law. The government has several levers to put out the fire: new deliberation, blocked vote or catch-up in the Senate. But for RDDV, Christmas is already ruined.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1591

"Do you want me to summarize the situation for you?" explains the socialist Christian Paul, one of the pillars of the parliamentary debate on copyright. "Well, nothing will ever be the same again!" The day after the surprise vote by the Assembly, against the government's advice, of two amendments paving the way for the legalization of "P2P" (read opposite), the debate resumed at midday in a heated atmosphere. In the morning, the president of the socialist group, Jean-Marc Ayrault, requested the postponement of a "botched, hastily presented" text, which he did not consider "up to the level of such a social issue". A message hammered home, as soon as the session resumed, by the PS, but also by the UDF, who multiplied the reminders of the rules and the interruptions of the session. "Cursed". After yesterday's revolt by UMP deputies (20 out of 30 voted for the two amendments), the group's leader, Bernard Accoyer, tried to calm things down, without disavowing his troops. Against the advice of the Minister of Culture, who wanted a new vote on the two "cursed" amendments, he stated that there was "no question of voting again", but that a more in-depth examination of the project would make it possible to realise that the global licence is not the solution, not to mention that it risks being "incompatible" with European regulations. Not a little proud that the Assembly's website had, according to the deputies, broken its audience records since the start of the examination of the law, several speakers opposed to the law multiplied their interventions on the theme: "Be careful what you say, thousands of Internet users are watching us live on the Internet." "There are those who listened to society and the others, isolated in their government bubble," analyzed a UMP deputy, acknowledging that it is "not easy to oppose the government in this way." After an interruption, the session resumed at 9:30 p.m. Devoted to the framework for the use of DRM, or technical measures for the protection of works provided for in Article 7 (which is at the heart of the transposition of the European directive legitimizing these digital rights management tools), the discussion reached the heights of technicality. With at stake the very sensitive questions of access of free software to these new markets and the non-patentability of software, on which there is a broad consensus in France. "But without interoperability of the amendments," quipped the socialist Patrice Bloche. Very irritated. The government, which still has 17 articles to vote on plus around 230 amendments, has resigned itself to having to resume examination of the text in January. Unless Parliament gets involved. It was indeed rumored that Jean-Louis Debré, very irritated by the state of unpreparedness of the text, had decided, after having spoken with Bernard Accoyer, to request the appointment of a fact-finding mission to the Senate and the Assembly at the beginning of 2006.

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## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1593

The debate on copyright and related rights in the information society was supposed to be rock'n roll, but it turned out to be downright punk, with a Minister of Culture, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, shaken by the opposition, but also by part of his majority, during the early stages of the examination of the law in the National Assembly. From Tuesday and again yesterday, RDDV played the good faith, castigated "the illusion of everything free" on the Internet, denounced the "caricatures", the "fantasies" and the "disinformation" on the first major reform of copyright in France in twenty years. No, it does not want to eliminate "private copying" or the right to "share one's passion" by legalizing the DRM (Digital Rights Management) anti-copy systems, the central axis of this law which aims to curb the duplication of digital works to curb piracy. No, he is not the minister of the "repressive crusade" against Internet users, because he is proposing an amendment establishing a "graduated response" (warning email, then registered letter and finally fine) rather than the all-criminal measure in force until now. But, no more, he is not managing to convince several dozen deputies of the "balance" of a text whose weaknesses are castigated from the podium. On private copying, it is the UMP deputy from Tarn Bernard Carayon who denounces a "text that is unclear, to the point that the rapporteur had to specify that the number of authorized copies could not be less than one". No surprise, because the suppliers of these technologies, Microsoft in the lead, never stop repeating that DRM makes the notion of private copying useless. A logic identified by UDF MP Jean Dionis du Séjour, who is proposing an amendment to organize the disappearance of the remuneration associated with the right to private copying, a sum of more than 160 million euros in 2004 collected in the form of a tax on blank copy media (CDs, cassettes, etc.) and redistributed to the cultural sector. A proposal that has the representatives of authors and artists howling. Another recurring criticism: the "graduated response", touted by RDDV as a "way out", appeared in the form of an amendment only the night before last, even though the bill was passed by the Council of Ministers almost two years ago. And is the result of "a very, very difficult birth, with multiple constraints: procedures, personal data and constitutionality", as one of its supporters, lawyer Christian Soulié, acknowledges. Logical, because the amendment proposes nothing less than the general surveillance of networks and the creation of an independent authority ultimately responsible for imposing fines on Internet users. For François Bayrou, "it is the creation of an Internet police force with exorbitant powers, which will have the prerogative to come and control the private use of our IT tools." After a petition that collected more than 120,000 signatures denouncing in particular the impossibility for free software to access the technologies of DRM suppliers, the government seemed to panic a little yesterday. Several companies including the French Mandriva, one of Microsoft's competitors in this sector, were received in a hurry at Matignon yesterday. And RDDV swore that a solution would be found. The vote on the more than 240 amendments was to begin yesterday evening (see box) and continue into the night.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1594

The Maginot Line that the bill on "copyright and related rights in the information society" seeks to establish seems to us to be inconsistent with France's historical positions in this area, unsuitable in light of new digital practices and technically dangerous. However, from the outset, the public debate on this topic has been marked by balance. It was in the wake of the report on the "petition of dramatic authors" presented by Le Chapelier that the National Assembly of January 13, 1791 created copyright, which protected them for five years. But the slayer of corporatism explains: "When an author has delivered his work to the public, when his work is in the hands of everyone, when all educated men know it, when they have seized the beauties it contains, it seems that, from that moment on, the author has associated the public with his property, or rather has transmitted it entirely to them." It is in this same spirit that, thanks to France's diplomatic efforts, 148 countries adopted at UNESCO last month the charter on cultural diversity which reinforces the special nature of cultural goods. The Minister of Culture has certainly only inherited a poorly initiated text resulting from a transposition of a European directive while the administrations have undergone a long-term work on the part of the lobbyists of the "majors". But the bill presented this week to the Assembly will perhaps miss a unique opportunity to reconcile the consumer with copyright, and ultimately weaken cultural diversity by a useless legal framework intended to protect oligopolies overtaken by technical progress. Thus, the cultural good which has escaped global and complete commercialization at UNESCO would fall back into France thanks to this law... What are these "technical protection measures" (TPM) that the law will protect? These are secret processes designed to prevent copying, which can be integrated into the medium of the work or the reading material (1). MTPs include software associated with the work that is installed on the user's computer before the first consultation with the aim of preventing or hindering the operation of the computer and the software enabling copying. MTP also includes the technical process that requires the reader to connect to a server in which the work itself is stored, which is thus distributed via the network. The purchase no longer concerns the work but its consultation, which can be configured in every way. The use of these techniques obviously requires those who want to implement them to pay licenses to those who developed them, hardware manufacturers to restrict the functionality of the equipment offered to the public and the end user to only use the reader compatible with MTP. Thus, the entire sale is linked... Three trusts Microsoft, RealNetworks, Intertrust (Sony, Philips) are large enough to impose themselves on this market estimated for the year 2005 at 3.6 billion dollars (2). The European directive lists three rights returning to creators: distribution rights, communication rights, and the reproduction right, the only one targeted by the MTPs, which the Member States must legally protect. However, these MTPs are already protected by our law, both civil contract, unfair competition, parasitism and criminal computer fraud, law of conditional access services... The insertion of new provisions within the intellectual property code is therefore useless, as is the assimilation of the circumvention of technical measures to counterfeiting, liable to disproportionate sanctions, which is not imposed by the directive. This text proposed urgently! in Parliament will result in numerous restrictions on use by colliding two logics: that of the directive, which defines the rights of the owner of the work, and that of the French intellectual property code, which defines in a restrictive manner those that belong to the public... If the law is passed as it stands, it will be possible to prosecute for counterfeiting a librarian or an individual who would like to index the works in his collection and would necessarily have to bypass MTPs to achieve this! This bill also raises questions in terms of competition, economic development, research and even... computer security and defense! Let us only briefly mention the obstacles placed in the way of the development of companies and developers of "free software" since they will only have to go and set up in Belgium or any other country to continue their activity, while the French administrations already using this software will be responsible for finding substitute solutions, and the government will have to do without the substantial savings that could still be made through their use! Let us pause for a moment to consider the security consequences of this text. Last month, Sony discontinued the use of its MTP protecting CDs. The spyware installed without the user's knowledge to control the computer compromised its security to the point that, as soon as this flaw was announced, a virus exploiting it was distributed by email! Sony could only announce the recall of all the disks. In addition to the privacy issues posed by the incriminated MTP, we will therefore question the security of the computers "hosting" MTPs and the computer networks in which they are inserted. Who will guarantee us tomorrow that, when viewing a film or concert remotely, intrusion operations will not be carried out? What are the consequences if the viewing is carried out from a computer belonging to a sensitive network for the company, for the administration? We could continue the litany of collateral damage from this text, both in terms of the possibility for researchers in certain specialties to continue their work, and the risk of technological dependence. A missed opportunity, two hundred years after the contribution of the Enlightenment, to set an example of a law adapted to the digital economy, rather than promoting the maintenance of oligopolies apostles of technological obscurantism. This should also make us think about the opportunity to regulate the action of lobbies in our democracy, as it is in many countries and at the European Commission, so that the objective of the law remains the general interest. For this text, as it stands, the question is asked and the answer obvious. (1) For example, banning the reading of a DVD on Saturday evening to "invite" the purchaser to go to the cinema! (2) According to a study by the IDC firm. Bernard CARAYON, UMP MP for Tarn

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1595

Far from being limited to simple anti-copy devices, DRM is also an economic issue of the highest importance. For software and IT giants such as Microsoft or Apple, it is in fact the question of control of the market for the distribution of cultural goods in the era of networks that is at stake. DRM allows them to impose their control over both the formats of dematerialized files and the reading software, with the intention of imposing themselves as essential "tolls" with barriers and licenses as a key. A logic that risks favoring a "balkanization" of networks (the different DRM systems are not compatible with each other), of strengthening dominant positions such as those of Microsoft in PCs or Apple in MP3 players, and of excluding free software from this new market that is already very closed.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1596

Despite the celebrations, activism against the bill is totally unbridled, boosted of course by the Internet. The site Musique-libre (1) offers an anti-DRM Mix contest compilation. Quite raw, but with a few funny refrains, like the falsely folk "Downloading is illegal; peer-to-peer is the Axis of Evil" by the singer Sam. We should also note the postcards signed by the cartoonist LL de Mars (2): we see in particular a baby bawling because his lullaby cannot be read due to the lack of the right unlocking key. The activists of the free software of eucd.info (2) named after the European directive transposed by the French text distributed them yesterday morning in front of the Ministry of Culture, showing a 4.50 m roll with more than 110,000 signatures demanding the withdrawal of the bill. (1) www.musique-libre.org (2) www.eucd.info

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1597

In thirteen days, the petition against the copyright bill, initiated by a consumer group, has been signed by 96,000 people and 600 organizations and businesses. This group of users of free software and cultural products intends to submit its petition to the Prime Minister on Monday, the day before the opening of the debates in the National Assembly. In the collective's sights is a text that imposes a technical lock on all cultural media, called DRM, to limit the consultation and copying of works. "Using the right of quotation or making private copies will be punishable by a fine of 300,000 euros and three years in prison while remaining legal practices," the group denounces, adding that the vote on this text "will prevent librarians from archiving cultural production, web radios from broadcasting music, journalists and researchers from using the right of quotation, computer scientists from developing software and citizens from freely enjoying the goods they have purchased." (AFP)

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1598

On CDs, anti-copy systems prevent duplication, but also the transfer of a song to a digital music player. On paid download sites, such as Fnacmusic.com, they limit the number of copies and force the user to choose approved reading software. Twelve days before the Assembly examines the bill on copyright, these technological locks called "technical protection measures" or digital rights management systems (DRM, in the original version) are at the heart of changes in law in the Internet age. And have sparked an outcry from associations, artists, librarians and Internet users, who are petitioning left, right and centre. Logical, because DRMs are at the heart of this text transposing a European directive, which legitimizes them in law and protects them legally: the fact of "jumping" one of these DRMs, whatever the reason, will soon be punishable by three years in prison and a fine of 300,000 euros. In theory, no digital circulation of works not validated by the producers or publishers will be possible anymore. We can measure the difference with the situation in the "physical" universe, where a book can be bought in a bookstore, but also borrowed, given or photocopied for personal use. Royalty. "Our works are pillaged and the technical measures are a response to the aggression we have suffered," justifies Gilles Bressand, the president of the National Union of Phonogram Publishers, who recognizes that "anything that tends to protect the principal, and therefore the works, can cause secondary damage." Members of the Alliance public-artistes (consumer and artist associations) see this future law above all as a pledge given to "industrialists who want to completely control the circulation of works". They propose another solution to put an end to "the illusion of free" while "allowing the public to benefit from the full potential of the digital revolution": the legalization of non-commercial exchanges of works via the Internet in exchange for a fee on the subscription to the access provider (1). Librarians and the Association of Mayors of France are worried about the future of "public reading", according to the Secretary General (PS) of the AMF, André Laignel, with this "extraordinarily restrictive" law which does not provide anything for libraries to provide access to digital resources. A gift. The protest was boosted by the timetable: passed by the Council of Ministers two years ago, the text will be examined on Christmas Eve, December 20. And "urgently", with only one parliamentary reading. A report released yesterday by an organization dependent on the Ministry of Culture and dominated by record and film producers, the Higher Council for Literary and Artistic Property (CSPLA), has further heated up tempers. It recommends amendments imposing DRM on file-sharing software, and even on web radios (see opposite). These price increases have aroused the ire of free software designers, whose petition (1) against "the generalized locking of culture" has collected more than 30,000 signatures in less than a week. They see this as a gift to the suppliers of these control technologies, including Microsoft. (1) www.lalliance.org and http://eucd.info

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1599

After the United States on November 22 and before Japan on December 10, Microsoft launched its new video game console, the Xbox 360, in Europe on Friday, December 2 (Le Monde, November 29, 2005). The world's number one software company, which started from scratch in this sector four years ago, with no experience in mass production of hardware, and a brand image that is the opposite of the leisure world, has paid a high price for its years of learning. According to analysts, it has invested more than $10 billion at a loss since 2000. For a mixed result: its Xbox, which arrived in November 2001, a year later than Sony's PS2, only obtained a 20% market share, very far from Sony's 60% and barely above Nintendo. By arriving early this time (Sony's PS3 and Nintendo's Revolution are not expected until spring 2006), with lower prices and a more extensive games catalog than its predecessor, Microsoft expects to sell 6 million Xbox 360s within seven months and, eventually, capture at least 40% of the market. If Bill Gates' firm is so determined to establish itself in video games, it is certainly to take advantage of the strong growth of this market, but it is above all because it is preparing for the post-PC era. Indeed, the computer, over which Microsoft reigns supreme, could be the big loser in the vast convergence at work since the advent of digital technologies. In the battle to become the universal digital entertainment machine (storage, management, downloading and exchange of photos, videos, music, messaging, surfing the Web, etc.), reigning supreme in every living room, the new sophisticated game consoles or the latest multifunctional Internet-telephony-voice decoders have as much legitimacy as the "media center" PCs offered, among others, by Microsoft. Beyond the home, it is also possible, everywhere and all the time, to continue to entertain oneself and connect thanks to the new generation mobile phones (3G), which have become real pocket entertainment machines. However, there is also in this protean competition between players in IT, consumer electronics, telecommunications, media and games, some good news for Microsoft: to become "intelligent", all these new devices integrate more and more software. This is why the Seattle behemoth has been trying, for a decade, to extend its empire to other devices than the PC. With, as in video games, fairly mediocre results compared to the colossal financial effort made. Thus, Microsoft, which has long bet on the emergence of a vast interactive television market, must today be content with being the supplier of software for the decoders of a few television operators via broadband, a much narrower market. In mobile telephony, the market for "smartphones" - these handsets integrating calendar, address book and email functions - is indeed exploding but Microsoft is struggling to break through against the sector leader Nokia. The latter formed a consortium with other mobile manufacturers to develop an operating system, Symbian, which equips more than 60% of smartphones compared to less than 20% for Microsoft's software. Above all, in this year 2005 when it celebrates its 30th anniversary, Bill Gates' firm has taken a "hit", even if it remains one of the richest and most profitable in the world. Already under attack from free (and largely free) Linux software, especially in emerging countries, Microsoft risks being challenged in its core business by Internet giants such as Yahoo! and especially Google. Just as it had "made obsolete" IBM in the 1980s. These portals want to become providers of "software services": the services (word processing, spreadsheets, messaging, search engines, comparison tools, but also music, photo, video file management, etc.) would be accessible online, free of charge or by subscription, instead of being purchased and stored on computers. More flexible in use, no longer requiring very powerful machines or cumbersome update procedures, this software is accessible from any connected device and allows Microsoft to bypass it. A real danger for this company that draws all its power from its monopoly on basic software, which equips almost all computers on the planet. Even though Microsoft has known in the past, by taking advantage of its financial strength, how to buy or crush other competitors, such as Apple or Netscape, Google's aura worries it. To the point that, on November 6, it announced that it wanted to launch "live" versions of Windows and Office in 2006, accessible in particular from its MSN portal. A defensive move, which also forces it to cut its prices.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1600

It was barely ten years ago that at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), computer science broke away from mathematics to become a department in its own right. Today, there are some 45 professors, some of whom are internationally renowned, and more than 1,500 students. The computer science department is probably the largest in Canada, perhaps except for that of the University of Ottawa. It also stands out for its desire to stay in touch with the job market, its avant-garde nature and the many partnerships it has established. A bridge "Many students leave other universities to come to us because we have developed a close relationship with the job market," says Abdel Obaïd, director of the department. For example, we have courses accredited by Cisco. With this company, we have developed solutions for network management." In 2003, Professor Étienne Gagnon made improvements to the SABLECC compiler of compilers, which is now used around the world. The department has also developed technologies in conjunction with Bell Canada and Ericsson. "Some bachelor's degrees, such as the microelectronics engineering degree, are designed to meet the demands of industry, particularly in Montreal. We do several internships in the telecommunications and aeronautics sectors. Four people work full-time in the Internship Office, which has established links with hundreds of companies in North America, Asia, etc. We have also established links with other universities, in China, Lebanon and Europe for example, where our professors sometimes teach. Many students, especially in the graduate and doctoral programs, come from outside Quebec to take advantage of UQAM's teaching methods and cutting-edge computer equipment." Innovation and pedagogy The unparalleled dynamism of UQAM's computer science department is certainly not unrelated to its ability to establish such diverse partnerships with leading players in the private and institutional sectors. Bachelor's, doctorate or master's degrees, the institution offers more than 11 programs, not counting specializations, covering all aspects of computer science. "Started in 2000," recalls Dr. Obaïd, "our doctorate in cognitive computer science is an almost unique program in North America, a junction between computer science and the human sciences [psychology, linguistics, etc.]." This program focuses on modeling knowledge acquisition, with a view to using it in distance learning - we have obviously forged ties with TELUQ for the occasion - artificial intelligence and improving learning tools. Also brand new, the microelectronics engineering program is the only one of its kind in Canada and in the entire French-speaking world. This bachelor's degree currently has a cohort of 60 students and demand is high. Next year, the Canadian Accreditation Board should approve the acceptance of its graduates by the Order of Engineers. The specialized graduate diploma (DESS) in bioinformatics meets the growing needs in biotechnology around the world. It is intended for bachelor's degrees in computer science, mathematics, biology and biochemistry. In this three-term program, subsidized by Genome Canada and Genome Quebec, new approaches and analytical methods are developed to process and manage, for example in the pharmaceutical field, a plethora of biological data. On the job market, personnel needs have been identified in the basic research sector, of course, but also in the oil, food, forestry and agricultural industries. "We have experienced professors in this DESS, several of whom, like Anne Bergeron, have an international reputation," says Mr. Obaïd. At the end of their training, students have the opportunity to complete an internship in a biotechnology company or laboratory in the Montreal area. A broad research horizon The research activities in the Computer Science Department are grouped around five main areas: systems computing, theoretical and combinatorial computing, artificial intelligence, teleinformatics and software engineering. This research is developed within the framework of laboratories such as LATECE (Research Laboratory on Electronic Commerce Technologies), which brings together some fifty members from backgrounds as diverse as electrical engineering and urban and tourism studies. In particular, work is being done on the development of virtual private networks, designed for companies that collaborate regularly, and on open source software, which is in high demand in the institutional field. Founded in 1996 by Professor Omar Cherkaoui, the teleinformatics laboratory welcomes doctoral and master's students as well as interns. Its objective is research on advanced network management and multimedia applications superimposed on IP networks (platform modeling). They are also working on fiber optic architecture and building an ontology prototype for wireless telecommunications between computers. The lab has received several grants from telecommunications giants like Bell, Ericsson, Nortel and AT&T. It is responsible for several innovations such as tools for assessing quality of service in networks and the object-oriented implementation of the SNMP-v3 protocol. The computer science department is located in the brand new Science Complex, north of Place des Arts. Named the Pierre-Dansereau Science Complex of UQAM, the campus includes, among other things, the biological sciences pavilion (which will be inaugurated on November 28), the science library, the Montreal offices of TELUQ and student residences. Contributor to Le Devoir

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1601

As podcasting progresses and comes out of the shadows, one might wonder if its appearance in the open will not mean the end of free podcast downloads. Because as Simon-Pierre Gourd, professor of sound creation at the new UQAM School of Media, explains, podcasting has solid origins in nomadic and alternative culture, as well as in the philosophy of free software. The commercial aspect therefore seems very difficult to reconcile at first glance. "What people don't want is to have things imposed on them," he reminds us. Which leads him to believe that even if podcasts will soon become available for purchase, it will not be possible at any price. And it is difficult to predict how the operation will materialize. Mr. Gourd sees shows downloaded for $0.99, as is the case for songs on the Apple Music Store, or even the addition of targeted advertising to the content. One thing is certain, he believes that the rate and the process will have to be fair so as not to offend the enthusiasm of fans. For his part, Sylvain Langlois, vice-president and general manager of Astral Media Radio Interactif believes that the only possible business model is through advertising. His suggestion? "Visuals on the player's screen while listening or a text at the beginning of the broadcast. Because I don't think listeners will be ready to pay. They will prefer it to be free, even if it means putting up with advertising." In any case, major media outlets know that this generosity in content is not without repercussions for them. Which probably explains why it is taking a long time to see paid downloads appear. In the opinion of James Selfe, head of promotion, Radio Communications at Radio-Canada's first channel, podcasting has the power to increase listener loyalty to the media and its products. And that, for both public and private broadcasters, is sweet music to their ears. Tools to enjoy podcasts -A computer with Internet access (high speed) -Download software (for example: iPodder, iTunes, Win Amp, Musicmatch or Windows Media Player) -A digital music player is required to get going because otherwise, you will be forced to listen to your episodes on your computer. Note that despite its name, podcasting does not necessarily require the use of an Apple iPod. Several other players can do the trick, although the manufacturer of the famous device has fully integrated the management of this type of downloads since iTunes 4.9. -All that remains is to explore the Web in search of auditory treasures! JSMassicotte@lesoleil.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1602

To put an end to the high volatility of copyrighted files circulating on the Internet, digital content producers and software manufacturers are seeking to generalize DRM (Digital Rights Management) systems. These technical devices make it possible to limit the number of copies and to tightly control the use made of files acquired from download platforms. Some players in the industrial world do not hide their desire to see such devices integrated into all communicating software. Several weeks before the bill on copyright in the information society is examined by Parliament, a draft amendment to the text is circulating "according to which any program publisher who has not taken measures to, in the state of the art, protect works and objects against unauthorized use" could be prosecuted... for counterfeiting. "The major achievement of the European directive on copyright [which the law proposes to transpose into French law] is the legal protection of technical anti-copy measures," is acknowledged by the Brussels Commission. For rights holders, the interest is to curb the piracy of cultural works, carried out using peer-to-peer (P2P) exchange networks: if the original file is protected by DRM, its successive uses can be tracked. But for software giants, the interest is quite different. For Microsoft and Apple, it is a question of increasing their control over computer file formats and reading software tools. And also, of excluding free or non-commercial software from the field of competition. Currently, DRM devices are based only on computer programs attached to mobile files. But they could, in the short term, be directly integrated into the chips that equip individual computers. The principle is simple. When sold or exchanged on a download platform, the music or video file is encrypted. A second file - called a license file - is stored locally, on the user's hard drive. When a reading software tries to access the music file, it automatically calls the license file which contains the ad hoc cryptographic key, necessary to read the work. It is, in particular, the license file which determines the number of copies that a user is authorized to make of the file he has acquired. "This is an inversion of the logic of cryptographic exchanges, warns Christophe Espern, one of the facilitators of the FreeSoftwareFoundation (FSF), an association opposed to the generalization of DRM. In a classic cryptographic exchange, the keys are made available to the user. In the case of DRM, the keys are hidden on the hard drive and only the reading software can access them." A particularity which implies that only "trusted software" can access certain content protected by DRM devices. This detail is important. "This de facto excludes open-source [free] software from the competition, since its fundamental principle is to be developed in complete transparency," says Mr. Espern. "No free software can read content protected by DRM." The sometimes occult nature of DRM systems is at the center of controversy in the world of computer security specialists. At the end of October, antivirus software publishers detected the presence of a small program on CDs published by Sony-BMG, installing itself without the user's knowledge on the hard drive of their PC. Several antivirus software publishers have decided to classify this small program, called a rootkit, in the category of spyware... The new generations of hardware, in the wake of Microsoft's future operating system - Windows Vista, scheduled to be marketed in 2006 - will integrate systems that will strengthen existing anti-copy protection. The future Windows will in fact include a module that will only authorize access to certain areas of the computer's memory to software - including device drivers - that is "signed", i.e. recognized as "trustworthy" by a certification authority such as, for example, the American company Verisign. Software will therefore have to go through a remote server to obtain authorization to access these protected areas where, for example, files protected by copyright could be stored. The possibility of circumventing DRM would then be almost zero. One of the last flaws in any digital content protection system, called by specialists the "analog hole", could also be in the process of being filled. It is in fact still possible to re-record and encode in digital format the music that comes out of the speakers of a personal computer. But "in the United States", specifies Mr. Espern, systems are already being tested that make it impossible to convert analog streams into digital files".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1603

ECONOMY OF ARTISTIC PROPERTY, by Xavier Greffe (2005, Economica, 209 p., 18 ). THE NEW COPYRIGHT AND RELATED RIGHTS, by Alain Berenboom (2005, Larcier-De Boeck, 512 p., 110 ). COPYRIGHT AND PROTECTION OF WORKS IN THE DIGITAL UNIVERSE, by Séverine Dussollier (2005, Larcier, 582 p., 128 ). TEXT OF THE PROJECT: www.assemblee-nationale.fr/ 12/dossiers/031206.asp FOUNDATION FOR FREE SOFTWARE, http://eucd.info

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1604

Developing countries would like, this time, not to miss the next industrial revolution, which will be that of information technology. The task promises to be difficult, given how far we are starting from. However, for a rare time, they seem to be able to count on the help of large multinationals and the laws of the market. Immediately nicknamed "the green machine" after its unveiling last week at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis, the small lime green laptop almost brought a tear to the UN Secretary-General's eye, so beautiful is its adventure. "It is truly a moving experience. It is also a touching expression of global solidarity and [an example] of corporate citizenship," exclaimed Kofi Annan in front of the device designed especially for children in the poorest countries on the planet by the engineer from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and father of the "one laptop per child" project, Nicholas Negroponte. No bigger than a school book, the machine is a real computer with a small color/black and white screen and a keyboard, all running on flash memory and embedded in a rubber shell to ensure better shock resistance. Its power cable also serves as a shoulder strap. It has a pretty yellow crank that is used to recharge its battery in the event of a power outage, at a rate of one minute of crank turns for 40 minutes of use. It can easily be transformed into a television or an electronic game. It includes free software and runs on a free-source operating system (Linux) that will allow its users to easily develop their own software. It was designed to work on a network so that, for example, an entire class can work together or benefit from a single Internet connection. Oh yes! This little marvel should only cost $100 US. Sponsored by industry giants such as Google, AMD, News Corp and Red Hat, it will initially be sold only to governments in developing countries so that they can give it directly to their millions of schoolchildren. Its distribution should begin by the end of 2006 in six countries, two in Africa, two in Asia and two in Latin America. The little green machine may not be the only low-cost computer available in the coming months. The American SolarPC should release a computer at the same price, but without a screen, by the end of the year. AMD is working on an Internet box at $249, the Taiwanese manufacturer VIA launched a personal computer in June sold for $250 and the Indian Encore Software presented prototypes that would cost $230. We are seeing the same phenomenon in wireless telephony where the American Motorola has just been chosen by a consortium of 650 operators to design mobiles costing less than $30. Dutch Philips, for its part, promises to make models half as expensive by 2008. Finnish Nokia has instead chosen to tackle service costs and has set itself the goal of a monthly price of less than $6 per device. It is easy to guess that this race for low prices is generally less about altruism than about business sense. While the computer market is stagnating in developed countries, growth prospects are spectacular in the emerging economies of China, India and Brazil. The number of personal computer users in developing countries is expected to increase from 660 million to one billion within five years. In wireless telephony, it is expected to be able to gain one billion new users during the same period in these countries, which will account for 80% of global growth in subscriptions. The companies know that they could do much better still provided that the cost of these technologies is reduced. A shortcut to development? Whatever the reasons, this trend is good news in a world where, like the Tunis Summit, there is an attempt to reduce the "digital divide" between the North and the South. Often poor, if not totally devoid of traditional telecommunications infrastructure, even simple telephone wires, could not developing countries hope to skip this stage and move directly to the new economy thanks to cellular telephony and digital technology? Their under-equipment and the youth of their populations could, according to experts, paradoxically constitute an advantage because they make them virgin territories where new information technologies can be rapidly deployed. It has been calculated, for example, that each time the number of mobile phones increases by 10 devices per 100 inhabitants, the GDP itself increases by 0.6%. It is also reported that these devices now allow African and Chinese farmers to obtain direct information on market prices and to be less cheated by intermediaries when it comes to selling their crops. What these statistics do not say, however, is that the digital revolution in the countries of the South is concentrated mainly in emerging economies and large cities, leaving behind rural areas and the poorest populations. Nor do they say that if it is mainly the cell phone that is successful among these populations, it is partly because one does not have to know how to read or count to be able to use it. And they do not talk about the spying on these communications by dictators. What is also not said is that the first experiment in a computer for the poor, called Simputer and developed by the Indian Institute of Science, was a dismal commercial failure. As for the little green machine that we dream of seeing millions of schoolchildren in poor countries around the world ride around with today, its creators admit that one of the problems will be to dissuade the families of its small owners, whose annual income is sometimes as low as $1,000 a year, from selling it immediately to make ends meet.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1605

Angel Gonzalez-Sanz is an economist at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He is co-author of the 2005 report on the information economy and electronic commerce published on the occasion of the World Summit on the Information Society. Is it not ridiculous to want to bridge the "digital divide" when many people in the South have problems accessing water, health or education? The countries of the South must become aware of the importance of new information technologies in solving these fundamental problems. Nearly half of the world's Internet users live and work in the countries of the South. This therefore has a significant social and economic impact on them. Technology must be a tool to solve development problems more effectively, particularly in relation to trade since that is our mission. There are already several examples of success, even if they are on a limited scale: in the tea and coffee markets, for example, some small producers have found niche markets in developed countries thanks to the Internet, and they have appropriated more added value by avoiding certain intermediaries. Similarly, in the tourism sector, developing countries can appropriate a greater share of the added value by ousting certain intermediaries. This is the case in Cambodia: the main agencies in the United States do almost no promotion of this destination and concentrate their offer on a few hotels. In Angkor, a small hotel with 22 rooms opened a website in June and, since then, has already generated 70% of its turnover directly through online bookings. How is the "digital divide" characterized? There is much talk of the digital divide between the North and the South, which is real: 3% of Africans have access to the Internet, compared to 62% in North America. But there are also South-South divides linked to the very great inequalities that affect developing countries. A gap exists between the elites and the vast mass of the population, another between urban and rural areas. Similarly, new information technologies cover very varied fields: the situation of mobile phones is much more favorable than that of the Internet. But if we know the rate of access or equipment, we lack information on the way people use technologies, which is fundamental to support and evaluate policies. And the uses can be very different from those in the North: if, in developed countries, mobile telephony is a very personal tool, in developing countries it has an enormous impact on the activity of microenterprises. In Egypt, 85% of them, from taxi drivers to painters, now depend on mobile phones, whereas before they had no means of communication. What are the obstacles to attempts to resolve this divide? Lack of access and equipment, and high prices, of course. But also professional qualification or illiteracy: the Internet remains largely text-based. The $100 computer is therefore not the immediate solution for the poorest, who live on $2 a day. But the idea remains interesting. A similar project has appeared in India, with the Simputer. Many developing countries seem to choose free software, such as Linux, which can be copied and modified at will, rather than Microsoft's. Is it because of its lower cost? Free software is very interesting for developing countries. Not only because of its cost, but also because it allows the emergence of a local industry for adapting the tool, for translation, for services, all things allowed without limit by this type of software. It also allows South-South cooperation to be initiated, without depending on companies in the North. Brazil, for example, has developed the use of free software significantly, and we have just signed an agreement to reproduce their experience in other countries...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1606

Tunis, special envoy. It is green, its crank is yellow, and, from a distance, it looks more like a toy. The look is no coincidence: this object was designed for children. Christened the "green machine" by its designers because of its color, this $100 computer is without a doubt the most concrete response provided at the Summit on the Information Society in Tunis to the North-South "digital divide" that was at the center of the debates and the very origin of the summit. Presented as a preview by a team of researchers from the famous Media Lab of MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in Boston, in the United States, the first and only prototype of this machine presented as "indestructible" was unveiled last Wednesday by Nicholas Negroponte, father of the project and director of the Media Lab, before the astonished eyes of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. "We have long dreamed of a low-cost computer," Annan said as he discovered the undisputed star of the WSIS. "Today, we have an impressive technical result." Described as a "technological shortcut" for poor countries, this low-cost laptop is not a cheap computer. The size of a school textbook, the PC with a color screen is equipped with a 500 megahertz microprocessor. It connects to the Internet in "wifi mesh" mode and can even act as a television or e-book (digital book) with a screen on one side and a keyboard on the other. Only the data storage capacity in flash memory, reduced to half a gigabit, distinguishes it from an ordinary desktop computer. Equipped with four USB ports, it has the immense advantage of being able to be powered in all possible ways: electric current, simple batteries or using the small crank on the right side of the keyboard, which operates a dynamo. With astonishing results: when turned for one minute, it gives ten minutes of autonomy if the computer is on. In "e-book" mode, closed, "one minute of transmission can power the computer for nearly thirty minutes", explains the very calm Professor Negroponte. He is certain that he has here "the project of his life". Access to knowledge The fact is that the $100 computer is anything but a commercial enterprise. Developed within the Media Lab, the project is supported by a non-profit association "One Laptop per Child" (OLPC, according to the acronym for the English One Laptop per Child), founded by Negroponte in the company of other big names in new technologies such as Alan Kay, the man who, in 1968, had developed the first laptop. This NGO of inventors has set the bar very high. Its ambition is to eventually provide every child on the planet with a laptop from the age of 7-8, with absolute priority given to poor countries. It is intended to be a weapon against the "educational divide," explains Negroponte, who has long supported the creation of schools in Cambodia. "Digital technology is just another means of providing access to knowledge and learning," he recalls. The OLPC program plans a very rapid ramp-up: five to ten million units could be produced before the end of 2006, up to ten times more by the end of 2007. "A computer per child" could of course have chosen to recycle second-hand computers from rich countries to distribute them in poor countries. But according to the Media Lab's calculations, if we consider that each PC to be reconditioned before new use requires one hour of work, it would take 45,000 years of work time to update 100 million machines. Too long to get the South out of its digital underdevelopment. Another bias of the (100% American) MIT team: individual ownership of the computer. "We're not thinking of community pens," explains the Media Lab on its website. "Every child should have their own. They are tools for thinking, cheap enough to be used for work and play, drawing, writing or doing mathematics. A computer can be the same thing, but much more powerful." While collective uses of the "green machine" are not excluded, Negroponte also believes, as a good American, in the virtues of private property. "Experience shows that we take care of what belongs to us," he says. "Have you ever washed a rental car?" From the production of the $100 PC to its final distribution through states and then schools, a Marshall Plan to bridge the digital divide remains a monstrous puzzle. It will first be necessary to hold the psychological barrier of $100, in order to accelerate the diffusion of the object. The MIT computer is not in fact the first in the niche of very low-cost PCs designed for emerging markets. But it will be the least expensive: the few models released to date, or about to be released, in Taiwan, India or the United States, all cost between 200 and 250 dollars. To arrive at such a low price (the first "classic" PC offers are at 500 dollars), the Media Lab team, during the year that it took to develop its prototype, worked on the smallest detail: it took 200 drawings of the model and three months of work on the flat and flexible screen, the biggest difficulty, to arrive at a unit cost of 35 dollars. All the while taking care to make it readable in the open air, since many classes in the Third World take place outdoors. And by designing an operating system (from free software based on Linux) "non-obese", that is to say reduced to the essentials in order to save on energy consumption. The $1 million to $2 million project was funded largely by sponsors like Google, chipmaker AMD and Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. The other big money-saver is the lack of any investment in the machine other than technical, says Mary Lou Jepsen, who developed the display. "About 75 percent of the cost of a computer is marketing, distribution and operating system licensing," she says. "In our case, those expenses were cut to zero." To keep costs down, states that want to buy the $100 PC and distribute it free to their schools will have to order large enough quantities. Eyeing a potentially huge market, the manufacturers are already in advanced negotiations with five companies in Asia to start production in February 2006, and will set a price that is lower the more millions of units are produced. According to OLPC, which estimates the minimum order for the project to be economically viable at 500,000 to one million computers, the first list of potential "buyer" countries includes Brazil, Thailand, Egypt, Argentina, India and China. "China alone wants three million right away," announced Mary Lou Jepsen. "And Brazil has already blocked its line of credit. It's beyond anything we could have imagined." "At that price, we are ready to buy thousands, even millions," enthused Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade in Tunis. Rich countries are not left out: the state of Massachusetts in the United States has ordered 500,000 for its schoolchildren. For reasons of scale, OLPC, which has asked the UN to provide the logistics for the project, wants to serve first the large countries that would order at least one million computers. The launch in small countries will take between six months and a year. But there is no shortage of grey areas regarding the financing of the operation, particularly for the poorest countries, unable to pay the sums envisaged. Like the beginnings of the Internet, "Solutions exist," assures the director of the Media Lab, who imagines that States, which spend on average 20 dollars per year and per student on school books, could devote part of this sum to the purchase of machines if these include digital manuals replacing books. The case of Africa, they recognize at OLPC, is the most problematic and could require "sponsorship of children in the South by those in the North." There remains a real unknown: connections to the Internet network. In this complex puzzle, they represent another challenge. Thanks to the mesh, a Wi-Fi chip that allows computers to be connected to each other in the same geographical area, even without an Internet connection, local networks can be created, allowing the exchange of royalty-free content. "We can imagine that a single connected computer will allow hundreds of others to be irrigated," explains Mary Lou Jepsen, according to whom the capacities of the new networks will allow an exponential development of "connectivity" on a global scale. The most important thing, the Boston researchers point out to all their interlocutors, is to believe in the dynamics of the project. "It's a bit like the beginnings of the Internet," says Mary Lou Jepsen, present at her stand in Tunis twelve hours a day to answer questions from participants at the summit. "It seems a bit anarchic, chaotic, but the technological contagion around the $100 computer is such that, for us, all hope is allowed today."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1607

At the World Summit on the Information Society (November 16-18 in Tunis), the main topic of conflict is the "governance" of the Internet. And it pits the United States against the rest of the world. The vast majority of countries want America to share the power to define the standards and rules for the operation of the Web, or even transfer it to the United Nations. But the American Department of Commerce has announced that it will not give up (read below). Washington warns democratic states against a possible rise in power of dictatorships which, if control of the Internet were transferred to an international organization, would have new means to curb freedom of expression in their countries. The United States also says it fears a takeover of the Network by incompetent international "bureaucrats." The fact remains that today their technological supremacy gives them a preponderant role. If the Internet exists as a unified global network, it is thanks to the ongoing work of engineering committees that establish global standards in all areas. The two main bodies, the Internet Architecture Board (IAB) and the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), are composed mainly of American and Scandinavian experts working for large American companies and universities. They are overseen by the Internet Society, based in Washington and Geneva, an association in which American members play a leading role. The development of technical recommendations for the World Wide Web is ensured by the W3C, an international organization based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston. Above all, the Internet is a set of machines: in the world, 80% of routers - the computers that calculate the best route for data to take to transit the Network - are manufactured by Cisco, a company in San Jose (California). The other 20% come from its competitor, Juniper, based in Sunnyvale, a quarter of an hour away. To surf the Web, Internet users use the same browsers: Microsoft Explorer, Netscape Navigator or Apple Safari - all American. The rebellious spirits use the free software Firefox, from the Californian cooperative company Mozilla. To find information, in any language and in any field, everyone uses the American search engines Google or Yahoo! first. To exchange electronic mail, listen to and download music, watch videos or create weblogs, the vast majority of available products come from the United States. Instant messaging is dominated by Yahoo!, MSN (Microsoft Network) and AOL (America Online). As for Skype, the free telephone system using the Network invented by Scandinavians, it has just been bought by the Californian auction site eBay. Finally, American e-commerce, marketing and online advertising companies dominate the markets of most countries. This power is also exercised at a less visible but equally strategic level. The Internet is governed by a nebula of public and private organizations created over the years by American researchers and academics. To be connected to the Internet, every computer must have an IP (Internet Protocol) address. Each number must be unique, otherwise the coherence of the system on a global scale would be broken. Coordination is ensured by ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), created in 1998 to replace the artisanal system installed twenty years earlier by the University of Southern California. ICANN is a hybrid institution. Its members are public and private organizations from all over the world, and its board of directors welcomes nationals from eighteen countries. But, legally, it is a private association under Californian law, under the supervision of the American Federal Department of Commerce. One of its branches, IANA (Internet Assigned Numbers Authority), periodically creates series of IP addresses and then distributes them to five organizations, corresponding to each continent. In turn, these assign them to users in their zone. Another major mission of ICANN: to manage domain names. In addition to its IP address, each server has a name - cocacola.com or lemonde.fr - which allows access to the desired site without having to memorize the address. These names have acquired great commercial and symbolic value. The system is managed by a network of thirteen root servers, both directories and switchboards. Seven are installed in the United States. The two main domains ".com" and ".net", created for American users but used throughout the world, are administered for ICANN by VeriSign, a private company under contract to the American Department of Commerce. It manages more than 40 million names and ensures the operation of two root servers, including the standard server, the model for all the others. ICANN also exercises control over national domains, such as ".fr" for France. States and territories wishing to create a new one or change one must submit a request to ICANN, which generally takes several years to process. East Timor (Timor-Leste), independent since 2002, only obtained activation of the ".tl" this year. For its part, the European Union negotiated at length with ICANN to create a ".eu", then waited for it to be introduced into the root servers. The ".eu" will not work until 2006. ICANN must also give its agreement when a country wishes to transfer management of its domain from one organization to another. In 2005, this was the case for five states, including Iraq. On the other hand, the ".kp" domain, created for North Korea, is not active, because ICANN has never assigned it to a national organization. Finally, ICANN is responsible for creating sector-specific domains, such as ".museum" for museums or ".travel" for travel agencies. It had planned to create a ".xxx" for pornographic sites, but gave up on this at the behest of Washington...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1608

Until Sunday, free software enthusiasts will be introducing you to their world, all over Quebec. On the theme "Let's connect people", you will be able to attend conferences, demonstrations, interventions in schools and other activities intended to promote free software (open access). Remember that this quality software, designed by volunteers and distributed free of charge, has the same functions as paid software from major brands like Microsoft or Adobe. Their only flaw is their sometimes difficult installation process. And precisely, the general public will be able to take advantage of a free service on Saturday in Montreal, Laval and Quebec City: you bring your computer, and professionals will install the Linux system, the Office office suite or other free software for you. Beginners are welcome; take advantage of it! Information and program: www.sqil.info THE ANNIVERSARY November 17, 1970: Doug Engelbart files the patent for the mouse Invented by Doug Engelbart of Stanford University, the first mouse was made of a wooden shell and two metal wheels to move a point on the horizontal and vertical axes of a screen. As you probably guessed, Engelbart nicknamed his invention "mouse" because of the wire that dangled, and still dangles, at its end. It was used to use a graphical interface called "Windows", also created by this researcher. Unfortunately for him, software could not be patented at that time... We also owe to this computer pioneer the concepts of hypertext (i.e. links between Web pages) as well as videoconferencing. THE QUOTE From this day forward, I will not spend another penny on content that I cannot use the way I want. If I can't copy it to my hard drive, and play it on my favorite music player whenever and wherever I want, then I won't buy it. They can all take their protection systems and stick them in their bottom line. - Mike Evangelist, former Apple marketing director, on the new copy protection systems built into music and movies that impose usage restrictions on consumers. Source: writersblocklive.com THE TECH WORD TO PLUG KILLER APP "This GPS pacifier will be the Killer App for moms!" Great lovers of war metaphors, the marketing strategists of technology companies have dubbed "killer applications" those flagship technologies that everyone dreams about every night: Apple's iPod, Google's search engine, Sony's Playstation... "Flagship applications" (official translation) are particularly decisive in the technology market, where due to compatibility issues, you have to impose your standard or die. Send us your suggestions for tech words (English or French) to actuel@lapresse.ca. E-ETHICS The eight email faux pas 1- Writing on the spur of the moment. 2- Being sarcasm that won't come across in writing. 3- WRITE IN CAPITAL LETTERS. 4- Overusing exclamation points!!! 5- Pressing "send" before proofreading. 6- Forgetting to attach the expected document. 7- Writing to a client with a Hotmail or Yahoo address. 8- Writing while drunk. Source: taken from e-mail mistakes that make you look bad, according to technology columnist Kim Komando. The eighth mistake is ours (unfortunately...).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1609

There were low-cost flights, now there are simplified "low-tech" computers. While computer manufacturers around the world are constantly boasting about the sacrosanct "use value" of their products by highlighting their increasingly extensive possibilities, a small French SME has decided to break with the logic of "always more" high-tech. Developed by a Parisian SME created in 2002 by three students, the Ordissimo is a computer that does not seek to do everything but to offer a use adapted to a clientele of ignoramuses wishing to get up to date with technology without spending sleepless nights. "Many people do not get into computers for fear of being seen as idiots," explains Christophe Berly, one of the fathers of the Ordissimo, "we help them take this step with a machine that is not cheap but limited to basic uses. It is aimed at seniors of course, but more broadly at anyone who wants to simplify their relationship with the computer." With its almost instinctive mode of operation, close to writing, Ordissimo calls a spade a spade. To send an e-mail, simply click on the e-mail icon and fill in the window that appears on the screen. The same operation is used to write a text, by pressing the text icon. If the graphic interface has been simplified and reduced to essential uses (writing, connecting to the Internet, calculating, looking at photos), the single-click keyboard and mouse have also banished all computer codes or shortcuts. To move a paragraph, press the "copy" key, written in black and white, then "paste". Sold for 395 euros (without screen or Internet connection) or 695 euros in a complete version, this computer has already carved out its small success of esteem by word of mouth in senior circles and aims for 15,000 sales, solely by mail order, by the end of 2005. Here too, the service is tailor-made with the possibility of choosing paid installation at home (60% of buyers), or even taking a few introductory lessons. You can also train yourself with the help of videos and a "Learn" button with practical exercises to boot, or use the services of a remote trainer also indicated by a small icon. "Everything is done to reduce the failure rate", explains Christophe Berly who admits to only two cases of absolute recalcitrance to Ordissimo-style formatting. Be careful, however, not to take users for naive people. "Don't use the simplicity of the Minitel as advertising any more," wrote a fan of the Ordissimo recently by email, "I find that reductive." Developed using free software and assembled in France, the Ordissimo intends to progress with its users. Its designers are preparing a menu of applications that can be downloaded online, some of which are very cutting-edge (telephony, music, photo editing, games, etc.) for those "who want to go further." This time, the high-tech level.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1610

The failures of the computer systems used during the last municipal elections have given Quebec citizens a flagrant demonstration of the urgent need to use free software during operations as important as an election. Indeed, only software developed, verified and improved by a large working community can inspire the confidence that the use of software tools in democratic life requires. We therefore call on our fellow citizens, Quebec businesses and the institutions concerned to support the creation of a broad coalition promoting the use of free software in electoral processes. Of course, all of the problems mentioned recently are not necessarily the result of flaws in proprietary software: server congestion, operator training, risk assessment, power outages, fires, etc. On the other hand, the overall situation requires that we raise the level of trust in the systems used in order to have absolute assurance that one's vote is properly counted, to have a reasonable and transparent recount possibility, to have free and rapid access to the election results, and, above all, to maintain full public control over the democratic process. Free software is software delivered with its source code in such a way that it can be accessed, consulted, copied, modified and redistributed, thus evolving continuously towards a more sophisticated version, in a context of cooperative and community development. The free operating system GNU/Linux, named after the GNU project of the FreeSoftwareFoundation and the Linux kernel, itself an amalgam of the name of its first designer, the Finnish Linus Torvalds, and the Unix system that is at its origin, is an example of free software. General Manager, Génération Linux

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1611

These are global cooperatives, run by tens of thousands of people working together via the Internet. Their names? GNU/Linux, a computer operating system that runs hundreds of thousands of machines worldwide. Or Wikipedia, a free, open encyclopedia accessible via the Web in dozens of languages. What do these two projects, and thousands of similar projects that have appeared in recent years, have in common? The result is accessible to everyone for free, modifiable by anyone, and belongs to no one; they are immaterial "common goods," born from a curious digital cauldron fed by volunteer amateurs, professionals, and companies. Yochai Benkler, a law professor at Yale University in the United States, distinguishes these "common goods produced in cooperation" from the "structure of the industrial economy driven by the State and the market." Hot topics. This astonishing phenomenon has not so far needed turnkey programs or State decisions. Simply the militant energy of a few charismatic figures (like the bearded post-hippie Richard Stallman, at the origin of free software in the 80s), allied with an anonymous international of sharers who are increasingly numerous on the planet. "The arrival of the Internet for immaterial creation in general means that we can create together in a simple way outside the organization, notes the economist Nicolas Jullien. This is the first time on this scale, even if it already existed in a more reduced way on a local scale or between a few actors." It is difficult to stick a label on these digital cooperatives that touch on all the burning political issues, from the mode of production to property (intellectual, in this case) and wage labor. The most visible figures of this movement are as much communists as socialists, American democrats or even "libertarians", like the American Eric Raymond, pro-free software and right-wing anarchist in favor of firearms. However, there are some classic markers of a cooperative and libertarian left. This model notably blurs the distinction between the consumer and the producer, as opposed to the "available brains" of the TF1 model: the Wikipedia user is both a reader of articles and called upon to correct the errors he spots or to contribute his knowledge to the community. Christophe Aguiton, ex-Sud and a pickerel earning money from the LCR, sees it as a return to the sources of 19th century socialism, when "Proudhon or Marx put forward the idea that socialism was the cooperative". The 20th century and the preeminence of the State would crush these ideas, particularly in France, before "their recent revival", continues Aguiton. The cooperative plus the Internet "offer a new way of producing common goods, created on a voluntary basis by individuals directly for humanity", in a different way from "common goods under the responsibility of the State, such as roads or education". It should be noted in passing that these modern "common goods", just like the more traditional ones produced by the State, are compatible with capitalism and the market economy: several companies, such as IBM, have invested massively in free software and sell services around the systems thus produced. The collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia boosts the audience of major search engines, thus attracting advertising flows. Which leads Nicolas Jullien to say that "it is also right-wing because the company reduces its production costs and we are really in free competition". But if the company can benefit from these cooperative common goods, it can never appropriate them and block access to them: specific copyright contracts guarantee at each stage the collective ownership of the results of the common work. "Fundamentally, it is a left-wing fight, because these models make it possible to fight against the expansion of the sphere of private property", believes Aguiton. Major moves. If the State and politicians have not encouraged the emergence of these high-tech cooperatives, their role is now central to preserving and encouraging them. Because many firms are harassing States with major lobbying efforts to toughen intellectual property rules and deprive these collaborative projects of air "which threaten traditional businesses based on intellectual property", from Hollywood to software to the pharmaceutical industry, according to Yochai Benkler. The founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates, thus castigated the "communists" of free software while the multiplication of patents on living things is restricting the emergence of open knowledge bases on genetics. For the socialist Christian Paul, politicians can therefore oppose "the infinite extension of the field of intellectual property" and "favor these alternative forms in radical opposition to the way in which the market organizes the world".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1612

On September 21, the day after Simon Wiesenthal's death, the article on the online encyclopedia wikipedia.org about the concentration camp survivor was sabotaged by a far-right group. His biography was loaded with wild allegations about his supposed homosexuality. Three minutes later, the hack had disappeared, corrected by an Internet user: the original version is back in place. This is one example among hundreds of the permanent tensions suffered by the cooperative online encyclopedia, which anyone can modify and enrich at will. And which always make the success and growing quality of Wikipedia paradoxical: more than a hundred languages, two million articles in total, including more than 750,000 in English, 175,000 in French and even nearly 1,400 in Breton. How could such an open knowledge base resist extremists of all kinds, maniacs and, more commonly, mediocrity? The academic Claire Nacher, from Paris-III, sees in this project "a denial of organization and a denial of politics", which "generates at best cacophony and, at worst, the takeover by forces that are neither democratic nor disinterested (1)". If, despite its imperfections and attempts at sabotage, Wikipedia is enriched every day, it is because the project is organized. Like open collaborative projects, such as free software, Wikipedia is not a utopian mess without rules. It is an "eminently political project", as stated in a text available on the encyclopedia itself. With its initial "constitution", decreed by the founder, the American Jimmy Wales: neutrality of points of view, absence of editorial committee, non-signature of articles. So many choices are debatable and discussed, often within the community of "Wikipedians". Similarly, if officially any Internet user can enrich the articles, the most invested among them are responsible for ensuring constant surveillance. "Vandalism is dealt with by administrators, who can go back to previous versions of an article, all archived", says Alexis Dufrenoy, computer scientist and spokesperson for the French branch of the Wikimedia Foundation, which oversees the project. Positions of responsibility assigned by co-optation. Wikipedia is constantly the scene of "edit wars", where opposing points of view clash, such as "the very long controversy over the article "Abortion" in the English version", says Dufrenoy. In France, an arbitration committee chosen by elections via the Internet if no consensus is found plays the role of Blue Helmets when the editors do not agree on the discussion page associated with each article. Recently, he tried to reconcile pro and anti-Bogdanoff twins who were tearing each other apart over the (dubious) scientific quality of the work of the former presenters of Temps X. (1) www.ccr.jussieu.fr/urfist/cerise/cerEval.htm

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1613

Read Common Cause by Philippe Aigrain. Fayard, 2005, 18 euros. The Future of Ideas by Lawrence Lessig. Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2005, 350 pp., 25 euros. On the Web The page of the economist Nicolas Jullien: www-eco.enst-bretagne.fr/Membres\_enstB /nicolas.html Download free software & various texts on the domain: www.framasoft.net

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1614

Brussels special envoy In the Lakensestraat, in the heart of Brussels, shop windows become screens at nightfall. The strange creatures of Marius Watz (www.unlekker.net) deploy colorful tentacles that densify into complex patterns before their flaky disintegration. A few steps away, we fly over the geometric urban landscapes of Elout de Kok (www.xs4all.nl/~elout), navigating in their bristling 3D structures. At the heart of the device, the MediaRuimte, an experimental space managed by LAB[au], a laboratory of architecture, urban planning and multimedia production, curator of this new exhibition with the coded name. Drawing machine. For two years, LAB[au] has been in charge of the digital and experimental side of the Cimatics festival, dedicated to audiovisual arts and VJing, which is being held, for the third time, in the Belgian capital. "The title of the exhibition refers to the programming language Processing, an open-source tool that allows you to combine images, animation and common sound, explains Manuel Abendroth, co-founder of LAB[au], a simplified language created by artists for an artistic purpose [read opposite]. Perhaps more importantly than the tool itself, Processing has become a platform for artists who have many things in common and who find a family there." A new generation, raised with computers, for whom manipulating code is as natural as drawing or painting. They create autonomous abstract visuals that generate themselves, drawing machines that develop before our eyes, sound compositions that never repeat themselves, new instruments for live performances. The works exhibited have in common their abstract character, "with a relationship to the biological and the organic", comments Manuel Abendroth who recalls that many algorithms are derived from "this mathematical attempt to describe a biological phenomenon". Brazilian Dimitre Lima (http://dmtr.org) presents strange crackling topographies in the basement. The images captured by a webcam are transformed into relief, contour lines themselves translated into sounds. Golan Levin (www.flong.com) invites the viewer to trace lines with his mouse, threads that escape his control, twist, disintegrate in real time and to music. In his installation Floo, mouse movements trigger the growth and dispersion of filamentary spirals, whose behavior makes strident drones appear. The Processing scene brings together creators from the "do it yourself" culture rather than art schools, like Elout de Kok, who grew up with the first video games, influenced by the demo scene (a haunt of die-hard programmers), more accustomed to dance floors than galleries. Just like the Austrian Lia (aka "tinylittleelements", http://lia.sil.at) in a live performance this Friday evening at the MediaRuimte with the Akuvido collective and the nexsound label (www.nexsound.org). "I move in a border zone between art, design and popular culture," says Marius Watz, curator of a Generator.x exhibition on generative art in Norway that has just ended in situ but continues online in the form of a blog. Generative art is the bastard child of abstract art from the 60s, a return to retinal art that translates into a certain aesthetic formalism, an abstract visual system generated by lines of code." Where software acts as the material. Software developed by artists who do not hesitate to get their hands dirty. "If we want to act on the world, we have to act on software, try to translate what we have in mind through code." In the systems he programs, Marius Watz preserves a part of randomness, seduced by the unpredictable nature of his creations, between the mechanical and the organic: "The machine can create horrible things, but also marvelous visuals that we would never have thought of doing." The artist admits to seeking a kind of "visual hedonism," which does not prevent him from developing more conceptual work in parallel (like Universal Digest Machine which attempts to answer the question "the web: how big is it?" on http://spider.unlekker.net). "Maturation." The prettiness of these works that impress and flatter the eye often earns them the reproach of being simply decorative, without depth or critical scope. "This art form is in a maturation phase," tempers Manuel Abendroth. As technologies are increasingly integrated into our environment, a new context is gradually being created from which real artistic, philosophical or sociological positions will emerge." The youngest have no such hesitation, bickering to test the interactive installation of LAB[au] Place Sainte-Catherine. No need for them to know that this piece, Point, Ligne, Surface, is a tribute to Mondrian's Broadway Boogie-Woogie. Perched on tiptoe to access the screen, a little boy grabs with the stylus the points, lines and surfaces in RGB (the colors of the computer screen) to which spatialized sounds are associated, throws them frantically on the screen, creating on the ground, around him, a Mondrianesque painting hopping under the proud eye of his father.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1615

Rewarded this year by the prestigious Net Vision prize awarded by Ars Electronica, Processing (1) is an open source programming language whose particularity is to be close to verbal language. "It is a simplification of the code, it makes it more concrete, explains Manuel Abendroth de Labau. To draw a line, you just have to type "draw line". We lose this fear of code." The tool allows people who are not pure and hard coders (students, artists, designers and architects) to easily access the programming of animated images and sounds, and to sketch prototypes. An alternative to commercial software, this project initiated by two artists from MIT Medialab, Casey Reas and Ben Fry, has generated a large community that contributes to the development of the code. The works can be discovered in the exhibition section of the site. (1) http://processing.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1616

Word processing, spreadsheet, database, drawing and presentation tools: this free software, version 2.0 of which has just been released, is a great alternative to Microsoft Office. LITTLE BY LITTLE, OpenOffice is making its way. Increasingly used by administrations, schools and universities, but also by businesses and individuals, this free software is in fact an ideal solution for anyone looking for an alternative to Microsoft Office. In fact, the resemblance is so perfect that we could talk about cloning: same menus, same functions, and perfect file compatibility. A Word or Excel document opens without problem and keeps the same attributes in OpenOffice. For their part, Microsoft software automatically recognizes files exported by OpenOffice. But here's the thing: OpenOffice is free. Originally developed under the name StarOffice by the German publisher StarDivision, it was recovered by Sun Microsystems, which made it a commercial software and authorized a community of independent programmers to distribute it for free under the name OpenOffice. Adapted to different operating systems (including Windows, Mac OS X and Linux) and available in several languages (including Arabic, Hebrew and Thai), the OpenOffice suite maintains the same appearance regardless of the computer on which it is used. Once installed, it is divided into six modules: a word processor, a spreadsheet, a database manager, a presentation software, a mathematical formula editor and a drawing program. The word processor Writer is very easy to use. With its correction and layout tools, it has nothing to envy the best representatives in the sector. It can also manage the display of images, integrate tables and links that point to a section of the same document or to the Internet. The spreadsheet Calc has more than 450 functions and a quantity of standard tools (sorting, formatting, scenarios, consolidation, diagrams, etc.). Like Microsoft Office, OpenOffice has templates and wizards, a programming language inspired by Basic to develop macros, an image gallery to enrich texts and presentations, a spell checker and a multimedia file reader. As a bonus, each module can save its documents directly in PDF format. Version 2.0, more pleasant to use and more homogeneous, is distinguished by new animations and transitions in the presentation software and by better compatibility, both with Microsoft Office documents and with those of WordPerfect Office. It will simply be criticized for sometimes being a little slow on the most modest configurations. For the moment, the French version is under development, but it should be available in a few weeks. n OpenOffice.org, to download on www.openoffice.org/ DS

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1617

The race for the leadership of the Parti Québécois has so far given rise to four regional debates, called tribunes and composed of periods, which brought together the nine official candidates in Sherbrooke, Montreal, Trois-Rivières and Quebec City. Direct observation of the candidates' speeches, carried out as a member of the audiences of these public meetings, made it possible to define types of remarks and behaviours that reflect their respective views and political orientations. The remarks of these contenders for the position of leader of the PQ can be grouped into the following four categories: denunciations, accomplishments, solutions and panaceas. Remarks and journalistic interest In terms of denunciations, the prize clearly goes to Jean-Claude St-André, who attacked both "the strategy of fiscal imbalance" and the actions of multinationals in Quebec. The so-called left-wing candidates such as Pierre Dubuc and Gilbert Paquette vigorously deplored "the decline of French in Quebec." Jean Ouimet was scandalized by the fact that, according to him, 95% of Quebec artists live "in the poverty hole." Pauline Marois and André Boisclair, for their part, made very few denunciatory remarks in their speeches. Louis Bernard stigmatized the invasive role that Ottawa has given itself in the development of culture. As for Richard Legendre, he expressed his dissatisfaction at seeing the Quebec government struggling with a budget of $55 billion rather than $90 billion. The accomplishments were mainly of two types: those resulting from ministerial actions and those attributed to personal actions. André Boisclair and Pauline Marois referred to government policies in which they took part as ministers, such as the zero deficit policy for the former and the daycare policy for the latter. Richard Legendre proudly highlighted his achievement of the stadium at Jarry Park. Gilbert Paquette highlighted his role in creating companies related to the development of free software. Both presented these achievements as examples of contributions to sustainable development in Quebec. Solutions to specific problems were expressed in abundance by the majority of candidates, for example the creation of a national water institute in the Old Capital (André Boisclair). They actually turned out to be expressions of new or old ideas that the press coverage did not highlight. Why? Because, for the press, a new or old idea that is not susceptible to controversy simply does not exist. There was one major exception that confirms this journalistic rule: the declaration of independence provided for in the PQ platform after a YES victory in the referendum, a measure contested by Louis Bernard, who considered it "unrealistic." Sovereignty No observer or audience member of these four platforms could dispute the fact that the panacea for Quebec's political, economic, social and cultural constraints is, according to all the candidates, sovereignty. However, to achieve this, each of them emphasized an instrumental panacea that revealed their personal political dream. André Boisclair resorted to positive realism by proposing that Quebecers be more "able to live with [their] successes." Pauline Marois made rallying the goal of her action as future leader. Louis Bernard advocated a quiet break so that independence could "be done properly." It was the supposed budgetary windfall that seduced Richard Legendre when independence was achieved. Gilbert Paquette could not see the future of Quebec without technological innovation. Unionization is the cure for all of Quebec's ills, in Pierre Dubuc's opinion. Jean Ouimet invited "citizens" to pedal for "sustainable development" by moving toward the collective development of a "social contract." Not to be outdone, Jean-Claude St-André instead ordered them to urgently resort to immediate action, head first, "to achieve independence." Finally, Ghislain Lebel insistently reminded his fellow candidates that nothing can be accomplished without recognizing the mistakes of the past. The upcoming debates should continue in this vein. Oratorical performance In addition, the candidates' behaviors were defined based on their respective oratorical performance by emphasizing their main statements during the various periods of the debates. Here are these behaviors, in alphabetical order. - Louis Bernard, the bold: the next Quebec elections will be "pre-referendums." "As soon as sovereignty has given us the means," he insisted, "we will establish a guaranteed minimum income for all." In his mind, the decentralization of powers to the regions is another imperative resulting from Quebec's accession to sovereignty. - André Boisclair, the resolute: the candidate leading in the polls has committed to reducing the debt while protecting social programs. To Pierre Dubuc, who, in Trois-Rivières, saw the need to "tell people from different cultural communities" to take part in the fight of a people, the people of Quebec, who want their right to self-determination, André Boisclair added firmly and promptly: "And they are part of it, of this people, they are part of it, of this nation!" - Pierre Dubuc, the mobilizer: "Immigrant workers need to unionize," he noted in Sherbrooke. He also reiterated his conviction that the Parti Québécois has no more important task than to reconnect with the union movement and progressive circles "to win the next election." - Ghislain Lebel, the annoying one: in his opinion, "the PQ dances badly: a little step to the left, a little step to the right." Following Pauline Marois, who listed a series of government interventions such as support for employment, the transformation of businesses and aid "for workers," Lebel shouted before the Montreal audience: "Ms. Marois, you're going to stop that! You're going to confuse a Jesuit!" - Richard Legendre, the diligent one: he essentially read the same text with great care during the introduction and closing of the debates in the conventional manner of rhetoricians from the old classical colleges. During the confrontations of the trios and the question periods, he almost recited it by heart. - Pauline Marois, the warned one: she insistently emphasized having headed 11 ministries in the Quebec government. She was inexhaustible in giving examples of this or that in order to enlighten audiences about the relevance of implementing certain political measures. - Jean Ouimet, the foreseer: he foresaw the "global challenges that await us." - Gilbert Paquette, the enterprising: he suggested channeling Quebecers' savings into sustainable development "to prevent them from going abroad." - Jean-Claude St-André, the attacker: he constantly launched an attack on "the rich who do not pay their fair share of taxes." In Quebec City, André Boisclair, the leader, attacked Jean Charest "as a simple activist" in his conclusion. And, in less time than it takes to say it, he found himself acting, perhaps presciently, as "leader of the opposition, if you trust me." Time will tell. Jacques Rivet: Full professor in the information and communication department at Laval University

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1618

Microsoft FOUNDER and Chairman Bill Gates was due to come to Paris on Monday 24 October to sign the framework agreement between his group and the National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation (Inria). Known since 26 April, this text provides for joint teams to work in Orsay (Essonne), in the suburbs of Paris. The agreement stipulates that the scientific advances resulting from this partnership will be published - as is customary in the scientific community - but, above all, that the software designed by these Franco-American teams will be distributed under an open source license, i.e. free of charge. This decision marks a major turnaround in Microsoft's industrial property policy. Until now, the world's leading software publisher was opposed to free software. On the contrary, it almost systematically patented its software in the United States, to block the path of its competitors. Mr Gates did not hesitate to describe the followers of free software as "modern-day communists". Microsoft currently holds 6,000 patents and has 10,000 pending applications... in the United States. Because, in Europe, software is not patentable; it is subject to copyright and is protected as such. The agreement between Microsoft and Inria nevertheless provides that, if the work of the joint teams gives rise to non-software "inventions" that do not fall within the scope of a scientific publication - such as algorithms - these will be patented with the European Patent Office (EPO). The work resulting from this framework agreement will be jointly owned: 50% by Inria and 50% by Microsoft. Two major categories of research themes have been defined. These are, on the one hand, the use of computers to prove modern mathematical theorems that are too complex to be demonstrated by a human being; on the other hand, the development of computer tools allowing other sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, etc.) to manage gigantic databases. There are several reasons for Microsoft's about-face on intellectual property. It may want to better defend itself against attacks for abuse of a dominant position. This about-face was also the only way to work with scientists at Inria, a research center that includes many supporters of free software. Finally, one might also wonder whether Microsoft is not beginning to realize, like IBM before it, that by trying too hard to use patents it risks blocking the software market by preventing small but highly innovative firms from putting their products on the market. To the detriment, also, of the big players in the sector.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1619

New York from our correspondent Generally, an author experiences some satisfaction of self-esteem in signing a book: controlling the content, seeing his name on the cover... This is not the case for a small number of them who choose a rather daring form of publication, on the Internet: "wikibooks". Not only does their name not appear next to the title, they do not receive any royalties, but they control nothing. Any reader can correct an error, clarify a passage or add a chapter if they wish. And yet, the project, reserved for school textbooks and guides, attracts a growing number of authors. 12,000 titles. Derived from the Wikipedia encyclopedia, also distributed and transformed at every moment on the Web (Libération of November 22, 2004), wikibooks appeared in July 2003. Today, the catalog has nearly 12,000 titles and surprises by its variety. Many books for learning languages (a Mandarin Chinese manual is the book of the month distinguished by users), computer manuals, maths, philosophy, art, law, mostly in English, but also in several dozen other languages. Among the "wikibooks" (in French) completed, still few in number, we can count for example: S'initier au abalier en 10 leçons or le Biodiesel. Why write a wikibook? "For the authors, it is a fun social activity, it is the pleasure of interacting with intelligent people, believes the American Jimmy Wales, the founder of Wikipedia. And then it is a charitable action. They contribute to the knowledge of humanity." The site, in its explanations, imagines this reaction of an author: "I can't imagine seeing my magnificent prose edited by any passerby. It is mine, why should I let others touch it?" Answer: "We work together on the statements of what we know (...). Each of us benefits from this arrangement." And no one owns the texts they author, they share them. The project is directly inspired by free software, distributed free of charge and modifiable by users. Some authors are still not ready to accept that anyone intervenes in their works in any way they want. Thus, those of How to Build a Computer published this warning: "The editors of this book have developed a code of conduct to follow to participate in the writing of the book" and recommend that they be contacted before changing everything. Surveillance. Any Internet user can start creating a wikibook, alone or with others. Sometimes, others spontaneously join the project and a small editorial team is formed. For each chapter, a discussion space allows authors to compare their points of view. The system also keeps a version of each step in the development of the texts. It is therefore possible to go back if a user gets noticed by writing anything. For example, if a revisionist intervenes in a work devoted to the Second World War, as soon as a reader (or a co-author) reports it, his additions will be deleted and the passage placed under surveillance. Other projects are currently being developed: Wikijunior, the publication of children's books; there are already a few titles, for example one on the solar system. Even more ambitious, Wikiversity, online courses allowing users to become "the agents of their learning", according to the wishes of the Irishman Cormac Lawler, one of the promoters of the project. http://fr.wikibooks.org/wiki /Accueil

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1620

Why go out and buy a new $50 fan when you can spend 12 hours painstakingly straightening each blade on the one you have? That's according to the author of these pages (in English), who offer four different methods to do it. The one we tried: 1) determine which blade is unbalanced; 2) test all possible configurations until you find the ideal position, number and orientation of the clothespins that will act as counterweights; and 3) glue on a permanent counterweight (metal washers) that will weigh exactly the same as the clothespins. We lost patience before we succeeded... Effectiveness of the result: 1/5 Quality of the explanations: 5/5 Cool factor: 1/5 www.factsfacts.com/MyHomeRepair/FanWobble.htm Black hat The techno word to plug "A black hat hacked my computer." The color of the hat is a sign of moral inclination towards Good or Evil in the exclusive club of little computer geniuses. As in the old cowboy movies, where these symbols originate, the good white hat will use his talents for acceptable purposes, while the bad black hat will not hesitate to commit the worst computer crimes (intrusions, spam, viruses, etc.). The "black hats" are destined for a life of solitude and disgrace, since they harm the reputation of the entire community of honest hackers. Moreover, the most prestigious French-language dictionaries unfairly generalize the misdeeds of a minority when they translate "hacker" as "pirate." Come on, it all depends on the hat! Send us your suggestions for techno words (English or French) to actuel@lapresse.ca. The anniversary October 1958: the first video game appears on an oscilloscope. In an effort to bring an entertaining aspect to science education, William Higinbotham created Tennis for Two for the Brookhaven National Laboratory Open House, a nuclear research center in New York State. An analog computer, used to calculate missile trajectories, displays the trajectory of a ball on an oscilloscope screen, with which visitors can interact. The net is represented by a white line at the bottom of the screen (the game is seen from the side). In a later version, Tennis for Two will allow players to play on the Moon (low gravity) or on Jupiter (high gravity). The techno quote "Linux is like the big brother who fought all the hard battles to delay curfew and get access to the car keys. After him, life was easy for the other free software people." - Marc Reury, president of the free software publisher JBoss, reacting to the 40% increase in the number of users of the Linux operating system in one year. Source: slashdot.org Digital Internet use by Canadian schoolchildren: between parents' desires and young people's reality. Canadian schoolchildren spend an average of 9.5 hours per week on the Internet. Seventy-two percent of parents believe that it helps them with their studies. In fact, 17% of schoolchildren actually use it to study, while 40% connect to it to play online video games. E-mail and chat are the other most common uses. Survey by Ipsos-Reid for Bell Canada, September 2005. Interviews with 2,151 parents of schoolchildren aged 5 to 17. Accuracy rate: 95%. Margin of error: 2.1 percentage points.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1621

The American stock market ended in the green yesterday, supported by good corporate results, despite a new increase in energy prices. At the end of the session bell, the Dow Jones gained 0.80% (79.69 points), closing at 10,552.78 points and the Nasdaq gained 1.20% (28.82 points), at 2,141.22 points, its strongest increase in ten weeks. The Standard and Poor's 500 index (SP 500) ended up 0.92% (+11.21 points), at 1,228.10 points. "It is very difficult to identify a reason for the market's rise," acknowledged Hugh Johnson, analyst at Johnson Illington Advisors. Nevertheless, we can note that the results of PepsiCo and Red Hat were encouraging. This could have been the catalyst that pulled the stocks higher," he indicated. Red Hat, the American publisher of a version of the free software Linux, ended with a spectacular jump of 29.68% to 21.44 dollars. The group saw its net profit increase by 40% during the last quarter, the profit per share being posted at 9 cents, where analysts expected 7. For its part, PepsiCo ended with a gain of 2.62% to 56.50 dollars. The food group posted profits above expectations in the third quarter, thanks to its performances in non-carbonated drinks and abroad, and it raised its objectives for the whole year on Thursday. Among the strongest risers on the Nasdaq, eBay gained 6%, on anticipations of a quarterly profit above expectations. Conversely, RIM (Research In Motion), maker of Blackberry handheld computers, lost 9.4%, faced with increased competition in its market after the announcement of an alliance between its rival Palm and Microsoft. US markets were also supported by the news that weekly jobless claims fell more than expected. In addition, investors seem to think that the impact on the economy from hurricanes Katrina and Rita will be rather modest. Stock indices were not affected by a slight rise in crude oil and a new closing record for natural gas. On the New York Mercantile Exchange, a barrel of light sweet crude for delivery in November ended up 44 cents, at $66.79. The natural gas contract ended at a new record, at $14.19 per cubic foot (0.028 m3). On the Nasdaq, 1.80 billion shares were traded and 1.63 billion on the New York Stock Exchange. The bond market ended lower: the yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 4.289% from 4.262% Wednesday evening, while that of the 30-year note advanced to 4.539% from 4.501%. The euro was trading last night at 1.2030 dollars.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1622

Special correspondent in Copenhagen "You'd think that beer is the best medium for discussing intellectual property," jokes Rasmus Nielsen, from the Danish collective Superflex. Their "open source beer" (see next page) has gone around the world, widely relayed by the media. On this rainy Saturday in July, the biggest Danish public television channel is visiting them to discuss and taste the famous Free Beer. The project was born as part of a workshop that the Superflex were hosting with students from the Copenhagen University of New Technologies on copyright issues. "We were thinking about a way to extend the methods of sharing and exchanging resources that are in vogue in the digital world, to apply the philosophy of free software to the real world. Using a product as universal as beer to talk about copyright could be an interesting experiment." For several months, the university canteen, bathed in the aroma of beer, served as a laboratory to develop this first royalty-free beer. Designed using classic brewing methods, version 1.0 of the beverage includes an ingredient that makes it “unique”: guarana (35 milligrams per liter), an Amazonian plant rich in caffeine, used in energy drinks, supposed to compensate for the drowsiness induced by this rather strong beer (6%), but with an original flavor. Monopoly. The first version is called “Vores Øl”, “our beer”, a reference to the slogan of the Danish behemoth Carlsberg, which has had a monopoly on hoppy beverages here since it merged with its rival Tuborg, the king of luxury Pils. It is difficult to find other brands in the bars of Copenhagen, where small family breweries were swarming. “There are many similarities between Microsoft and Carlsberg. For example, if someone opens a bar, they will have a visit from a Carlsberg representative who will offer to install all the plumbing for free, on condition that they sell exclusively their affiliated products and brands." Unlike these big brands that jealously guard their manufacturing secrets, the source code (or recipe) of Vores Øl as well as the brand (design, name, logo, music) are published under Creative Commons. The chosen license allows anyone to copy the beer, modify it, or even sell it on condition that they keep the drink free and credit the authors. "Brewing beer takes time and money, it's more complicated than copying an MP3 file, hence the choice to allow the product to be marketed," explains Rasmus. The idea is to make it the Linux of beer, by offering people the chance to reproduce and improve it like a piece of open source software." The story is to see if the new versions spun off from Vores Øl 1.0 can give rise to varieties of beer that are superior in taste and creativity to those of the big brands. A challenge that seems well on track given the enthusiastic feedback on the forum from budding brewers from Afghanistan, Poland, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Brazil, etc. "Can we think of objects, products in this way, what does it mean, how can we broaden it, apply it to medicines, for example?" Rasmus asks. In June, when Free Beer (the international version of Vores Øl) was launched, the collective opened a shop in their headquarters in Norrebrø, a former working-class neighborhood that was very popular, with its motley population of immigrants and young hipsters. Opposite the halal butcher and a wall dripping with protest stickers and anti-Bush graffiti, a stone's throw from the most popular local bar, the Copyshop has quickly become the hub of Danish dissidence. As its name suggests, the store only sells "modified originals, improved copies, political anti-brands", "products that challenge intellectual property". On the table, sits the photocopier where you can reproduce the recipe for Free Beer. In the window, a selection of icons of the counter-economy: Linux kits, the Blackspot Sneaker (Libération, December 25, 2004) launched by the ad-breakers Adbusters, a 70% biodegradable sneaker, made in Portugal, which mimics the Converse (bought by Nike), where a black dot serves as an antilogo. On the shelves, free beer of course, made by hand, but also Mecca-Cola, the "ethical coke" created by the naturalized French Tunisian Taoufik Mathlouthi, propelled as an emblem of Muslim resistance against "American hegemony", part of the profits of which are donated to Palestinian associations. Stimulating. Inspired by the Mecca-Cola experience (but with a significantly different perspective), another drink invites you to drink responsibly: the Guarana Power energy soda that the Superflex developed in 2003 as part of a workshop with a peasant cooperative in Maués, in the Brazilian Amazon. The Guarana Power bottle openly copies the design of one of the most consumed sodas in South America, Guarana Antarctica, a product of AmBev (American Beverage Corporation), a multinational that has distribution agreements with Pepsi Co, in litigation with Superflex (read opposite). Guarana Power was conceived as a response to the pressure from these companies, organized into a cartel, which took advantage of their monopoly on the purchase of raw materials to lower the price of the guarana berry by 80%. "We thought of a way to reverse this economic logic," explains Rasmus, "by using the companies (i.e. their brand, logo, name, colors) as raw material." The Guarana Power counter-soda is produced in Denmark with guarana purchased from the Brazilian cooperative at a decent price. A small soda company is responsible for its distribution in Denmark, in small cafes, alternative venues, clubs. Before opening the Copyshop, Superflex organized Guarana Power Bars in its premises, with film screenings, concerts and tastings of stimulating cocktails (vodka-guarana power). “It’s an opportunity to continue the conversation about intellectual property,” says Michael of Copenhagen Brains, an activist and resident VJ at Culture Box and co-founder of Copyshop. Most of the proceeds go to the Power Foundation, which supports initiatives to rebalance trade with commodity producers. Since 1993, the Superflex trio has developed a practice that combines art, design and commerce to explore globalization through collaborative projects. At the heart of their work is the creation of “Tools,” “tools that gain their non-economic but general value when they are used.” One such tool is Supercopy, a series of plagiarisms of existing products that they pirate or remanufacture: counterfeit Lacoste T-shirts (imported from Thailand) stamped Supercopy that they had runwayed at the Copenhagen Fashion Fair in 2002, copies of Ancel pudding transformed into Social Pudding, on sale at the shop. Another example: the Biogas lamp, an "adaptation" of the famous lamp by Danish designer Poul Henningsen so that it could run on biogas, produced from organic waste, intended for populations in Asia and Africa who do not have access to electricity. When these copies of the lamp were exhibited in Malmø (Sweden) in 2002, the Louis Poulsen company, which manufactures the originals, demanded the closure of the exhibition. "We found it totally absurd. Poul Henningsen, who was a communist and who had designed this lamp in 1958 for the working class, would certainly have appreciated this diversion which is faithful to the spirit of its creator." A new example, according to them, of the counter-productivity of copyright. "Intellectual property, whether it takes the form of copyright, licenses or patents, has expanded exponentially over the last twenty years. The fundamental legal concept is "if value then right": when there is economic value, there is intellectual property. The open source movement was formed as a reaction because this ownership of the code hindered the best possible development of software," explains Superflex. The artists have turned the formula into "if value, then copy." "Demons." A formula that also suits Piratgruppen, a group that campaigns for the legalization of peer-to-peer networks in Copenhagen. Their T-shirts are on sale at the Copyshop: two crossbones topped with an audio cassette instead of a skull. "Already, at the time of the cassette, the majors had campaigned with the slogan "home taping is killing the music industry," recalls Claus Pedersen, one of the founders of Piratgruppen. Their information base offers nearly 200 user guides on the various download platforms, a forum, news. And tries to popularize his ideas among Danish politicians, "but we are considered demons," regrets Claus. He too would like to broaden the spirit of the immaterial world to the real world. For the start of the academic year, Piratgruppen is preparing a major campaign: to make the main educational books freely available on peer-to-peer networks. "In Denmark, books are unaffordable. A student has to spend around 1,000 euros a year. Usually, one of them buys them and everyone else photocopies them. But it ends up being expensive. So we are going to digitize them so that they can download them. We hope that students will participate in the operation and take the time to scan the books." Photos Heine Pedersen

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1623

Source code is a set of instructions written in a computer programming language to obtain a program for a computer. It can be related to a culinary recipe, an organized list of ingredients in defined quantities and functions, the aim of which is to obtain a result targeted by the cook, according to a specific technique. It is generally not public, and is protected by copyright. Opensource. This term characterizes software whose source code is available, modifiable and redistributable under certain conditions. The most famous opensource software is Linux. Copyright. Copyrights are a form of intellectual property. It is the Anglo-Saxon version of copyright. Source: Wikipedia.org

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1624

Three recent signs seem to indicate that we have entered a new economic era, that of post-liberalism. First, the beginning of recognition by President Bush at the UN podium of the economic and social origins of terrorism and, in Louisiana, of the existence of "persistent poverty" and a failure of the federal state in the paragon country of liberalism. It is now clear that economic freedom does not spontaneously generate social progress. Then, the publication of the UN report on economic development in Africa, which questions the intellectual facility of imposing the opening of economies as a prerequisite for development, and the very effectiveness of foreign direct investment before recommending instead in these countries a strengthening of the role of public authorities. Finally, the global awareness of the end of inexhaustible and cheap energy, which should shake up many economic models. Only five years ago, the economy seemed to conclude the history of the world. Our theologian of liberalism, Pascal Salin, dogmatized that "globalization, if it actually contributed to the destruction of nation states, would be a benefit for humanity." The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas was quite alone in daring to emphasize "that one of the great conquests of the nation state is to have established an abstract form of solidarity between citizens to whom life reserves no direct contact," calling for a European patriotism on this point. Since then, the utopia of a self-enriched and pacified world through the liberalization of markets has been ruined by the shipwreck of the "new economy," in terrorism and in uncertainty in the face of the social consequences of economic disorders, brought about by the rise of new players such as China, India or Brazil. The collective unconscious has already taken this development into account: unlike the previous ones, neither the last campaign for the European elections nor that of the referendum gave rise to a debate on European federalism; no questioning either about the nationality of companies when it comes to discussing the takeovers of some or the risk of takeover bids on others. Political decision-makers have also integrated behaviors adapted to this post-liberalism. Like Nicolas Sarkozy, then Minister of Economy and Finance, when he defended Alstom in Brussels and supported Sanofi in its takeover bid for Aventis or Dominique de Villepin who invited the French to "economic patriotism". In their successive functions, both have moreover outlined a public policy of economic intelligence, created a new industrial policy with companies, linked to a research policy, and set up "competitiveness clusters" intended to catalyze regional initiatives. On the left too, those who take into account the reality of the world agree to challenge taboos, like Dominique Strauss-Kahn who dared, furtively, to speak out in favor of a "social VAT" or Yves Cochet whose speech on the consequences of the end of oil is far from any soothing demagogy. Thus the model that our American partner has been building for more than thirty years - long-term strategy, association of the economic development interests of companies and those of the State, protection of what is part of "national security" - is gradually taking shape in France as in the rest of the world. We are obviously forced to do so. The new interdependence between States and between economic zones, like the arrival of new players in the political and economic fields (IGOs, NGOs) or the confrontation with global problems (environment, public health) force us to think of new solutions. An invisible link connects Toyota's hybrid car and the tax proposed by Jacques Chirac on airline tickets: these are post-liberal solutions. The dinosaurs still need to be tamed. Some of them, who cannot be suspected of incompetence, remain blind to the changing world. Thus, and to take just this recent example, the European Commissioner for Competition, Nelly Kroes, is getting carried away by what she considers to be a return to protectionism by France. If it were a question of responding to the admittedly inopportune initiative of a French minister, it would have been necessary to first observe the good practices in this area of our partners and competitors. Thus, for twenty years, the CFIUS (Committee on Foreign Investments in the United States) has had the mission of analyzing and possibly prohibiting foreign equity investments in American companies, based solely on the criterion of "national security" that no text defines! We could also credit this great country with the creation of an Advocacy Center supporting American companies in conquering markets, the proximity of government circles to major investment funds, or the generous public funding provided to promote information highways, nanotechnologies, weapons programs, etc. The European texts to which Neelie Kroes refers are now obsolete. If we remain immobile, France and Europe will tomorrow be nothing more than a vast holiday zone, without jobs or a future. We must demand for Europe and its member states equal treatment between global trading powers and respect for fair competition. "European economic security" must be taken into account in modernized texts. In France too, we must convince people that the urgent need is not to think about a sixth Republic, the preserve of a few navel-gazers sheltered behind a status or a mandate. Our generation has the responsibility to adapt our country to new worlds. In addition to the projects that have been undertaken and that must be completed, three debates deserve to be opened as a priority: the overhaul of our indirect taxation, the debate on "social VAT" which, according to some, would allow us to reduce production costs and re-establish a fair balance with countries with low labor costs; the management of the end of oil (and more generally of other resources and raw materials) in five, ten or twenty years, it will call into question our lifestyles and, if we are not careful, could double the economic disorder with social disorder; the reduction of the digital divide by a wider use of free software, particularly in training and education. It is to talk about the future with courage that we need in the political debate and not to repeat hackneyed dogmas. Bernard Carayon, MP (UMP) for Tarn.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1625

This may be the TV of the future. An ultra-specialized show for a niche audience. In any case, tech columnist Robert Cringely has just launched NerdTV, a 100% nerd show. Each week, NerdTV offers an interview (in English) with a guest from the world of technology. Andy Hertzfeld, the first Macintosh programmer, inaugurates the concept; he talks about his love at first sight for open source software. The show is published under Creative Commons, allowing everyone to share or edit their own versions. www.pbs.org /cringely/nerdtv Flying Panda www.donpixel.com/play/en /050804104307/

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1626

"Don't watch TV, do it!" On June 21, 2002, Orfeo TV broadcast for the first time on channel 51 in a neighborhood in downtown Bologna. A weak, almost symbolic signal, limited to three streets. You could see the locals expressing their opinions on what they expected from an independent local television. With a makeshift video transmitter, some salvaged electronic equipment, a few amateur cameras and a handful of motivated people, Orfeo TV, which takes its name from the street from which it broadcasts, demonstrated that with very little money (1,000 euros), you could create your own micro-TV station and take back the floor in an Italian media landscape monopolized by Berlusconi. Their credo: to reinject a little "biodiversity" into the surrounding monoculture. Shadow cones. "In Italy," explains Ciro, one of the founders met at the Austrian festival of electronic cultures Ars Electronica (Libération, September 5, 2005), where the project has just been awarded a prize (1), "public television is subservient to the government and political parties, ordinary citizens do not have the right to communicate." Orfeo TV has set up in one of the thousands of "shadow cones", an area where the signal from large transmitters does not reach due to obstacles (buildings, mountains, etc.), so as not to disturb commercial channels. In Bologna, it occupies a shadow cone of MTV, which does not prevent it from being considered illegal. "We felt a bit like the landless people of television, we set up on wasteland, abandoned, and we breathe life back into this place." Orfeo TV becomes a bustling meeting point and a channel for broadcasting all independent productions, from documentaries to animations, including clips and art videos. Hosted by documentary filmmakers, media activists, philosophers, and individuals, the tele di strada attracts young people like Annalisa, a PhD student who does a bit of everything at Orfeo TV (like most people): publishing, live TV shows, etc. "I had never touched a camera in my video classes, it was a pro who filmed. At Orfeo, it was just the opposite, they put the camera in your hands and figure it out for yourself." The experience gradually contaminates all of Italy, the telestreets begin to proliferate in an anarchic manner. "One of the first," says Ciro, "appeared in Sicily within a workers' movement to protest against the closure of a Fiat factory, led by a dismissed worker, and stopped by the police." Others appeared in Milan, Rome (with the very active Candida TV, a group of videographers, artists and activists), Padua, Naples, Gaeta, Calabria where the church served as a studio, and Parma, launched by priests. At the height of the movement, there were nearly 200 pirate TVs. One of the most spectacular actions carried out by the Roman telestreets associated with the Guerrilla Marketing activists was the reappropriation of football match broadcasts, confiscated by Sky TV. Murdoch's private channel had bought the rights to the biggest matches of the season, forcing fans to take out a subscription. The telestreets intercepted the encrypted signal of the Roma-Juventus match to broadcast it free of charge to the public in San Lorenzo, the student district of Rome. But not all the experiences were so happy. Disco Volante, a TV made by disabled people in Senigallia, which won a local journalism award for Barriere (a film about the difficulty of access), was closed down by the police, who sealed their transmitter for a year and a half. "They started a procedure that they have just won, but the episode discouraged more than one person," admits Ciro. National network. The success of telestreet is due to their ability to combine traditional media and new media, micro-local and global. A website allows all these isolated stations to be connected, people can contact each other, get information, technical support. In December 2002, the first national meeting took place between the various players from media activism, free information, communication and independent production. On February 21, 2003, the first major collective transmission was organized on the eve of the war in Iraq. Telestreet then approached Newglobalvision, the first open-access video archive launched in 2001 after the tragic events of the G8 in Genoa. This collaborative database collects and distributes independent videos on the Net (covering in particular local events and demonstrations ignored by the mainstream media) via peer-to-peer networks. One of the major concerns of telestreet being to feed their program schedule daily, NGV allows pirate TV stations scattered throughout Italy to pool their productions (under Creative Commons), download a clip, a film, a documentary, an interview and broadcast it to their local audience and vice versa. With the Digital Communities prize awarded by the Ars, they hope to launch a national web TV to further strengthen ties. (1) Award of distinction, Digital Communities category, tied with the FreeSoftwareFoundation project. - Online catch-up session for those who couldn't make it to Linz in Austria, where the 26th edition of the Ars Electronica festival of electronic cultures ended on Tuesday. - Podcasts from the exciting symposium Hybrid: living in paradox. www.aec.at/de /festival2005/podcasts/podcasts.asp. - Blogs http://pieceoplastic.com/index.php?cat=26. www.we-make-money-not-art.com /archives/cat\_ars\_electronica. php. - Wiki www.web-laun.ch/ars2005/index.php/Bloggers \_Mobloggers\_Wikis\_Socialbookmarks

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1627

Microsoft filed a new appeal on August 10 before the Court of First Instance of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) against the European Commission, which found it guilty in March 2004 of abuse of a dominant position. According to a Microsoft spokesman in Brussels, the new appeal is the legal consequence of a decision taken in June by the European Commission on the issue of free software.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1628

Microsoft continues to contest its conviction for abuse of a dominant position by the European Commission: the world's number one software company has filed a new appeal against the March 2004 decision, targeting one of the "corrective measures" required to restore competition. Microsoft refuses to distribute certain parts of its "source code" (the manufacturing secrets of Windows) to publishers of free software. (AFP)

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1629

In third world countries, the next school year could well be digital. MIT, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is launching a colossal project, in partnership with emerging countries such as Brazil and Thailand, to bring computers to schools everywhere. The project is called One Laptop Per Child. It is led by Professor Nicholas Negroponte, one of MIT's bigwigs. It is an ambitious project that has led to the design of a computer that can be purchased for less than $100 each. Millions of units will be manufactured. Mr. Negroponte told La Presse that the computer will be unveiled on November 15, at the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis. In fact, the MIT laboratory has developed a device that will cost $90 but will be sold for $100 to governments of countries interested in the project. The $10 profit will be used for charity. Building a low-cost computer is easy, according to the MIT team. "You have to remove the excess in the systems. Today, computers have become obese," says Mr. Negroponte. He adds that when you eliminate the margins taken for marketing, you save more than 50% on the price of a microcomputer. In addition, the $100 computer will use the free Linux software. The professor denies having designed a computer that is poorly suited to harsh environments. The screen will be readable in direct sunlight and the components will be particularly robust. A hand-cranked computer Aware that the majority of African homes do not have electricity, the MIT team has solved the energy problem by developing a device whose batteries are rechargeable using a dynamo. By turning a crank, the user powers the energy circuit of his computer! While it is unlikely that every schoolchild on the planet will have a laptop in the short term, the One Laptop per Child project should help bridge the digital divide in many countries. Brazilian President Lula has shown great interest and is expected to give the green light to the production of 2 million devices, Mr. Negroponte estimates. The new technology specialist told La Presse that several other nations, including Thailand, are interested in the American initiative, particularly because the devices are portable. "Desktop computers are less expensive to make than laptops, but mobility is important, especially when it comes to taking the computer home at night so the whole family can enjoy it," Professor Negroponte emphasizes. FOR $100... The $100 laptop will be equipped with Linux, a 500 MHz processor and a 1 GB hard drive, as well as Wi-Fi capabilities and USB ports. The 12-inch screen will be in color

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1630

(special correspondent in Linz) He must have been pedaling on the spot for an hour, sweating in his cycling suit. Next to this sporty old man, a dandy, cigarette in mouth, does the same, although at a slower speed, a dilettante in a skirt is content with a turn of the wheel. The watts rise to the rhythm of the cheeks that turn pink under the effort, a final thrust of the hips and, at 10 p.m., the moon floating above the central square of Linz lights up, thanks to the energy accumulated by the strength of the calves of the hundreds of cyclists who took turns all afternoon. A large human battery that made it possible to light up the square for... an hour. Needless to say, it would have taken a lot of people to supply electricity to the entire Ars Electronica, the oldest electronic arts festival that is taking place until this evening in every corner of the Austrian city, including the most unexpected. On Friday evening, a commando action led by the New Yorkers from the Graffiti Research Lab (1) transformed the tram into a multi-coloured garland. An overexcited crowd threw handfuls of light-emitting diodes (LEDs) attached to batteries and magnets that stuck to the metal carriages. The GRL hacktivists are proposing an extension of street art through new technologies (LED Throwies, electrograf, mobile urban projection): a "graffiti 2.0" to compete with commercial signs and reclaim public space. The approach is "open source", encouraging everyone to make their own tools. A simple and participatory approach in line with the paradoxical title of this edition, "Simplicity - the art of complexity". "Isn't it strange that we are constantly developing new technologies that are supposed to simplify our lives and work, and that in the end we have the impression that everything has become so much more complicated?" asks Gerfried Stocker, director of the festival. For twenty-seven years, he has been examining the impact of technologies on the arts, culture and society, echoing a growing technophobia, and more generally the nostalgia for a simpler life. In this society dominated by technical revolutions and global networks, and drowning in information, a certain discouragement is growing, the desire to let go. Or even pounding a hammer on the computer keyboard in anger, an option also available at the festival with the Sledgehammer Keyboard installation, where you could literally hit your frustrating experiences on a giant latex keyboard connected to a screen (2). “Paradox.” To guide the novice on the complex path to simplicity, the Ars had invited the American guru of digital design, John Maeda, professor at the prestigious Media Lab of MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). The artist, who also presented his soothing abstract digital paintings, Nature, has just released a book, The Laws of Simplicity, compiling his observations (3). “We are trapped in this paradox, wanting something that is easy to use, but that does every complex thing imaginable.” His first commandment is “reduce.” A recipe that has been successfully applied by the iPod and Google, as well as Walter Bender, who initiated the "One laptop per child" project, which aims to design a robust and inexpensive computer (less than $100), but equipped with all the essential functions in order to equip the billion school-age children in developing countries. "The goal is not to eliminate the complexity of the world, but to create a tool that allows us to confront it more simply," he noted during the symposium. Complexity is often a question of point of view. In the basement of the Brucknerhaus, it does not seem to put off the young people who come to participate in the various workshops, handling the soldering iron, electronic components and computer code to create interactive musical instruments or program software for mobile phones. "We need to constantly update our knowledge. The "Do it yourself" philosophy, inherited from hacker culture, is spreading across the Internet and is providing a number of online guides that are as easy to apply as cooking recipes," says workshop organizer David Cuartielles. Simplicity of access was the dominant feature of most of the installations presented at the festival. Visitors could lie down and shiver in Kaffe Mathews' bed, massaged by sound vibrations, creating intense sensations and a unique listening experience. Exonemo combines the ancestral art of folding and the latest geolocation techniques in his poetic Roadmovie. The same purity is found in Paul DeMarinis, who revisits the archaeology of communication through a subtle metaphor in The Messenger, an installation connected to the Internet that is inspired by the electric telegraph. Emails from all four corners of the planet are dissected letter by letter by three fanciful receivers. One consists of 26 chamber pots that spell out the letters in as many different voices, the second of 26 skeletons hanging from gibbets wearing ponchos stamped A to Z and who quiver in a grotesque danse macabre each time a letter is activated. Finally, 26 bottles each containing a metal letter that make bubbles when the current passes. Impossible to reconstruct or understand the message transmitted that comes to die here. An ironic reference to the thousands of insignificant messages that have become our daily lot. Goldfish. This unenviable fate is also illustrated by the hysterical installation of the Techart Group, Office Live, which delivers a sarcastic commentary on repetitive office life. A high-tech "domino effect" where the entire production line is automated and activated by... a goldfish. To help festival-goers find peace, Ars Electronica organized a pastoral trip to the sumptuous baroque monastery of St Florian. Between a Japanese archery session, an origami workshop and a concert on a stunning 14-string instrument 10 meters long, the audience gave a rock star welcome to Toshio Iwai, the father of the cult musical game Electroplankton, a digital magician who presented his new optical illusion machine Morphovision (4). (1) www.graffitiresearchlab. com (2) www.taylorhokanson.com (3) www.lawsofsimplicity.com (4) www.nhk.or.jp/strl/ morphovision www.aec.at/en/festival2006

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1631

Taking risks doesn't always pay off. Yet that's the bet that the artists and researchers at the Société des arts technologiques (SAT) have set themselves, launching their fall programming last night. After a tough year marked by enormous financial problems, the city's only digital art centre is once again announcing a period of fragmented transition with an expansion of its premises, a new general director and the most diverse programming in its short history. The organization dedicated to networking the arts, industry and research in the new technology sector has announced that it will take possession of the second floor of its building on Saint-Laurent Boulevard (diagonally from the Monument-National) in October. Integrated into its "urban hub" project that includes a very high-speed global network (100 megabits per second, 50 times faster than residential high-speed), this floor will be devoted to a new training and research project in which the Université de Montréal has already expressed interest. The SAT had purchased its current building at great expense last year following the eviction of its premises on the Balmoral block where the provincial government had announced the construction of the new OSM performance hall, which ultimately never saw the light of day. In addition to an expansion of its research sector, this transition must be accompanied by new self-financing tools, the new general director of the SAT, André Picard, stressed to La Presse. This former employee of IMAX theatres and the NFB wants the SAT to benefit from its expertise in technological creation: "We must establish our model for exploiting knowledge and expertise while maintaining the artistic and research movement. We have developed several software and technological applications that are almost ready to be widely distributed and we want to benefit from them while keeping in mind the ideology of free software." André Picard takes Louis Bellemare's place as general director. Louis Bellemare had been hired, among other things, to redress the organization's difficult financial situation following its move. The SAT's best calling card, however, remains its venue, which presents a continuous series of shows all fall long. Several major players are back, such as the MEG festival, the weekly SAT "MisSessions" evenings, which are enhanced by a rebroadcast on 101.5 Radio-Montréal, the Néon events, the Ligue d'improvisation hip-hop du Québec and the technOpéra series in collaboration with the Opéra de Montréal. Also worth noting is a new collaboration with the Audiogram record label, which will offer the launches of all its fall albums, as well as the return, after several years of absence, of the audiovisual collective Epsilonlab. Marked by the seal of great diversity, this programming also seems to lack a guiding principle. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, as the saying goes. And the SAT is going all out.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1632

Bill Gates tried everything. But Microsoft's banks didn't give him the respite he hoped for. Yesterday, the former richest man in the world emerged unrecognizable from a final negotiation session to announce the unthinkable: the firm was declaring bankruptcy. It was the culmination of a decade-long decline, after thirty years of unchallenged domination of the software sector. "Microsoft is first and foremost a victim of its behavior during the 1990s and early 2000s," says Morgan Stanley analyst Franck Epson. "The company abused its dominant position to maintain it artificially, to the detriment of innovation and the quality of its products. All it took was for Google to merge with Linux in 2007 for the model to break up." That year, in September, everything moved quickly. After several postponements, Microsoft finally launched the successor to Windows XP. Long known under the code name Longhorn, Windows Vista was initially scheduled for release in 2003. In 2005, it was scheduled for late 2006. And in 2006 for 2007. But then, on September 15, Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin held a press conference with Linus Torvalds, the main architect of Linux, about their merger. They ridiculed Bill Gates ("The richer he is, the poorer his products are"). Never has an announcement generated such excitement in the history of computing. "They were so sure of themselves that they played it modest," notes a desperate Microsoft executive. Bill Gates immediately understands the magnitude of the threat. During his annual "week of reflection" in an isolated house on the Pacific coast, he tries to come up with a response. But when he returns, some of his friends find him "totally depressed." Released ten months later, the competing operating system, Google Linux Desktop, kept all its promises: combining the search capabilities and ease of use of Google with the reliability and near-free nature of Linux. "For the first time, an operating system becomes invisible to the user, he no longer has to worry about plumbing," rejoiced the IT press. A stripped-down product. In comparison, the launch of Windows Vista was a flop. By delaying its launch, Microsoft stripped its product of its main innovations, offered as add-ons to Windows XP users. Integrated search between hard disk and Web, which was to be the heart of the new system, had already been offered separately. "Microsoft had no choice but to highlight its progress in terms of security and protection against viruses, but this argument backfired by highlighting the structural weaknesses of its previous products," observed an industry analyst. Immediately after its release, Google Linux Desktop gained market share. Windows slips below 90%. The rent system described by Microsoft's detractors is stalling. Until now, the firm derived most of its revenue and profits from the purchase of new computers. In the mid-1990s, the number of machines in use worldwide was estimated at 100 million. Ten years later, there were 730 million. For each purchase of a new computer equipped with Windows (95% of the market), Microsoft collects a royalty. After an average of five years, a new one is purchased. Such a system has ensured the firm's dominance since it was chosen by IBM to equip its first PC in 1981. Microsoft has been convicted several times for abuse of a dominant position. It was accused of pressuring PC manufacturers to block any alternative to Windows. The convictions in the United States in 2000 and then in Europe in 2004 finally put computer manufacturers at ease. They lacked an attractive product. With Google Linux Desktop, the craze is such that the major brands are offering two models, one with Windows, the other with its competitor. "Suddenly, people made Microsoft pay for years of domination and a lack of choice," explains Bernard Lang, a pro-Linux activist from the very beginning. "They felt like they were finally free to choose their computing." Risky diversifications. Another decisive argument, the price. The first to benefit from it are the administrations and companies, which contested the financial burden of Microsoft software and their updates, always paid for. Previous versions of Linux had already won over governments and municipalities. In 2005, the Paris City Hall had considered generalizing Linux on its employees' computers. Microsoft had to grant a considerable discount to keep its market. The same year, the British government, noting that the public sector had spent 18.3 billion euros on information technology in 2004, created an "academy" to encourage the adoption of free software. Companies do not hesitate for long. In addition to the drop in cost, Google Linux Desktop offers many advantages over Windows, enhanced security and transparent communication with portable devices, from electronic tablets to mobile phones, which executives are equipped with. It is among the general public that Microsoft retains the most aficionados, but not enough to remain profitable. The software giant must resolve to lower its prices. It sees its margins melt away, at the same time as demand. The group records the first losses in its history in 2010. It also pays the price of risky diversifications, particularly in the field of video games where it has never managed to break through against Sony. When the bankruptcy was announced, the Bill Gates friends club, created a year ago to support the founder of the company, stressed that "recent events should not make us forget his tremendous contribution to global computing." A contribution contested by its many detractors, who believe that Microsoft's success was based on bluffing and anti-competitive practices, rather than technological superiority.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1633

Washington from our correspondent Google, Google, Google... In Silicon Valley or on Wall Street, we hear nothing but this incessant gurgling, everyone wondering about the projects of Larry Page and Serguei Brin's firm. Not a week goes by without a new announcement. Last Thursday, the company announced that it was going to raise 4 billion dollars (3.26 billion euros) on the market (for what purpose? Mum's the word). Yesterday morning, it launched Google Talk, an instant messaging service (competitor of AOL, Microsoft's MSN, Yahoo...) and Internet telephony (competitor of Skype, 51 million users). Google Talk is currently reserved for Internet users with a Gmail address: to obtain it, you just have to be co-opted by another user. In less than a year, Google's image has completely changed, going from the friendly start-up to the worrying big corporation. In the Internet sector, everyone is trembling. The only one who has good reason to relax is Bill Gates because, as the New York Times puts it, it is now Google's turn to be the "bad guy." Without fanfare. Until now, Google has vowed to stay true to its core business, searching and storing data on the Internet. But even though it was launched yesterday without fanfare, Google Talk represents a new step in the race for the Mountain View (near San Francisco) firm. For the first time, it is setting foot in the telephony territory. Like Skype and others, Google Talk allows Internet users to talk to each other live, via their computer. Touting its audio technology, it promises to do better than the competition in terms of sound quality (the sound quality found in Skype is already impressive). As for its instant messaging, Google Talk is based on open source technology (freely modifiable). The group aims to be a "rallying point" and to help create a "massive instant messaging network," said George Harik, the company's director of new products. Ad. Eventually, Google Talk is expected to offer a service that lets you call your friends directly on their landlines or mobile phones. Communication is one of the sectors that Google is most likely to be interested in, as it thrives on the interaction between free services and advertising. One could imagine that one day anyone who clicks on an ad would receive free long-distance phone minutes. Or that, on your computer screen, the advertising would automatically adapt to the content of the discussion you've started via instant messaging: you talk about the recent Stones concert, and the ad for their latest album appears... So there is much speculation about what Google intends to do with the $3 billion (2.44 billion euros) it has in its coffers and the $4 billion it is about to rake in. Some are already predicting the purchase of Skype, the small company that threatens the telephone dinosaurs. Its founders recently rejected a $3 billion takeover offer from Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1634

True virtual extensions of the classroom, Internet portals have been gradually being implemented in school boards for three years. Each student and teacher is given a user name and code that allow them to access a site adapted to their needs. No matter where you connect, you can access your email, a chat site (which generally works in the presence of the teacher), your calendar, teachers' instructions, bookmarks of sites relevant to the training, banks of articles from the main daily newspapers, etc. Students save their work there, which can then be retrieved by teammates or by the teacher when it is time to correct it. However, the implementation is happening at a fairly slow pace. "This reaches between 2 and 10% of the schools in a school board. This may not seem like a lot, but school boards would not be able to provide the support needed for all their schools to launch the portal at the same time; "They are therefore gradually penetrating," explains Pierre Delisle of the Société de Gestion des réseaux informatisés des commissions scolaires. The tool developed by this company, which is partly funded by a contribution from the school boards, is distributed to 25 school boards, which pay an additional contribution to use the portal. Three school boards on the North Shore and Laval have also joined forces to develop their own portal, Projet Mille, which uses open-source software. "We are trying to develop Linux terminals with old devices, to be able to put more of them in our schools," explains Claude Raymond, educational advisor at the Commission scolaire Seigneurie des Mille-Îles. Some computers are so outdated that they can no longer support recent commercial applications. The hope is to recover new vehicles from the school boards' computer fleet. "With the portal, we are trying to develop work by community, with discussion groups," continues Mr. Raymond. Reluctant parents This type of approach does not always go smoothly with parents, who sometimes have a red light go off when they hear the word "chat." During his first meeting with the parents of his Grade 6 class last year, Jocelyn Dion was surprised to see their distrust. "Many of them felt that chat had no place in teaching. We had to clarify things," recalls Mr. Dion, who was quick to tell them that chatting was only done between students in the class. "Parents see the Internet more as a source of access to illicit information," continues the teacher, who led a special computer-based learning project last year. He notes that the range of sites accessible to students is limited for the youngest and is expanding every year. In the sixth grade, they have access to the entire Web, says the teacher, who works to raise awareness among young people about the different types of content that can be found there and explains how to assess its reliability. The teacher at Les Lucioles elementary school on the North Shore uses the Internet for various school subjects: what better way to understand a Cartesian map than to look for coordinates on a computerized map, or to work on French and history than to research the major events of the 20th century using Internet sites? His students' work is then posted on the Web. "There are projects that I would never have been able to do on such a large scale without computers," notes the teacher, who has witnessed a surge in motivation among the students. Successes The former principal of the private elementary school Institut Saint-Joseph, Mario Asselin, also gets animated when he talks about the successes of young people on the Internet. For example, last year a student posted a review of a fantasy book (Amos D'Aragon) on the school website, entitled "my favorite novel." Six days later, the author of the novel, Bryan Perro, came to write a comment in turn. "It was the first time that the students said "it's true that anyone can read us!" It made the young people hungry for knowledge. It encouraged them to want to write better and better: they know that they are read," the director enthusiastically recounts, emphasizing that the students have even started to publish texts outside the school setting, for fun. Without wanting to make the use of the Internet an end in itself, he vigorously advocates for schools to take the technological turn: "The power of the tool requires that we take an interest in it!"

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1635

NEW YORK from our correspondent - The expression "new economy", popularized by Business Week magazine in 1996, today evokes more the excesses of the speculative bubble of the end of the 20th century and the illusory promises of prosperity for all and endless growth. The frenzy of enrichment and naivety have gone up in smoke, but not the upheavals born of the global networking of consumers, producers and distributors. In his best-seller published at the beginning of the year in the United States, The World is Flat, the journalist and writer Thomas Friedman takes the measure of the impact of information technologies. He announces the third phase of the world economy. The first, dates back to the discovery of America in 1492. It is marked by European expansion and the "globalization of States". The second, from 1800 to 2000, is characterized by the "globalization of companies", the birth and apogee of multinationals. The third stage has just begun. It is the "globalization of people. They can collaborate like never before and compete all over the world. The engine is no longer muscle and machines, but software and the global fiber optic network." Pierre Omidyar, founder of the online auction house eBay, makes a similar analysis. "We are seeing a fundamental shift in power," he says. "People everywhere are coming together using the Internet and changing the activities in which they are involved." Just a decade ago, you had to call your bank to check your account, stamp an envelope to send mail, and read your newspaper or watch TV to get the football scores and the weather forecast. Today, according to a study by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, two out of three Americans do this much faster online. In December 2004, 58 million Americans sent at least one email a day, and 35 million made the Internet their primary source of information. Some 2 billion searches are made each month via Google; at the same time, the site of its competitor Yahoo! is consulted by 345 million people. Nearly 1 billion human beings have access to the network. The tip of the iceberg of the new economy is online commerce. Two companies, eBay and Amazon, have made the Internet a growing part of world commerce. Online sales in the United States reached 6.5% of retail sales in 2004. According to Forrester Research, this rate could reach 13% in 2010. The community of eBay users worldwide represents 157 million individuals, of whom 500,000 in the United States have made it their main professional activity. The value of auctions on eBay is expected to reach 45 billion dollars (36.6 billion euros) this year. On a more traditional commerce model, Amazon has 41 million customers in seven countries. Online music and piracy have exploded, undermining record companies. Legal and paid, the Apple Music Store has sold more than 500 million songs in two years. In the information field, the Internet threatens the supremacy and future of traditional media, particularly written media. A NECESSITY The least visible part of the transformations, those that affect the functioning of companies, their organization, their strategies, is undoubtedly the most serious in consequences. Companies can now both address the world and adapt locally to each market. Competition is increased tenfold. The ability to collect, process and exploit information, to work in a network, to provide personalized service to customers, while taking advantage of the benefits of large-scale production, is becoming a necessity to remain competitive. The use of electronic media for information exchanges between suppliers, subcontractors, customers, service providers and financial institutions has become widespread. This translates into an unprecedented acceleration of productivity gains. Between the 1970s and 1990s, labor productivity in the United States increased by an average of 1.4% per year. Since 1995, it has increased by 2.5%, and by 4% since 2001. The MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) research center on the new economy highlights the very different strategies of companies. Some are content to eliminate certain tasks. Others, the most successful, completely change their organization and give employees the information and responsibilities they need so that they can regain control at any time. Proof of the newfound faith in the new economy is found in the return of utopias. In its August issue devoted to "The Ten Years That Changed the World," Wired magazine notes with satisfaction that "less than half the Web is commercial; the rest runs on passion." It cites as an example the phenomenon of blogs, 50 million of which "appeared almost instantly and have no economic logic." Yochai Benkler, a Yale professor specializing in network economics, believes that online collaboration is creating a new mode of production that is different from the traditional relationship between companies and the market. He cites open source software, online data sharing, and the millions of consumer ratings that are accessible on websites as examples. "The economic role of social behavior is becoming more important," he says.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1636

JEAN DE CHAMBURE is the editorial manager of Atelier, a BNP Paribas structure that has been monitoring information and communication technologies for fifteen years. The general public Internet is ten years old. Have we come out of the phase of fantasies and disillusionment? The powerful collective euphoria of the late 1990s around the prospects of the Internet would be a good subject of study for historians. Could there be a millenarian phenomenon? In the year 1000, catastrophic scenarios about the future of the planet proliferated; in the year 2000, equally passionate positivist predictions about an enchanting high-tech future developed. Moreover, while the generation of young people in the 1970s expressed themselves in political protest, their children saw in the Internet the opportunity to shake up the economic order: instead of the people overthrowing the government, agile mini-companies would dethrone large groups. There was a libertarian ideology in the Internet, where everything was free, and cyber-companies were more concerned with innovating than making money. Hasn't the Internet lost some of the magic of its beginnings? Certainly, business on the Internet has become an important economic activity and the myth of everything free has lived. However, the Internet has given more power to each individual: everyone can be as well informed as a journalist, trade on the other side of the world like a multinational, share their files with those of millions of others to create a giant database... Its power to bring people together has created forms of collective work, even bartering and mutual aid: the best known is the brotherhood of free software programmers around Linux, which makes Microsoft tremble. On eBay, people buy objects from strangers with the only guarantee being the online ratings of previous buyers on the seller's reliability. Thousands of experts on this or that subject voluntarily write the 200 million articles of the free, multilingual online encyclopedia Wikipedia. What is the main societal impact of the Internet? It was feared that the Internet would keep people behind their computers: they would work online, consume online, spend all their leisure time online. But the Internet is a fantastic means of communication. Email remains the primary use of the Web. Instant messaging, discussion forums, community and dating sites, blogs: in fact our modern societies have a thirst for expression, for information. The diversity, the accessibility of content, to which everyone can contribute, is a great wealth. But beware of leveling. The main problem of the Net, which explains the importance taken by search engines, remains the sorting, the prioritization, the relevance of these billions of Web pages.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1637

In other times, "I've heard about..." would have been revolutionary. In times of global uncertainty and the crisis of Western democracies, it is better to speak of heresy, a term identified from the statement of the firm that made the proposal, R & Sie. At the Cordeliers convent, architects François Roche, Stéphanie Lavaux, Jean Navarro and Benoît Durandin free themselves from anything that might, from near or far, resemble a rule. Starting with the scenography, which has been sidelined: "I've heard about..." squats on the previous proposal by Rirkrit Tiravanija, who reconstructed on a scale the Museum of Modern Art of the City of Paris (under construction) inside the Cordeliers convent (Libération, February 23). François Roche and his acolytes insert their "urban speculation" into it, grafting a honeycomb protuberance onto it, half limestone cave, half Cheval's postman's house. No model either, even fewer images and plans of the Parisian firm's achievements, better known for its projects beyond our borders, in Bangkok or Trinidad, than for its French achievements, a question of inadequacy to the French architectural climate. State of mind. The rumor, an architectural fiction in a prototypical state that R & Sie proposes, is first read as a state of mind. And since the project is not the simplest, the only way to grasp its content is to push bodies to experiment with it. When the mind balks at the speculations of a city in a perpetual state of uncertainty, never fixed or finished, where architecture would self-generate according to internal and external stimuli (mood of the inhabitants, climate and economy, etc.), "bodies know how to speak," says Roche. Are you lost? Precisely, the "immersion room" welcomes you: inside this polyurethane foam cave "clogged with concrete resin", five smooth white cells await visitors to curl up and listen to the warm, whispering voice of François Roustang, Lacan's hypnotist... "Echappée belle". "You are at the heart of the situation, this strange silky sensation that frightens and caresses you... The city is an extension of your own body, you are one of the nerve endings of this body that is a city..." Asleep or softened, the bodies pass back in front of the sculptural objects in the form of stalagmites, enigmatic white underwater concretions with abstruse titles ("random reticulated structure", "psychochemistry"...) to perceive this sensual environment differently, where a little girl sings "let's walk in the woods". For Roche, this inner journey is a "great escape, a transdoor", a dream directed to apprehend this bioarchitecture. This city is also a joyful mix of the most recent philosophical concepts. The Territorial Protocol that ensures its cohesion is a term borrowed from Peter Sloterdijk. And when the whole could fall into an indigestible mille-feuille, a touch of humor is thrown in. The Protocol is printed with ink that fades above 16 °C, "a bodily mode that prevents the architect's words from being engraved in stone". It is also a pure product of collective intelligence: architects, art critics, philosophers, mathematicians, biochemists and science fiction writers have contributed to it. Recent developments in robotics and biotechnologies are found there. The machine for constantly building architecture is not just a hypothesis. It was developed by Behrokh Khoshnevis, a researcher at the University of Southern California, "a robot that shits viscous concrete and clay material, producing both an external membrane for the walls and a formwork," says Roche. All that remains is to inject into it the variables that would make Viab (for "variability-viability", a neologism by Bruce Sterling) a real biostructure, via algorithms calculating and combining in real time a set of parameters (structural limits, light input, cell thickness, local biotope, bodily emissions, stress level of the inhabitants, etc.). A "ten-year research project," with robotics specialists or nanotechnology researchers from the CNRS in Grenoble. A bet. These speculations turn the dirigiste conception of urban planning upside down. They announce the disappearance of the architect and his client as city makers, designing their totem buildings from above without going through negotiation. They also mark a serious evolution of non-standard architecture, sketching out, in particular by opening the source code of Viab, in a free software way, a collective cooperative architecture... This bet on the future is invigorating: "We all scared ourselves in the 20th century," says François Roche. "We know that technologies can produce barbarity, but doubts and uncertainties must not prevent us from moving forward, from taking the risk of conflict." For those who still doubt, R & Sie invites us to Antwerp in February 2006 to study "the possible degeneration" of I've heard about...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1638

This science fiction article is not born of imagination. It projects into the near future the trends and programs already launched in 2005. WHEN Vincent wakes up, he doesn't feel very well. He partied last night and his head is still spinning. He gropes for his PDA (personal digital assistant), the small, flat, flexible computer that never leaves his side, and simply says "breathalyzer". Immediately, the PDA sends a request to the sensors integrated into the fabric of his T-shirt, which transmit his pulse and blood alcohol level in one second. The data is sent for analysis to a specialized server that returns its results in a few seconds: nothing serious. The PDA still searches the Internet for some dietary advice: in this summer of 2030, computer-assisted dietetics are all the rage. Audrey, Vincent's friend, wakes up in turn. She didn't go out yesterday because she was sick recently. To monitor her health precisely, she had a set of micro-sensors implanted in her arm, coupled with a transceiver, which fit into a capsule the size of a grain of rice. Every hour, the sensors automatically perform a small check-up. The results are stored in the capsule's memory - which contains Audrey's complete medical file - then they are transmitted to her PDA, which displays them so she can read them. Finally, they are sent to the computer at her doctor's office. If the computer judges the numbers to be alarming, the doctor will be alerted in person. While drinking his coffee, Vincent tries to remember what he did last night. His memories are hazy, but it doesn't matter, because the PDA, which he had hung around his neck, recorded everything on video. Besides, all the guests had a PDA on them. The images of the evening are already circulating on the Internet. The audio files of his conversations will be easy to find, several search engines must have indexed them word for word. On second thought, Vincent doesn't really want to know what he might have said last night and orders his PDA to search the Internet for a video of a football match played the day before yesterday in Brazil. As soon as it finds it, the device transmits the images to the electronic paper covering a wall in the kitchen, which turns into a giant screen. In the living room, Audrey prefers to watch an amateur concert broadcast live from a small hall in Tokyo, because it's evening there. She watches the images on the living room table, the top of which is a screen: these new table-screens are found almost everywhere, because they cost less than a solid wood table. Audrey, who plays a little guitar, asks the orchestra if she can join them, and a little impromptu jam session begins. Like most people in rich countries, Vincent and Audrey live partly on the Internet, but they no longer pay attention to it. Wherever they go, they are surrounded by devices connected to the network twenty-four hours a day. The Net has melted into the urban landscape, becoming both invisible and omnipresent. To the general public, it has taken the form of a very high-speed wireless local area network. Behind the scenes, it operates thanks to robotic routers and millions of kilometers of optical fibers buried in the ground of every continent or laid on the ocean floor, which carry data streams to local wireless systems. In the course of its expansion, it has smoothly swallowed up telephone, radio, television, and surveillance-maintenance networks. It is used as much to link two machines installed in the same building as to communicate with spacecraft. Vincent drives to work. As soon as he gets behind the wheel, the on-board computer reads him a message from his mechanic, who receives in real time the data transmitted by the dozens of sensors monitoring the condition of the car: the brakes need to be redone, the garage computer suggests an appointment for next week. Entering his office, Vincent, who works in an architectural firm, says hello to his five colleagues. Two of them are sitting in the room, the other three are on another continent, but their image is projected life-size on the office walls. Recently, the occasional videoconferences at a fixed time have been replaced by "telepresence": the team members stay online from morning to night and talk to each other from time to time as if they were in the same place. They start working together on the virtual model of a future building that floats in the middle of the room. At noon, Audrey decides to go out, and would like to meet Vincent. In order not to disturb him, she asks her PDA to discreetly locate him. The device begins to scan the detection networks composed of thousands of camera-microphones and wireless sensors scattered throughout the city. In one minute, it spots Vincent in a downtown brasserie. Audrey connects her PDA to the restaurant's video system and sees that Vincent is sitting at a table with a stranger. She listens to the conversation for a few moments and guesses that she is an office colleague. To be sure, she downloads the business card broadcast by the woman's PDA and launches a search on the Net: she obtains her professional CV, a selection of texts of which she is the author, her vacation photos, and discovers that she is in the process of divorcing, that she has two children and a clean criminal record, apart from a few speeding tickets. Knowing who she is dealing with, Audrey decides to warn Vincent's PDA that she is going to join them. On the way, she makes her choice from the restaurant menu, which has appeared on her screen, and places her order. During the meal, Audrey receives a message from her doctor's computer: the last check-up carried out by the sensors implanted in her arm is not satisfactory, she must go and rest. She leaves the restaurant quickly. No need to ask for a separate bill: on the way out, the restaurant's detection system has connected to the implant in her arm, which also contains her bank details. The amount of the meal will be debited from her account. Back home, Audrey decides to read a little. She connects her computer to her favorite magazine and finds an article on a novel that seems interesting to her. She launches a search and, a second later, the book is purchased and downloaded. If she likes the novel, she will send it for free to a few friends. Like the majority of the population, Audrey practices the mix of genres. She regularly uploads pirated copies of books, music and films, so much so that her computer now contains millions of works. She doesn't really use them, except to allow others to come and help themselves at her place: now, the most massive exchanges are between friends and neighbors, by direct local connection. But, on the other hand, Audrey often makes the effort to buy the works of her favorite artists, especially those who self-distribute by bypassing traditional intermediaries. In fact, she has a hard time finding her way around, because millions of creators put their works online for free, abandoning the legal protection of author's rights and copyright, which no longer corresponds to the state of technology. This trend, launched at the end of the 20th century by authors of free software (open source), gained momentum at the beginning of the 21st with the trivialization of piracy, the decline of publishers and distributors entangled in an endless war against their own customers, and the explosion of the Open Content movement: today, for a young creator, the goal is to make himself known very quickly throughout the world by distributing his work on the Net, in the hope of attracting private sponsors, state subsidies, donations from fan clubs and the public, invitations to participate in paid events... Audrey likes to see and touch real paper books, but resorting to the Net is too tempting because, recently, the entire content of all the libraries in the world has been digitized, indexed and available for free online. At the moment, she is discovering contemporary Korean literature: after decades of unsuccessful tests, effective instant translation software has finally been created. In addition, she has become accustomed to reading enriched and interactive texts on screen, which offer an inexhaustible depth and variety of information. Since each word of each work is indexed, one can carry out searches covering the entire world literary heritage, or all the technical documentation on a given subject. Each quote can be placed in its original context and its author can be identified and contacted, if he is still alive. One can also be helped by intelligent engines capable of understanding the direction of a search, of finding all the annotations already written about a text and of autonomously producing summaries, collections of comments, bibliographies, lists of definitions, etc. This new universe was born from a technical revolution launched discreetly in the 2000s, and which has spread over two decades. By the end of the 20th century, computer scientists had understood that so-called peer-to-peer systems, created by young autodidacts to exchange music, were the most robust part of the Net thanks to their horizontal and decentralized architecture, and also the most efficient, because they managed the available resources in memory and bandwidth in a rational and dynamic way. It was also the most egalitarian and creative sector, because every user was both a consumer and a provider of content. On this basis, a consortium of American universities and laboratories launched a program called IRIS (Infrastructure for Resilient Internet Systems), aimed at profoundly transforming the infrastructure of the Net to make it a fully peer-to-peer network. Today, centralized servers hosting large masses of information are disappearing: the content of the Net is scattered fluidly and invisibly in the memory of billions of machines connected to the network without their owners having to worry about it. Each new file receives a unique and definitive coded name that will be used to track and find it indefinitely, wherever it is hosted. Thus, to publish a document, there is no longer any need for a website or blog: it is simply thrown into the planetary database constituted by the community of interconnected machines. Another advantage is that anyone can create a database, a forum, a dialogue channel, an online store or a Net-TV by relying on the infrastructure of the Network, without needing a technical service provider or specific software. Similarly, a company wishing to carry out very heavy IT work is no longer obliged to rent a supercomputer: the new architecture allows it to mobilize for its own benefit, for a few minutes, the unused computing power of millions of computers. The rule of sharing has also been imposed for connections: each device connected to the network serves as a relay for the systems located in the surrounding area. When Audrey calls Vincent, the data stream from her PDA is no longer sent to a fixed antenna that is responsible for "re-routing" it to a central office. It is transported in the background by the computers of a few dozen city residents who are on the right trajectory at that moment. Each connection gives rise to the appearance of a temporary and evolving ad hoc network, provided by the user community. After work, Vincent wants to get some fresh air. While he is strolling down the street, his PDA informs him that a union demonstration is passing through the neighborhood. He asks to know more: immediately, hundreds of demonstrators bombard him with messages to encourage him to come and join them. But, a moment later, he receives an official notice from the police reminding him that the order to disperse has just been issued... As he walks away, his PDA warns him that one of his friends is passing through a neighboring street. The two friends meet up and decide to go to an immersive gaming center - a system developed in Japan around 2005, which has conquered the whole world. Each rents a "cave", a cubic room whose six interior faces are 3D screens. Totally immersed in the realistic setting of the game, Vincent embarks on a complicated adventure with his friend, locked in a neighboring cellar. They face a team installed in another gaming center located in a distant city whose name is unknown to them. Suddenly, Audrey's voice is heard in the cellar. She has been watching Vincent's exploits on his PDA for a few minutes, but she would like him to go home, it is time for him to go spend some time in the real world. Tonight, Vincent and Audrey will fall asleep in the middle of nature: Audrey has set her PDA to broadcast a country setting on the walls of their room.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1639

1. Generating 112 million euros without leaving your armchair in six months is possible by... a. Creating an online casino. b. Selling socks on the Internet. c. Leaving subscribers to wait with the customer service hotline. 2. What does happy slapping mean? a. Literally "a lucky shot", the expression applies to a person with whom the sexual encounter was of high quality. b. An expression that refers to children who play at slapping each other. c. A game (English) that consists of beating up someone at random, filming the attack and posting the scene on the Net. 3. Mr. Chouard is best known for... a. The quality of his teaching of law and computer science. b. The success of his personal contribution to the referendum on the European Constitution posted online on a blog. c. Having announced the victory of the "no" vote before everyone else. d. A strange idea consisting of drawing lots among the citizens to find the country's leaders. 4. Adele is... a. The pseudonym of the most sought-after stripper on the Web. b. A new brand of computer. c. The name of the government program for electronic administration. 5. Voyages-sncf.com assured this in an advertisement broadcast in May on the Net: "Paris-New York in eight hours, under the sea and by train, will it soon be possible?" It was: a. A viral marketing campaign. b. A disinformation operation. c. A project for the future. 6. The bête noire of SNCF ticket office clerks is called: a. Louis Gallois. b. Minimum service. c. iDTGV. 7. The site Laskard.com offers: a. To explore "your pleasures at the zen rate of 0.15 euros per minute". b. A "nokpote" category for those who want to break the taboo of unprotected sex. c. Job reassignment ads for thugs. 8. In chat language, TKC means? a. You're nuts. b. You smoked a joint. c. You're screwed. 9. The initials RSS designate? a. A network under surveillance. b. The group of hackers, the Rats on stage. c. News feeds. 10. Firefox is the name of? a. A browser. b. A fighter pilot. c. An antivirus. 11. Ten years ago, Jacques Chirac... a. Still didn't know how to use a field mouse. b. Was finally able to read Libération on the Web. c. Wasn't very Internet-savvy either. Solutions 1c. Hotlines. 2c. Gratuitous attacks broadcast on the Internet. 3b. His blog of the no was incredibly successful. d. But he's not the only one to have launched this idea. 4c. This program has 140 measures. 5a. A campaign that aims to make noise around a brand even if it means making up stories. 6c. From the name of the low-cost TGV ticket sold only online (non-exclusive answer). 7b. This dangerous game is indeed "nokapote". 8b. From the French "Tu es cassé". 9c. Acronym for Really Simple Syndication, RSS is a format used for broadcasting news. 10a. This browser is free software. 11a, b, c.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1640

ARC-ET-SENANS (Doubs), from our special correspondent - The first architectural project by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux presented in 1774 for the future Royal Saltworks was square. "Why so many columns?" asked Louis XV. "They are only suitable for temples and the palaces of kings." Rejected by the king and his administration, Ledoux made circles, but kept the Doric columns. Claude-Nicolas Ledoux wanted, as a good utopian architect, to build an ideal city. At the Royal Saltworks, which processed the salt produced in the neighboring town of Salins-les-Bains, he housed the workers, craftsmen and their families within the building. Frankly a Rousseauist, Ledoux hoped that his buildings arranged around the ovens and the director's house would become "those favorite places" where people lived their lives "according to natural laws." AN ACOUSMONIUM In a world freed from the salt tax, utopia has invested the field of cyberspace, nomadism, hackers, free software and the free-Net. Also, on the sidelines of the major summer festivals, the Besançon association Elektrophonie presented Nuit bleue on July 9 and 10, an alternative program, under the vaults of an old building where salt water was treated. An audience of fans came with blankets and sleeping bags to listen to contemporary music broadcast by an acousmonium for a night - sound consoles, orchestras of 80 loudspeakers, the equivalent of 40 hi-fi systems. The device allows the spatial arrangement of sounds, portable players, flying in balance games managed by psycho-acoustic principles. Acousmatics aims to develop the sense of listening by referring to Pythagoras, who taught philosophy to his students behind a curtain and in the dark, to make them more receptive to his discourse. In Arc-et-Senans, it was therefore necessary, to listen to them, to turn one's back on the two very young musicians, the Ukrainian Katia Zavoloka and the Berliner AGF (Antye Greie-Fuchs). Nuit bleue - for the blue lights projected on the Ledoux colonnades - is in its fourth edition, in partnership with the University of Birmingham, where the Beast (Birmingham ElectroAcoustic Sound Theatre) and the creative space Musiques et recherches de Bruxelles are located. Outside, in the gardens, the visual artist Thierry Boucton has set up tents like those found at rock festivals or rave parties, light, colorful, illuminated from the inside, "itinerant makeshift lanterns, with light moorings." In a second space, the Saline d'Arc-et-Senans, a center for European cultural meetings, exhibits a sample of the photos offered at the African Photography Meetings in Bamako. There we will see the photos of the Malian Mohammed Camara, of Bamako, a fine and tranquil vision of an Africa returned to itself, while the Haitian Roberto Stephenson shakes up Port-au-Prince, his chaotic city, a little more, in color, in panoramic, with insane superimpositions. Is the world running? Answer in the vegetable garden of Bangladesh, behind the cooperage.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1641

Q: What does your "Impeach God" button mean? A: It's inspired by Richard Nixon, who would have been impeached if he had remained in office. He played a nice trick on Americans, not unlike that of the Christian God: "I have a secret plan to end the suffering in Vietnam, but for heavenly security reasons I cannot allow mortals to understand how my plan works. You just have to trust me and obey me without question, because I see the big picture and you know I will be good to you. If you don't obey me, you are bad; I will put you on my enemies list and my infernal revenue service will come after you every year for eternity." This rhetoric is used to convince some people to ignore valid arguments that discredit you; it appeals to arguments that can neither be validated nor invalidated. As for Bush, he is even worse. He is lying and deserves to be impeached for his crimes against peace and his war crimes. This terminology is borrowed from the Nuremberg trials, whose criteria would certainly be sufficient to indict, convict and execute Bush. But since I am opposed to the death penalty, I will settle for life imprisonment! Q: Is there a connection between free software and the political causes you support? A: I publish political commentaries and comics that defend the human rights of citizens, and free software respects the human rights of the user. We have identified four essential freedoms for the computer user: the freedom to use a program, the freedom to study and modify its code, the freedom to help your neighbor by distributing copies of the program, and the freedom to help the community by publishing modified versions of it. Free software respects the freedoms of the user; "Proprietary" software, that is, software that is not free, can work well but remains fundamentally unfair on an ethical level. I have refused proprietary software in my life. Q: Twenty years ago, would you have guessed that computers would be installed in the living room and that Microsoft would be the absolute master? A: No, and it is a mistake to say that it happened thanks to Microsoft. It happened thanks to cheap computers, whose operating system happened to be Microsoft's. It was a rather weak system, and I did not pay attention to it. These computers were almost unusable. For example, I designed my operating system, GNU, on a 32-bit architecture while Microsoft did so much later. Microsoft was really not a giant and had nothing to do with my decision. Today, the free software movement is constantly under attack from Microsoft. Its leaders seek to impose standards that prevent free software from being compatible with their own. For example, they recently patented the new Word document format in order to prevent free software from reading these documents. Q: Why should my mother choose free software? A: Even those who cannot program can enjoy the first two freedoms of our movement: the freedom to use software freely and the freedom to distribute copies freely to friends. Your mother has friends, doesn't she? I suppose she is used to cooperating with her friends... That should be legal. To prohibit cooperation and social solidarity is unjust and tyrannical. It is true that she will not be able to use our other two freedoms, the freedom to modify software code and to publish modified versions. But it is like freedom of the press: most people do not write articles in newspapers, but they still receive the benefits of freedom of the press. When the press is controlled in a country, we only have access to information that serves the most powerful. It's the same with software.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1642

For Richard Stallman, software is no more valuable than a recipe or a subway map. People should be able to freely obtain, modify, and reproduce these tools. This is the philosophy he put forward in 1984 when he founded the "free software" movement, without which computers and the Internet would not be what they are today. At the time, the family computer did not exist, people did not meet on the Internet, people wrote each other letters on paper, and people bought their pornography at the convenience store. But what software publishers had already understood was that they could get rich by affixing a copyright system to their products similar to that of books. Revolted, the young Richard Stallman decided to break down what he saw as a barrier to the dissemination of knowledge by creating a license that would let the user modify and copy the software as they wished. Today, his operating system, GNU, is an essential component of the Linux system, which powers 20 million computers worldwide. The license he created has multiplied the potential of many innovations, from Netscape to Google to Quake. With his stature in the software field, Mr. Stallman came to UQAM earlier this month to share his vision of copyright, not only in computing, but also in other types of works, whether books, films or music. His insight is welcome, since Ottawa is preparing a bill (C-60) that should soon shake up all these areas by adapting copyright to the digital age. New Light "Copyright was originally created in many countries to provide industry regulation for book publishers. They were the ones restricted by copyright, not the public," he says, referring to the harshness advocated by some regarding the sharing of music or films on the Internet. "At that time, the public did not have the means to copy works on a large scale. Today, millions of people can do so. The economic situation that made copyright advantageous has changed. It has become a barrier to the needs of the public and it turns many users into criminals. It is true that copyright must be adapted to our times, but we are not necessarily going in the right direction." "Today in the United States, the government is very influenced by companies. Laws are sold. So copyright has been modified in the interest of publishers, by strengthening its scope and duration over time." The solution to this situation is to relax copyright instead of strengthening it, according to Mr. Stallman. In front of a packed amphitheater of admirers (also there for the launch of the Semaine québécoise de l'informatique libre, which will take place from November 12 to 20), the father of free software presented his "proposals" to modify copyright. No more than 10 years First, Richard Stallman proposed reducing the duration of copyright to 10 years. "In publishing, for example, most books are discontinued after a year and unobtainable after three. Except for the rich and famous, everyone has an interest in letting the public reproduce their work every few years, so that it can continue to exist." "Publishers point to the example of best-selling authors to defend copyright in its current form. But they are a small exception, and they have the power to negotiate their contracts anyway." Ten years is a far cry from what entertainment giants like Disney, which is fighting to maintain exclusivity over characters created in the 1930s, want. "Copyright is not about an idea, it is about the application of an idea," Stallman says. It was the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) that started this confusion by mixing works and patents under the common concept of intellectual property. Copyright is not property; WIPO's first flaw is its name. "There is no point asking Mr. Stallman what he thinks of Bill C-60, which is supposed to ratify the WIPO agreements signed in 1996... Three types of works According to Richard Stallman, ideally, three types of works should be distinguished, each with its own specific copyright. First, there are works of "practical use" such as software, but also reference works, maps or books intended for teaching. According to Stallman, all of them should be able to be modified and distributed freely, as are cooking recipes." The Wikipedia.org encyclopedia was built on this principle: it is the readers themselves who write, modify and revise it, and it has become the largest encyclopedia in the world. "A second category would be works that "reflect someone's thoughts": opinion essays, scientific articles, memoirs, etc. Since modifying such works "is not useful to society," Stallman suggests allowing only "the right to noncommercial distribution of exact copies." Finally, the case of works of "art and entertainment" poses a challenge, according to Stallman, since their modification can "destroy their artistic integrity." On the other hand, one must respect "the folkloric process of modification" that, he recalls, allowed Shakespeare to write memorable plays in a way that would be illegal today. A "compromise copyright" would then allow artists to authorize the noncommercial distribution of exact copies of their works for 10 years, and then modified versions thereafter. So should music sharing be allowed? "There is no reason to prohibit it; not only because the public wants to have access to it - which would be a sufficient reason in itself - but also because sharing culture is a good thing for society." "As for musicians, they don't get a penny from their records anyway. With the exception of rare celebrities, they only make money from concerts. If the music circulates freely, it promotes their concerts." As you will have understood, Richard Stallman never intends to prohibit copies of a work, whether it is a cooking recipe, a doctoral thesis or a rock album. A radical position, certainly, but one that he has applied with great success in the world of software. In this, his words will not leave anyone indifferent.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1643

STRASBOURG from our European office - In an unprecedented move, the European Parliament voted as a bloc on Wednesday 6 July in Strasbourg to definitively reject a bill aimed at patenting software in Europe. This is "the first time" that the Assembly has blocked a directive at this early stage of the procedure, stressed its president, the socialist Josep Borrell, during a press conference. The Parliament had already rejected three projects relating to biotechnologies, takeover bids and dockers, but it had previously sought a compromise with the Council, the co-legislator. For Michel Rocard, its socialist rapporteur, the Parliament thus expressed "collective anger" against the "inadmissible" way in which it was treated by the Commission and the Council, who refused to take into account its first reading amendments. Denouncing their "total, arrogant and sarcastic contempt", the former Prime Minister of François Mitterrand recalled that "the lack of democracy" that these institutions have demonstrated is "one of the components of the crisis" that Europe is experiencing, since the French and Dutch "no" votes in the referendum on the European Constitution. Mr. Borrell stressed that this vote is "the most unanimous ever recorded", with 648 votes for rejection, against 14, and 18 abstentions. It is also "the most contradictory", as Mr. Rocard noted. Despite the unanimity of the vote, the text has deeply divided Parliament, and each camp "preferred to reject it outright, rather than run the risk of letting the other's position be adopted". ETHICS AND FINANCE The directive has given rise to a lobbying campaign "unprecedented", with "thousands of emails" from both sides. It must be said that its ethical and financial stakes were considerable: for Mr. Rocard, "it was a question of preserving the free circulation of ideas" against patenting attempts that could bring their depositors "a few tens of billions of dollars per year". In the other camp, the large European companies (notably Nokia, Siemens, Philips and Alcatel), who want to make their investments in research and development more profitable, had convinced the Commission to act. To this end, the latter had proposed giving Community legitimacy to the case law developed by the European Patent Office. This intergovernmental body, based in Munich, has issued more than 30,000 patents concerning computer-implemented inventions, when their program makes "a contribution to the state of the art", a definition subject to controversy. However, it did so without any legal basis. The Munich Convention of 1973, which it is supposed to apply, excludes from its scope computer programs "as such". She likens them to creations of the mind, protected by copyright. Mr. Rocard, as well as the supporters of free software, wanted to stick to this convention: "We do not patent the notes of a musical chord, nor the rhymes of a poem, nor mathematical formulas," recalled Mr. Rocard, emphasizing that "software is only the connection of mathematical formulas." In the first reading, he had obtained that the European Parliament say that software is only patentable if its development "implements the forces of nature" - and not just a brain and paper. The Council of Ministers had refused to take this position into account, despite the pressure exerted by the new countries of the European Union. In Parliament, the representatives of these States, which do not yet have large companies capable of supporting the financial logic of patents, have taken up the cause of free software, thus providing an unexpected reinforcement to the left. After the text was rejected, Mr Rocard considered that the file was "not ripe" for consensual legislation. The Commission clearly is not either, since it indicated that it would not make a new proposal.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1644

Strasbourg - The European Parliament yesterday definitively rejected the directive on the possibility of patenting software, ending three years of a fierce battle that had torn the IT world apart between pro- and anti-patents. MEPs voted against the text supported by the Member States and the European Commission by an overwhelming majority of 648 votes to 14, burying for the first time a text at the second reading, even before the search for a "conciliation" with the governments. The Parliament being divided into two equal blocs on the text, the political groups preferred to vote for a global rejection, rather than take the risk of seeing amendments adopted that went against their opinion. Two camps The text opposed on one side the giants of information technology (from Microsoft to Nokia) and certain small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), who wanted to see their research efforts protected, and on the other side SMEs in favor of free software, who feared seeing their development hampered by costly patents. The text did not propose patenting software itself, i.e. computer programs, which is excluded by the Munich Convention of 1973, which treats software as intellectual creations, like a novel, and protects it by copyright. But the European Patent Office has in recent years agreed to patent software incorporated in industrial products, from mobile phones to washing machines, which was not recognised in all Member States, due to the lack of a European patent that applied to all. To validate these practices and harmonise everything, the European Commission proposed at the beginning of 2002 that "computer-implemented inventions" could be protected by patents. Last March, the ministers of the 25 had reached an agreement with difficulty on this approach, according to which an ABS braking system could be the subject of a patent, as could the software at the origin of this invention. They had completely ignored the restrictive amendments adopted by Parliament at first reading. The Council and the Commission had "total, arrogant and sarcastic contempt for Parliament", declared the rapporteur of the text, the French socialist Michel Rocard, accusing Brussels of having been "an accomplice of Microsoft". "The lack of democracy is a cause of the current crisis in Europe. Let this rejection serve as a lesson to the Council!", he declared. "We have defended the free circulation of ideas and competition against monopoly. Software is only a connection of mathematical formulas and you do not patent a mathematical formula, nor the rhymes of a poem", he further maintained. Speaking of an issue "of tens of billions of dollars per year", Mr Rocard considered that the file was "not ripe" for consensual legislation. Pro-patent lobbyists made the best of a bad situation, preferring the status quo, which leaves decisions in the hands of patent offices and courts, to adopting Mr Rocard's amendments. "This is a wise decision that has avoided overly restrictive legislation," said Mark MacGann, spokesman for EICTA, the pro-patent lobby for large corporations. "Parliament has avoided amendments that are disastrous for innovation in Europe, but it is regrettable that the directive was rejected," said Jonathan Zuck of ACT, an association of small and medium-sized enterprises. In contrast, the FFII, which represents 3,000 small and medium-sized enterprises that support free software, congratulated Parliament for "voting 'no' to bad legislation."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1645

The European software patent project is stillborn. By 648 votes out of 680 voters, the European deputies buried yesterday, at second reading, the draft directive on the "patentability of computer-implemented inventions". Brussels wanted to harmonize the law between the twenty-five member states of the Union. And its experts wanted to provide European companies with a law comparable to that in force in the United States and Japan. "The European Commission had declared, through its spokesperson, Joaquin Amunia, that if the Parliament rejected the joint proposal, it would not present new proposals. This vote therefore puts an end to a process initiated in 1999", underlines Pierre Breese, president of an intellectual property consultancy firm. The European Commission is paying for its obstinacy. Its leaders decided to impose their thesis in defiance of the demands of the parliamentarians. Brussels refused to take into account the 256 amendments tabled by MEPs in September 2003, when the text was examined at first reading. Last month, the European Committee on Legal Affairs also rejected the amendments defended by Michel Rocard. The former French Prime Minister argued that "the free circulation of ideas was at stake". Like many European SME managers, he wanted to exclude software only from the scope of the patent. Mathematical formulas cannot be defended by patents. Opponents of the directive feared that introducing a patent for software would paralyse their activities. "It is a question of survival. "A SME cannot afford to spend 10% to 30% of its development budget to ensure that it does not use patents filed by others, nor the hundreds of thousands of euros of cash needed to assert its rights during a patent infringement trial," explains Stéfane Fermigier, president of Nuxeo, a French software publisher competing with Microsoft, Oracle and SAP. Opponents have even developed a website where software used and protected by patents is listed. One site (webshop.ffii.org) lists the twenty or so patents taken by Sun Microsystems and Swisscom, making e-commerce and websites complex to develop. The supporters are the largest software publishers. The German SAP, which has a portfolio of several hundred patents, wanted to benefit from legislation comparable to that in force in the United States. A lobby group called Eicta, which brings together major European technology companies including Alcatel, Ericsson, Nokia, Philips and Siemens, was also very much in favour of software patents. Their chairmen recently wrote to Tony Blair asking him to defend "jobs, innovation and investment in research and development for the technologies of the future". These leaders were heard by Brussels, but they did not convince the MEPs. "Rejecting the directive had become the last option to send a strong and clear signal against software patents", underlines Georg Greve, chair of the FreeSoftwareFoundation in Europe, a supporter of so-called free software such as Linux. The latter is calling for an immediate end to the granting of software patents by the European Patent Office. In 2001, Europe protected 16,000 software inventions. The French government, which had called for a balanced text, is disappointed. "The patent is not harmful," assures François Loos, Minister Delegate for Industry. Marc Cherki

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1646

Strasbourg (EU), special envoy. All that for that! After two and a half years of battle, the European Parliament has finally given up on providing the Union with specific legislation on software protection. By an overwhelming majority of 648 votes to 14, MEPs finally buried yesterday the draft directive "on the patentability of computer-implemented inventions" (Libération yesterday). Contrary to appearances, the reasons for this almost unanimous rejection are far from unequivocal: for the left of the Assembly, this project did not sufficiently guarantee the non-patentability of software, which must be able to circulate freely, just like ideas. While the conservatives and liberals feared that the Commission's project would be "distorted" by left-wing amendments which would have, on the contrary, prevented the legal protection of these programs which run computers and many machines, from GSM to washing machines and electronics embedded in cars... In the absence of a clear majority in one direction or the other, the political groups therefore preferred to reject the entire text. Yesterday's vote is therefore an admission of the powerlessness of Parliament, incapable of reaching a broad consensus within it. Certainly, the MEP and former socialist Prime Minister, Michel Rocard, responsible for the report on this draft directive, presented it as a victory for the supporters of "software", generally small and medium-sized enterprises as well as individuals, and as a defeat for the pro-patents, in this case the big industrialists such as Microsoft, Siemens, Nokia or Alcatel. However, this is not the case, quite the contrary: the European Patent Office has already granted licences protecting software necessary for the proper functioning of machines, even though the 1973 European Patent Convention expressly excluded the patentability of computer programs (which are subject to the less protective copyright regime). In doing so, the office is increasingly modelling its case law on that of the United States and Japan.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1647

On June 26, the Paris City Hall hosted the "Paris Capitale du Libre" event. Thus, the libertarian myth of open-source software, improperly called "free", now aims to win the hearts of the general public beyond expert circles. Riding the fashionable theme of community freeware, it sends a message to everyone: IT should not be inserted into the economy, it is just another freedom and nothing else. This discourse is a bad blow to access to IT for the greatest number, a dangerous misinterpretation for the European and French software industry, a real incentive to relocate IT services outside Europe. The opening of computer codes can be useful for research, and community work can sometimes contribute to certain technological progress; but can we sustainably ignore economic issues and in particular put ourselves on the sidelines of intellectual property law? Is there really a future for a "libertarian altercomputing" where creative work would be free? Is freedom reduced to free? The principle of intellectual property is one of the foundations of our democracies and our economies, which must be guaranteed and protected. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen solemnly recall this. Calling this principle into question is suicidal in a context of increased global competition. However, the words of R. Stallman, the self-proclaimed pope of free software, are edifying in this respect: "Proprietary software is immoral and must not exist..." To the question: "How can companies developing free software make a living from their programs?" He even made the following historic statement: "This question does not interest me, I am against the market society..." If Europe and France want to have a software industry, which generates the income and jobs of tomorrow, it is necessary, on the contrary, to strengthen its foundations and allow the development of production capacities for these new "works of the mind". A programmer who invents solutions has the right to be remunerated accordingly by the marketing of his invention. He is not obliged to share them. It is therefore urgent to protect the works of the mind that are software, in France and in Europe. The commercial reality of the "open source software" industry is simple: instead of predictable software equipment expenditure, allowing the controlled depreciation of major investments, it shifts the expenditure to the services necessary for the "tinkering" of "open source" software. Experience shows that these expenses give rise to multiple extensions, since the fruit of this work is not "stabilized", and does not fit into a normal economic relationship that guarantees its legal and operational security. This is how the French Ministry of Finance has just proudly signed the largest contract in the world for IT maintenance on open source software, for an amount of 39 million euros. Which makes this "free software" the most expensive software in history! Let's pass it on to Parliament and the Court of Auditors who will assess, over time, the relevance of the experience. "Free" software is therefore not really free. Driven by IT service multinationals, large consumers of maintenance and development credits, "open source" is now targeting public administrations, very convenient cash cows in a sector where competition is fierce. It would be naive for administrations to think that they are gaining independence from software publishers when they are much more dependent on service companies. From one dependency to the other, everyone will choose. But preferring the solution that hinders the development of a genuine European software industry is very unwise. Prioritising service over creation is like choosing to build petrol stations and ignoring the automobile industry. Preferring services also means encouraging offshoring. Software creation activity is based on research and can therefore be more "fixed" to a territory. IT services activity can be carried out anywhere, especially where labour is less expensive. IBM, for example, announced in July 2005 that it was hiring 14,000 people in India at the same time as its European social plans. But it has no similar project on the software publishing side because "moving software design factories is very difficult". Furthermore, computer security has become a considerable issue in our societies. We need well-defined, known, guaranteed products that engage the responsibility of stable economic players. We owe citizens the security of exchanges on the Internet. This requires increasingly sophisticated processes, which are very expensive, and can only be financed by real publishers who then know how to market them for the benefit of the greatest number. The real challenge to be met is that of the widest possible diffusion of IT in our economy to increase its competitiveness and performance. In particular, in small and medium-sized businesses. Under these conditions, promoting software that is free only in name is a bad economic action. No intellectual work is free and all work deserves a salary. Let us not let ourselves be carried away by the ultra-libertarian fashion in areas as strategic as the software industry. This would mean sacrificing the knowledge economy for the sake of a supposed freedom that risks the death of our industries of the future. Behind the illusions, the reality would be much less beautiful.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1648

The economic literature abounds on the advent of the information society and on the increasing share of information technologies in global growth. Europe has chosen to base its economic development on the development of a knowledge society, affirmed in the "Lisbon strategy", largely dependent on these technologies. Noting the European lag in research (1), the European Commission launched the i2010 initiative (2) on 1 June, which aims in particular to catch up on our investment delay, to encourage innovation, to reduce the digital divide and to promote the deployment of digital libraries making European knowledge, cultures and languages accessible to all. Thus, over the last twenty years, millions of jobs throughout the world have been created around the development of software that has transformed the lives of businesses, individuals and States by providing new products and services. Tens of thousands of companies have been created, some of global size on the verge of monopoly, others very local, concentrated on a niche of products or services. The bulk of human activity in developed countries and the development of the least developed countries in the future are thus driven by the use by man of a tool which, for the first time, is not an extension of his hand but of his mind. This event requires that we approach the legal framework for the development of these technologies with a new and appropriate perspective. The vote by the European Parliament today on the patentability of software - in line with the American model despite the dressing up - could call into question the development of European innovative activities in this area, increase our investment gap instead of bridging it, and jeopardize our independence and security. These are not simple concerns - although prudence would dictate that there be public and transparent debates on this point - but economic facts. While a factual study had shown that the emergence of software patents in the United States had led to a reduction of 10 to 15% on average in research expenses in favor of legal fees, hearings conducted by the Federal Trade Commission have highlighted that this transfer could reach 35% for certain innovative SMEs in Silicon Valley. The patent system is in fact totally unsuitable for software, effectively protected by the copyright regime which prevents piracy, while leaving the possibility for other innovators to create competing software made more efficient each time by the contribution of new ideas. It is against free and undistorted competition that some dominant players in the world of software and communication are pushing the idea of patenting software, diverting its use in passing in order to be able to claim exclusivity in the long term of immaterial information processing processes, and thus exclude any competing software from the same market. As Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates himself said in a famous memorandum in 1991: "If people had understood how patents were issued when most of today's ideas were invented, and had taken out patents, the industry would have ground to a halt today. I am sure that some big company will patent something obvious related to interface, object orientation, algorithms, application extensions or some other crucial technique. If that company does not need our patents, then it will have the right for 17 years to take as much of our profits as it wants. The solution is to patent as much as we can." Since no software has a useful life of twenty years as it stands, who would have any use for Multiplan today? Patent applications - as Bill Gates mischievously pointed out - can only concern basic ideas or concepts. Thus, and to take only the example of daily use of the Internet, patents have been granted for the "shopping cart", the online loan application, ordering by mobile phone, Internet telephony, instant messaging or even... for the double click! If the software becomes patentable in Europe, the holder of one of these trivial patents will have the right of life or death over thousands of companies! Another serious perverse effect of the patentability of software is the endangerment of the development of "free software" used by a growing number of administrations, companies and individuals. This software, distributed through innovative and adapted licenses, for example the GPL license invented by Richard Stallman, is nevertheless a model of collective intelligence placed at the service of the common good. The quality, reliability and availability of this software are ensured by the permanent and collective development of developers from all over the world. The successive cases of security flaws, such as those of the "Blackberry" messaging service, intentional or not, discovered in proprietary software also highlight the interest of free software for access to its source code. The fact that 60% of free software developers are European is probably also not unrelated to the offensive led in favor of software patents... We must also question the way in which the case was handled at the European level. The patentability of software is not only a proposal due to a poor assessment by lawyers who are unfamiliar with technological practices and unaware of the challenges of the information society. Why these repeated breaches of the democratic process caused by this directive? The sum of particular interests is not equal to the general interest! However, it is striking to note the collusion of interests between the zealots of software patentability and the potential beneficiaries! The supporters of patenting are also advancing in disguise. Thus, everyone will have noted that Philippe Simonnot, who campaigns in France as "director of the economic observatory of law" for patentability, is above all an employee (3) of the "Centre for a New Europe", a think-tank which, in addition to organizing a "capitalism ball" last February, also advocates the privatization of health systems and relayed, last March, an article defending a reform of European law on monopolies, in favor of... Microsoft! Let us listen to Bill Gates who, on June 29 before the Japan Business Federation warned: "If you depend too much on people belonging to other companies or other countries, you relocate your brains and your capacity for innovation." Large countries like India whose growth is largely based on the development of activities linked to information technologies have refused the system of software patents. Europe cannot afford today to take the risk of further reducing its growth, of losing jobs and independence. The European Parliament must once again reaffirm that software is inherently unpatentable and reject the joint proposal of the Council and the Commission. \* Member of the European Parliament (PES). \*\* Member of the Tarn (UMP). 1) The United States invests 400 euros per capita in research, compared to 350 euros for Japan and 80 euros for Europe. 2) http://europa.eu.int/i2010 3) http://www.cne.org/ about2.htm#4, philippe.simonnot@cne.org BY MICHEL ROCARD \* AND BERNARD CARAYON \*\*

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1649

Dijon (Côte-d'Or) special correspondent The recruitment of a former president of the Parliament, thousands of emails and demonstrations in Strasbourg and Brussels: three years of lobbying on the highly controversial directive on software patents is three years of a struggle for influence "of quite exceptional magnitude", according to Xavier Dutrénit, parliamentary assistant to the socialist MP Gilles Savary. And a real confrontation of styles: rather institutional and traditional for the large companies pro-patents, and more chaotic and individual for the opponents, a motley group of activists from associations, SMEs and isolated programmers. Here, in Dijon, at the Rencontres mondiales du logiciellibre, a sort of summer university for geeks, these computer enthusiasts, the dozens of people present fear the exploitation of software patents by large companies. Bob on his head typing on his laptop, Alexis, a teacher in Rome, demonstrated in front of the Italian presidency. Frédéric, with a ponytail, T-shirt and sandals, has made "several trips to Brussels for demonstrations of 300 or 500 people". Like the anti-patent lobby, they have both used the Internet extensively: dozens of sites dissecting the text, mass emails to European parliamentarians... Behind the apparent mess, the coalition of opponents has also managed to motivate more traditional relays. A former Commission official, Philippe Aigrain, opens his address book to them. The Greens, convinced from the start, play the role of intermediaries with the other parties. The European Confederation of SMEs (which brings together 500,000 firms) supports them, because it fears that large companies will take advantage of patents to block competition. Among the supporters of the anti-patents, we even find the Open Society Institute, an organization founded by the former speculator George Soros, who financed the Federation for a Free Computing Infrastructure (FFII). The latter even paid for a full-time lobbyist in Brussels. "It's the same symptom as during the "no" campaign in France, believes Mark MacGann, who heads Eicta, the lobby of the big pro-patent companies. Atomized elements have managed to organize themselves across Europe thanks to modern technologies." Result? During the first reading in Parliament in September 2003, the MEPs amended the directive and blocked software patents. For the pro-patent lobbies, it was "a good hangover" and the failure of "easy" lobbying, continues MacGann. Change of tone: the big names in industry, until then "absent", increased the pressure in anticipation of the second reading in Parliament. Last month, all MEPs and their assistants received an email entitled Free ice cream!, inviting them to take to the streets to take advantage of the deal... and read the documents explaining why software patents are essential to the economy. The former Speaker of the Parliament, the Irishman Pat Cox, was hired as a consultant by Eicta and hit the stands. Yesterday at noon, after the parliamentary debate, the MEPs lunching by the canal in Strasbourg even got a final reminder: a boat with a banner reading "Vote for the Computer-Implemented Inventions Directive" passed in front of them.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1650

The European deputies meeting in Strasbourg are discussing today, in second reading, the draft "directive on the patentability of computer-implemented inventions". They will vote tomorrow. The issue: to protect computer programs using "patent law". Brussels wants to standardize the regulations between the twenty-five member states of the European Union. In the first reading, the European deputies had restricted the scope of application of patents to inventions implemented by software. The ambiguities of the text, drawn up by experts from the European Commission, were removed thanks to a series of amendments tabled in September 2003. Recently, the European Committee on Legal Affairs rejected, by sixteen votes to ten, the amendments defended by Michel Rocard. According to the former French Prime Minister, "it is the free circulation of ideas that is at stake". Many small European companies, which defend solutions running on the Linux operating system, and publishers such as the French Ilog are fiercely opposed to the patent on software already in force in the United States and Japan. They believe that the patent will strengthen the power of the most powerful companies. "Microsoft in the United States has proudly announced that its objective is to file 3,000 patents this year," explains Georg Greve, president of the FreeSoftwareFoundation Europe. "Millions of Internet sites, like that of Le Figaro, risk becoming illegal." The analysis is contested by the largest European technology companies. They have asked for his support from Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission whom Tony Blair succeeded on July 1. In a letter dated June 30, the executives of Alcatel, Ericsson, Nokia, Philips and Siemens state that "the amendments proposed by the European Parliament negatively affect the European digital technology industry, employment and investment in research and development for the technologies of the future." According to a study by an American university, SMEs own 20% of all patents granted in the last five years in Europe, compared to 80% for large groups and government organizations. Large companies are even threatening to derail the directive if the amendments are finally adopted. For the time being, software is protected only by copyright. The protection lasts seventy years after the death of its author. With the patent, software-based inventions, already protected in Europe, can be defended for only twenty years. "In 2001, out of more than 110,000 patent applications received by the European Patent Office, more than 16,000 concerned such inventions," underlines a recent report from the European Parliament. MC

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1651

BRUSSELS from our European office - Before leaving for vacation, the European Parliament will vote on Wednesday, July 6, on a text with considerable ethical and financial stakes: the patentability of computer-implemented inventions. It is highly divisive, since it poses the following question: is the patent suitable for software, these computer programs now incorporated in most industrial products, from the airbag (air cushion) of cars to the mobile phone? The text on which the Parliament is preparing to fight constitutes a new piece of the decidedly controversial legacy left by Frits Bolkestein, the former liberal commissioner in charge of the internal market, at the origin of the draft directive on the liberalization of services. It was on his proposal that the Prodi Commission had, in 2002, decided to legislate, in order to put an end to the situation of "legal uncertainty" that characterizes the European Union. This insecurity is linked to the policy pursued by the European Patent Office. This intergovernmental body, based in Munich, has already issued more than 30,000 patents concerning computer-implemented inventions, when their program made "a contribution to the state of the art". It has thus protected them for a period of twenty years. However, it is supposed to apply a 1977 Convention - known as the Munich Convention - which excludes computer programs "as such" from its scope. The contradiction between its doctrine and its jurisprudence is due to the fact that it is paid from royalties: "As it is paid from the beast, it has patented everything and anything", laments the French socialist Gilles Savary. REDHIBITORY COSTS The supporters of free software wanted the Commission to confirm the content of the Munich Convention: works of the mind must not be patented, under penalty of prohibiting innovation. "If Gutenberg had patented the printing press, there would be no books today", they say. They believe that a patent on software would make it impossible to write new formulas, since this uses existing modules by combining them in different ways. Now united within the Association for a Free Information Infrastructure (FFII), they also argue that the costs of software patents risk strangling SMEs. Pieter Hintjens, director of Imatix, a small Belgian company of ten people, recounts that when he launched a mobile phone information service, a competitor asked him to pay a license, on the grounds that he had filed a patent on this invention in the United States. "If he had filed it in Europe, I would have had to give up, since I could not afford to pay!", he exclaims. On the side of the supporters of patentability, the Business Software Alliance, which brings together the large American software publishing companies, including Microsoft, demanded the right to patent computer programs "as such". European companies, represented by Unice (Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe, which represents all sectors that use software), but also Eicta, a professional association representing information technology companies such as Nokia, Siemens, Philips and Alcatel, wanted the Commission to make the case law of the European Patent Office mandatory. Mark MacGann, Director General of Eicta, believes that "research and development based on data processing" should not be excluded from patents, as advocates of free software are demanding. "Our companies invest a lot of money in it and want a return on investment," says Mr MacGann, citing Philips, "which improves the definition of television images" and wants to protect its inventions. For Gérald Sédrati-Dinet, French Vice-President of the FFII, "image processing is a simple matter of computer programming." It is these European companies that the Commission has heard, "given their economic weight." But in 2003, the European Parliament narrowed the scope of its proposal, under the influence of former French Prime Minister Michel Rocard. He said that software is only patentable if its development involves "forces of nature", that is, Rocard explains, if it requires "a back-and-forth between the mathematical formula that constitutes the software, and experience", as would be the case for the development of the "ABS anti-lock braking system". The Council, co-legislator, rejected this text. Poland, which joined the free software camp, almost swung the majority, but was called to order for procedural reasons. "We do not have large companies capable of supporting the logic of patents", explains, in the European Parliament, the Czech MEP of the right, Zuzana Roithova, who defends SMEs. Free software advocates are counting on these new MEPs from the East to put their point of view forward in the second reading, where an absolute majority of registered voters will be required.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1652

On 20 June, the European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee adopted, against the advice of the rapporteur Michel Rocard, a series of amendments that open the door wide to the patentability of software. For almost ten years now, the European Patent Office (to legalise its practice), the European Commission and a very small number of multinationals have been trying to obtain this legal blessing for a major auction of knowledge. Already in 2003, during the first reading in the European Parliament, the Legal Affairs Committee adopted a report in favour of patentability. Some of the members of this committee are traditionally sensitive to pressure from lobbies and to the ways of thinking of what has become a patent system (offices, consultants, specialist lawyers). But in 2003, the Parliament was able to elevate the debate in plenary session, to bring it up to the level of scientific, innovation, social and economic issues. It then adopted a text that clearly rejected the patentability of software and software-based information processing methods. Will Parliament succeed in doing so again? To help it make its decision, we must return to the basics, abandon legal jargon for a moment and explain the issues at stake in this choice in terms that are accessible to all. What is software? It is the expression in information of information processing. We have come a long way, the reader will say. A few examples are more telling: it is what we use to write, create, communicate, calculate, model, memorize; it is what structures all media, from text to animated images; it is the basic instrument of all science; the invisible grammar of each person's expression and the framework of exchanges between all; but also the instrument of medical diagnosis and certain therapies. Whoever can control software innovation, channel it or restrict it to their own advantage, holds power with extreme consequences. The narrow vision of a very small number of companies and a patent system working on its own extension is opposed here to the solid and reasoned rejection of scientists and innovators, of the vast majority of companies concerned, of economists who do not stop at simple dogmas on the usefulness of property and of intellectuals who have come to understand where software patentability is leading us. Scientists and software practitioners are almost unanimously opposed to the legalization of patentability. The most prestigious European scientists have sent a petition to the European Parliament which considers the patentability of software and information processing "ethically scandalous, economically unjustified and harmful, harmful to science and innovation and dangerous for democracy". Tens of thousands of engineers and software developers, including a large number of employees of the few multinationals demanding monopolies (Nokia, Ericsson, Siemens, and the companies united with them in the Eicta lobby) are similarly opposed. But if we are to believe the proponents of patentability, only a few financiers and lawyers understand the issues surrounding software. Study after study, even the organizations that were initially most in favor of software patents have had to recognize that European SMEs consider them harmful to their business. European organizations that bring together SMEs, such as CEA-PME, have clearly opposed the position of the European Medef, the Union of Industrial and Employer Confederations of Europe (Unice). The structures that have chosen cooperative innovation through free software know that the future belongs to them if it is not confiscated through patents. But all this still only concerns specialized players. What about economies and societies? The economy is not the realm of consensus. There are two main schools of thought on this subject. The first invokes the incentive that patent monopolies provide for software innovation, without explaining how all the innovation that has given us today's techniques and industrial empires could have done without them. Brilliant representatives of the second addressed an open letter to the European Parliament with similar orientations to those of the scientists' petition. Has anyone finally tried to understand where all this is leading us on a larger scale? Since the 1970s, a group of multinationals, initially American, then led by IBM, Monsanto and Pfizer, then joined by a few European industrialists and newcomers such as Microsoft, AOL-Time Warner or Vivendi-Universal, has convinced States to trigger the systematic extension of patents to new fields and the tightening of the implementation of copyright. Their goal was simple: to realize the dream of every investor by freeing themselves from human labor and realizing value on the free reproduction of information. In the field of software, Europe and India are still resisting this madness. So we have not yet seen anything of what it will bring us if we accept it. The decision of July 6 is a test of the ability of politics to define the limits that a certain capitalism must not cross, and a large part of the economic actors are waiting for confirmation that it is still possible for the economy to develop in ways that are compatible with society and humanity. May the European Parliament confirm the confidence it won with its vote in 2003 by clearly rejecting once again the patentability of software and software-based information processing.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1653

The European Parliament will vote tomorrow on the draft directive on the patentability of computer-implemented inventions. After several months of uncertain debate, there is still hope that the draft will be adopted as is. Most of the amendments proposed by Michel Rocard, leader of the opponents of the draft, were rejected by the legal committee. But there are still enough which, if adopted, would undermine the logic of the text. Ladies and gentlemen, one more effort! In truth, the positions taken on this subject by the former French Prime Minister are very strange. We cannot respond to him here point by point. We have done so in other instances (1). Let us simply regret here that such a prestigious politician has committed his credit to such a dubious controversy. Opponents of the software directive state the following syllogism: ideas are not patentable; but software is similar to ideas; therefore software is not patentable. They will therefore try to draw a line between software and computer-implemented inventions. We will not bore the reader with the Byzantine quibbles that have been used on this occasion. We will simply say that billions of euros are at stake and that thousands of European patents would be sent to the shredder if we followed Mr. Rocard, the nasty American trusts that we are, in principle, trying to target remaining out of reach. Some of them, moreover, support Rocardian positions for strategic reasons. In the so-called "software" community, that is to say, unpatented, there are not only naive engineers who have fallen in love with their programs and are working for the progress of humanity to the point of forgetting to earn a living. Contrary to what has been claimed by opponents of the directive, SMEs and particularly "start-ups" are interested in patenting their computer inventions. In their dialogue with banks, which do not necessarily have the necessary knowledge to assess the technical merits of the file presented to them, the patent allows business leaders to give credit to their project. A micro-enterprise without any patent risks being swallowed up by the big sharks. Far from distorting competition by concentrating all the cards in the same hands, the patent allows a less unequal game. To continue the metaphor of the nuclear strategy, we will say that the patent potentially allows a dissuasion of the weak against the strong. Just as there was equalization by the atom, there could be an equalization by the patent. The "economics of law" - a discipline unfortunately too little known in France - teaches that property emerges each time the benefits of appropriation are greater than the costs of appropriation. Which is enough to explain why an idea cannot be patentable since it is only valid in exchange with others. The same is not true of an invention implemented by computer, however immaterial it may seem. Indeed, such an invention can be put on the market without the secret of its operation (what in the jargon of computer scientists is called the "source code" of the software) being revealed. It is appropriable, and therefore patentable, it is as simple as that. And no additional qualification is needed. That the patents must then be of good quality is obvious. But it would be absurd to limit the scope of computer patentability by prejudices from another age. \* Director of the Economic Observatory of Law (University of Versailles-Saint-Quentin). Latest book published: Economics of Law, Volume 2: People and Things, Les Belles Lettres. (1) This complete response as well as the white paper that the Economic Observatory of Law has published on the patentability of software are available by writing to contact@oed.uvsq.fr BY PHILIPPE SIMONNOT \*

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1654

Bill C-60, which Ottawa introduced on June 21, and which amends the Copyright Act for the digital age, goes against the very foundations of the Internet. This is what several groups that defend free computing believe, gathered yesterday as part of the "Copyright 2005, Copyright and You" day. For the father of free computing, American Richard Stallman of the Free Software Foundation, whose conference was at the heart of the event, the Canadian legislation is clearly a step further towards censorship, by imitating the "unjust laws" of the United States. "Copyright laws were once intended to restrict the role of publishers on behalf of authors, but they have been hijacked and now restrict the general public for the benefit of publishers on behalf of authors," he explained in an interview with Le Devoir, a few minutes before delivering his speech entitled Copyright and the Community in the Age of Computer Networks. "Prohibiting the sharing of information is an attack on the very foundation of society: the spirit of goodwill, social solidarity." Petition against C-60 However, shouldn't the Canadian bill allow artists to decide whether or not to provide online access to their work? Nonsense, replies Russell McOrmond of the consulting firm Flora, which launched a petition against the bill that 2,000 Canadians have already signed. For groups like Creative Commons Canada, Savoir-faire Linux and Communautique, who all had a booth yesterday, the proposed reforms favor intermediaries between artists and the public to the detriment of the latter. They are based on an economic model that does not suit the world of the Web. After all, the inventors of the World Wide Web wanted to go against the dominant system. "They developed laws that impose the same structures on the Internet as those of the usual industry," laments Mr. McOrmond, who participated in the round table following the conference. For him, this law means that, in order to access culture, you will have to buy certain preferred brands. "The model is not adapted," adds Daniel Pascot, professor in the department at Laval University and also participating in the debate. "It is made for rival goods, that is to say goods that are not shared, and it is based on the idea of scarcity. However, software creators create an artificial scarcity [to enter the market game]." The spirit behind these remarks lies in this old and universal idea according to which we do not invent anything, we always create from something. And this something created belongs to everyone, to the community, the basis of all society. More informative than militant, this event organized by FACIL (for the collective appropriation of free computing), in collaboration with the LabCMO research group at UQAM and the social enterprise Koumbit, aimed to broaden the debate surrounding Bill C-60. According to Mr. Stallman, Canadian legislation no longer serves the public interest. Ottawa should instead legalize the non-commercial exchange of certified copies (of documents, music files, etc.). "Software is very much like a recipe," he compares. "However, the user of a recipe has freedoms: to prepare the recipe he wants, to study it, to modify it, to transmit it to others." An image that could serve as a lesson for future legislation...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1655

NANTES from our special correspondent - You have to arrive early at Scopitone to make the most of what this Nantes festival (4 years old) has to offer. Reducing it to a simple succession of concerts, as exciting as they may be, would be an insult. Organized until July 2 by the team of the Olympic, a discovery venue essential to the urban area, Scopitone has been combining sound and images since 2002, considered essential elements of today's entertainment, without ever reducing one to an illustration of the other. The idea germinated, explains Eric Boistard, director of the Olympic, with the emergence of electronic music, hungry for visuals to compensate for the solitude of the DJ. "The era is one of maturity. The technique, dominant in the early years, has given way to the artistic message. » We should be happy about it and above all enjoy it, during the day, at the Nantes shipyards, with the digital art exhibitions, at night, in all the spaces of the Trocardière, in Rezé, in the large hall, the marquee or the abandoned ice rink, converted into a screening room. In terms of digital art, the exhibition at the shipyards offers a series of unusual experiences that Gaspard, 5 years old, sums up with great enthusiasm to his delighted father: "In every compartment, there's something great!" Gaspard is not wrong. On the upper floor of the large building full of history, Phase or Bloc6tm offer a fun way to consider music. In particular through a video game (Bloc6tm), in which two users each manipulate their team of eight robots representing eight sounds. They must be connected to activate them, and brought closer together to speed up the tempo. Phase, created in collaboration with Ircam, allows a player to move a ball through a 3D landscape crossed by a furrow and dotted with sound grass clumps, percussion trees, etc. A MAGIC TRICK And then there is Goo, this orchestra of computers manipulated live by ten artists on site and ten others on the other side of the world, all connected by Internet to a communal sound bank. "A permanent sound morphing," explains Jean-Philippe Roux, one of the musicians present, "in which everyone shares responsibility for the form." Exactly like free software that feeds on contributions from the community. The result is a moving hubbub that frightens, tires, surprises, and seduces. It is also a question of trial and error, of learning (the Olympic works in collaboration with elementary schools on multimedia creation), of dialogue between artists and spectators, especially during the day. At night, the mystery of the show takes over. At 7pm, under the big top, the Austrian Klaus Obermaier presented Apparition, his latest creation. Two dancers, a screen and different projections on their bodies and on the screen. Lines that intersect, merge and seem to cut the space into slices. A device of great beauty, a magic trick. In the large hall, the stage, surrounded by eight screens, gives the impression of being at the heart of the concert, alongside the Parisian Sébastien Schuller, whose first show we were eagerly awaiting. The work is there, the delicacy of the romantic songs and instrumentals too, but the voice is still too timid. Experience should help. Meanwhile, at the ice rink, a few visual haikus paraded. Suspended moments, last touches of serenity before the party and the rhythms of Miss Kittin, Mylo or Vitalic sweep everything away in their whirlwind.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1656

Tarifa (Spain) special correspondent It is a charming town at the southern tip of Spain, surrounded by hills bristling with wind turbines. One of the best spots for kite-surfing: kilometers of sandy beaches, turquoise sea, and fresh wind that attracts its battalions of surfers from Northern Europe every year. "You are in Tarifa, the southernmost city in Europe," proclaim the tourist signs. Opposite, the Moroccan coast. This is where the distance between Europe and Africa is the shortest. Around thirty kilometers that thousands of illegal migrants try to cross every year at the risk of their lives. On June 14, 14 of them, including six children, drowned in this perilous crossing. A border under high tension, invested for two years by Fadaiat. For ten days, this temporary laboratory for "freedom of movement" and "freedom of knowledge" was deployed within the walls of the medieval castle. Analog and digital activists, artists, coders, architects, videographers, trade unionists, members of social organizations from Europe met during workshops, screenings, network performances around the issues of mobility, migration and precariousness. Sharing. "In common Arabic, Fadaiat refers to satellite dishes or spaceships, but its more academic meaning means "across spaces", a beautiful metaphor to talk about meeting, connection between the two borders. The idea is to transform this castle, symbol of "fortress Europe", into a space for communication, dialogue, reflection", explains Florian Schneider, one of the founders of the No border network and initiator of the "No one is illegal" campaign, in 1997 at Documenta X in Kassel. As part of Fadaiat, the activist launched a hybrid academy, the final stage of the European DASH project "networking against exclusion" (1). Borderline Academy is trying to lay the foundations for new forms of knowledge sharing and organization: "After these years of networking, it may be time to strengthen ties," he believes. Spontaneous. A seminar condensed over two days last year, Fadaiat has mutated into a more spontaneous event, with thematic workshops (tactical mapping, education, free software, etc.) where everyone can plug in. In the church transformed into a smoky conference room, the debriefing of Euromayday, a global day of action against disposable work, is in full swing between "old school" trade unionists and young people in precarious situations. At the beginning of the week, it was the border regime in Europe that was at the heart of the debates in front of a studious assembly typing their notes on their laptops. The discussions are filmed and archived online. Spanish videographers raise awareness among the local population about what is happening in the castle by broadcasting three hours of programs daily on the local television channel. Conversely, Dutch performers from International Festival make offbeat TV reports on life in Tarifa through the prism of the event. At nightfall, in the courtyard of the castle, Fadaiat connects to the rest of the world, thanks to free streaming tools (2). VJs decorate the walls, images from Tangier are mixed live with a music stream from Barcelona. From the Netherlands and Sicily, media tactician Jo van der Spek and free software programmer Jaromil present the Streamtime project, a network developed with Iraqis to help local media connect and make themselves heard across borders. That evening, the stream from Iraq was unfortunately cancelled, the person in charge had to go and pick up a cousin stuck at the border. Another initiative was that of Artists without Walls, Israeli and Palestinian artists who had opened a virtual window in the “separation wall,” projecting on each side of the wall what was happening opposite, allowing people to communicate across the barrier. Virtual bridge. In this open-air, self-organized laboratory, it is sometimes difficult to tell the difference between a lost surfer and a dreadlocked coder. “We are thinking about an architecture where physical, social space and digital networks interact to create a new territory,” explains Osfa, from the Hackitectura collective, one of the main organizers of the event. Art, society and politics are very difficult to separate today, the role of art is to construct situations that produce new consciousnesses, new imaginaries.” Osfa, who is one of the founders of Indymedia Chiapas, also participates in Indymedia Estrecho. Unlike other "Indymedia", alternative media networks, this one is not restricted to one city but extends to the entire area of the Strait of Gibraltar. Last year, a virtual bridge was thrown to the other side, with a Wi-Fi connection between Tarifa and Tangier that allowed people to follow the festivities. Unfortunately, this year, the organizers did not obtain the necessary authorization or visas for the North African artists. So it was a boat that took charge of making the connection. On the sailboat, a crew of hacktivists (Ewen Chardronnet, Nathalie Magnan, Andy Bichlbaum of the Yes Men, Nicola Triscott of Arts Catalyst, Marko Peljhan of Makrolab) set themselves the goal of joining the two sides to physically explore the migration routes between Morocco and Spain. From Gibraltar (United Kingdom) to the enclave of Ceuta (Spain), from Tarifa to Tangier, they crossed all the borders, submitted to the control process, checking papers, searching the boat. They took the opportunity to document their journey (GPS tracking, radio communication) and mark the dangers. "By being behind our screens, we end up having an immaterial vision of the world, we forget the physical reality, explains Nathalie Magnan. The idea of Sailing for Geeks is to manage to give a representation of what a border really is." "The crossing is very dangerous, with wind, strong currents, heavy traffic, specifies Ewen Chardronnet, it also allows us to have an idea of what it is like to cross this zone in a patera, the makeshift boats of illegal migrants." Counter-surveillance. The sailboat serves as a test boat for the counter-surveillance technologies deployed on land by the rest of the Makrolab team. In Tarifa, radio amateur Aljosa Abrahamsberg has set up an antenna on the castle tower to intercept maritime communications between cargo ships and Tarifa Trafic, to find out how dangerous the cargoes are and where they are going. A radar can track traffic in the strait. In Tangier, the sailors are with two representatives of Moroccan associations, Hicham Limrami and Youssef Hbib, young electrical technicians from Larache, members of the Women's Forum and Pateras por la vida, an association that educates the poorest children, in order to give them "a boat to succeed here rather than seeking happiness beyond the sea." Both took part in the three-day workshop hosted by Indymedia Estrecho, where they learned how to manage a site in order to soon launch the first Moroccan Indymedia. "Indymedia allows us to have support, to connect our local associations to the rest of the world. Here, in Morocco, there is no freedom of speech." Back to Tarifa, where the Fortresses of Europe project is presented, a transversal line that should connect three European medialabs (the K@2 center in Karosta in Latvia, Kuda.org in Novi Sad in Serbia and Tarifa where a permanent observatory of the strait is planned). All have the particularity of having diverted old fortifications into a space of exchange and free circulation of knowledge. Streamed on the wall, live from Karosta, sculptors are melting metal in a glowing brazier. At the same time on the beach of Tarifa, they celebrate Saint John, gigantic bonfires are burning along the beach. It is also at this time of year, around the summer solstice, that migrants are most numerous to try their luck. (1) In charge of providing an infrastructure to activists (http://dash.org). (2) Stream archives: http://fadaiat.net/?q=en/streams

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1657

Even if the Scopitone, ancestor of the video clip, was only saved from oblivion thanks to a few super-eight fetishists, its spirit can be found today in the many attempts to marry image and sound. For the fourth time, Nantes is hosting this weekend the festival of the same name entirely dedicated to the intersections between music, dance, cinema, video and digital art. With a two-part program: Scopitone Jour, at the Ateliers et Chantiers de Nantes, where the public will be able to learn about new technologies (editing, publishing on the Internet, free software, etc.), participate in the debate on peer-to-peer, and discover a dozen performance installations with the sonographic creations of Servovalve, the 3D musical composition game of Bloc 6TM or the Grand Ochestre d'ordinateurs (GOO) of the Nantais of Apo33, a collective musical production in network. At night, Scopitone takes over the Olympic and the Trocadière, which is decked out with screens, with this year two screening areas reserved for the visual arts (creations by Pleix, the VJ collective Addictive TV, etc.), film concerts (Truffaz sets Ozu's Tokyo Kids to music and Eisenstein's NLF3 Que Viva Mexico) and audiovisual shows: the essential VJ/DJ Hexstatic, the playful electro of Gangpol on the kawaii visuals of Mit, or Labland, "visual music" born from the collaboration of Berlin VJs Pfadfinderei and the electro hip-hop duo Modeselektor. Equally enticing, the London white funk quintet Hot Chip, the relentless techno of Vitalic, The Hacker and Miss Kittin, the refined minimal house of Chloé and Superpitcher, or the poisonous New York rock of Blonde Redhead. In this high-class musical program, we will not forget the young duo Principles of Geometry, one of the main hopes of French electronica, and the concert of the strange Moodyman.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1658

Protecting computer data is something that SMEs can never stress enough, say companies specializing in this field. For their part, SMEs do everything they can to keep the costs of their computer equipment—what some call their information assets—as low as possible. Where is the happy medium? According to Michèle Saint-Jean, vice-president of GTI Canada, a firm specializing in risk management, computer hardware security, like everything else, must answer a single question: "What does your company need to start over after a disaster?" To answer this question, consider where your company stands in relation to the following issues, four major challenges if your SME's main source of revenue is limited to a handful of computer files. 1. Confidentiality The ISO standard on information protection (17799.2000) teaches managers of intangible data how to be shielded against the blows of fate. Given the scandals of recent years, it is important to be able to track files that are more or less secret, to prove their confidentiality or, at the very least, their protection. In other words, you have to keep proof of the protection of your data, to face the law, in the event of information disclosure. Companies in the inter-company, or B2B (business-to-business) sector, are particularly at risk in this regard, notes Ms. Saint-Jean. "Their business model is based on intangibles," she says. "If they cannot prove in court, by presenting concrete documents, that they ensured the confidentiality of their computer files, they will be found wanting and could be prosecuted." The news of the past few years illustrates this situation well. The example closest to us is probably that of the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ). A few years ago, the SAAQ was infiltrated by moles who used its data to obtain the addresses of people they were looking for. 2. Integrity The integrity of documents must also be ensured. This means that data falsification must be impossible. If it does occur, it must be detected and, ideally, corrected. "This leads us to discuss password management, which is too often neglected by companies," believes the spokesperson for GTI Canada. A company that wants to ensure that its password system is functional must establish a policy regarding these keywords. Their composition (length, type of characters) must vary, as must their useful life. Studies suggest changing all passwords every month if they are to be used seriously. According to Michèle Saint-Jean, the use of a firewall is also questioned. "Most of the time, break-ins into computer systems occur from the inside," she assures. 3. Accessibility Paradoxically, despite all the precautions aimed at limiting access to a company's computer data, accessibility must not be compromised. The company must ensure that, in 10 years, the files saved today will still be compatible with commonly used software. This is a problem that will probably be experienced by many users of software whose saved files are of the "proprietary" type (proprietary format). This includes the famous .doc and .xls of the Microsoft Office suite, incompatible with other software suites. In this specific case, the free software community is fiercely promoting the same universal file format. Obviously, there are more pragmatic solutions than waiting for the outcome of this saga. Relying on security backups in RTF (Rich-Text Format) format, for word processing, is just one example. 4. Security Natural disasters, such as fire or flood, must also be taken into account. So, a backup copy is essential, but keeping this copy in the same place as the original data does not solve the problem. Just like taking home the laptop loaned by the office, when it contains data deemed sensitive for a company, is not exactly recommended by IT security experts. In both cases, it is better to rely on a network that includes a server, where the company files are stored, and also have a backup copy on a remote server. This is a solution that could save your company a lot of hassle. alain.mckenna@lapresse.ca

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1659

Alain Le Diberder, former director of new programs at Canal +, whose websites he launched, chairs CLVE, a software development company for new media. He is the author of several books on television and video games, including Who's Afraid of Video Games? (La Découverte, Paris, 1993), and has just published Révolution numérique et industries culturelles, with Philippe Chantepie (La Découverte). Console manufacturers are displaying immense multimedia ambitions. Do you think they have the means to achieve them? This is anything but a new discourse! For at least ten years, video game manufacturers have been saying that the console is the future center of the home. Thanks to it, we will be able to play games, but also watch films, listen to music, connect to the Internet... Some have actually taken action: Philips and especially Sega and its Dreamcast, designed with Internet access. It didn't work, because broadband was not yet sufficiently developed. The question now is to examine the relevance of this industry, which plans the obsolescence of its products every five years. Because I don't believe that consumers will agree to change their equipment indefinitely. It's possible, if need be, when it's just video games. But not if it also concerns films and music... In reality, I believe that people will buy these consoles to play and nothing else. How can we explain the manufacturers' confidence? Quite simply because the console has the advantage of already being installed under the television, in the living room. That said, we must also understand that they are not the only ones in this niche. I'm thinking of smartphones, which are simpler and less expensive and are developing at full speed. Or the Freebox, which has just announced that, thanks to free software, you can read all the content of your PC on your television. There are also products like the iPod, or even Archos portable screens that are establishing themselves in this market. This armada of technical solutions tends to show that there is indeed a movement in the direction of the convergence of industries. Do you believe in a merger of the video game, film and music industries, with large groups that will produce CDs, films or games indifferently? This movement has already taken place, ten years ago. All the American majors as well as groups like Canal Plus, where I worked at the time, created their own interactive department. This was a failure, because video games remain a specific business and the operation of the majors remains very compartmentalized. Sony, for example, is a major player in music and film and yet it does not exploit its productions exclusively for its video game branch. The only counter-example is George Lucas who controlled everything from A to Z for his films, games and Star Wars derivative products. But Lucas is a somewhat unusual guy. Will the creativity of the video game sector be able to meet the increasingly important demand of consumers? As with Hollywood blockbusters, video games suffer from a certain sterility, with concepts and formulas that are too recurrent. This is proof that what works best in video games is marketing. On the other hand, we must also consider that the greatest successes, such as GTA or the Sims in particular, are not adaptations of films or major overpriced licenses. They are intelligent titles, not very expensive in terms of development, but which present an innovative concept. This is why I always believe, whatever the trends in the sector, in the emergence of exciting initiatives.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1660

Europe does not yet recognise the possibility of protecting software inventions with patents. But its point of view could change. Tomorrow, the twenty-five members of the European Commission's Legal Affairs Committee will examine the 256 amendments tabled by MEPs. The draft directive will then be submitted to the European Parliament for a vote on 6 July. This debate divides professionals. On the one hand, small companies, often from the world of Linux free software, are fiercely opposed to the patent, which they believe risks giving pride of place to large American publishers. They are supported by French companies such as Ilog. The rapporteur of the directive, Michel Rocard, chairman of the European Parliament's Culture Committee, was sensitive to their arguments. He tabled forty amendments. "The patent, if adopted, will strengthen monopolies. This is not a solution because software is already protected by copyright in Europe. If the patent were adopted for software, the concepts could be protected. However, an algorithm is like a mathematical formula that cannot be protected by a patent," explains Georg Greve, president of the FreeSoftwareFoundation in Europe. Faced with its "antis", Eicta, which brings together large European companies (Alcatel, Thales, Nokia, Philips, etc.) and employers' federations in the telecoms and electronics sectors, is mobilizing. Mark MacGann, its general director, assures that he is "perplexed by Michel Rocard's position". He accuses the former prime minister of "false debate" and of having a vision that dates back "to the 1950s". According to Eicta, it is "not a question of patenting pure software", but of protecting "inventions implemented by computer". Several tens of thousands of patents have already been taken out in Europe on software in anticipation of the directive. In order to clarify the situation, European deputies clearly want to exclude pure software from the scope of the patent. If Parliament were to adopt this text by a two-thirds majority, Eicta threatens to request "the abandonment of the directive". Because it believes that innovation would then be threatened in Europe.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1661

The Xiti analysis firm published, on Monday, June 13, the results of a survey on the growing adoption of the Mozilla Firefox web browser by European Internet users. The survey covered approximately 23 million connections to sites hosted on the Old Continent. It indicates that Firefox represents 14.08% of Internet traffic. Since its launch in the fall of 2004, the web browser has been steadily eating into the quasi-monopoly held by Microsoft with Internet Explorer (IE), which is nevertheless integrated as standard into the Windows operating system. France is slightly above the European average, with 14.42% of traffic attributed to Firefox. Roughly the same level as the United Kingdom (13.03%) or Austria (14.79%); ahead of Lithuania (7%), Italy (10.29%) or Ireland (10.56%); behind Hungary (22.06%), Germany (24.36%) and Finland, whose traffic attributed to Firefox peaks at over 30%. According to Xiti, these rates are increasing in all the countries studied, with the exception of Luxembourg and the Principality of Monaco. Conducted at the end of the week, the study presented does not take into account Internet traffic generated by employees of companies that have often remained loyal to IE. Strictly speaking, the figures put forward do not provide any indication of how the market is now divided between the two browsers. However, they do provide a snapshot of Firefox's growing popularity among individuals. NON-PROFIT STRUCTURE Like the Linux operating system, Firefox belongs to the category of free software - free, open and collaboratively developed - which represents a small but worrying threat to Microsoft. Firefox is therefore not developed and distributed by a commercial company. It comes from a non-profit organization, the Mozilla Foundation, created in the summer of 2003 by a group of former Netscape engineers. Fired after AOL-Time Warner (owner of Netscape) won its lawsuit against Microsoft and received $750 million, these programmers received a $2 million grant from their former employer to continue their development work within a foundation. The American software giant - which is seeing one of its products lose market share for the first time - is preparing its response. The next version of its browser, expected this summer, will integrate one of the features that made its competitor successful: tabbed browsing, which allows you to open several web pages in the same frame. In addition to ergonomics issues - and although flaws have been discovered in Firefox's source code - security is one of the main reasons for abandoning IE in favor of its new competitor. Microsoft has thus committed to making the next version of IE more secure than previous ones.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1662

Net-art is dead, long live rock'n'roll? The online exhibition "Why rock?" draws up a playlist of Net-artists who have started singing or venturing onto the stage. For what obscure reason did they come out of their mute screens to expose themselves to the spotlight? Like the Pavarotti of code, the Slovenian Igor Stromajer, who sang an HTML text in the lair of the Ljubljana opera, or the Russian Alexei Shulgin, founder of the first "cyberpunkrockband", who makes his antediluvian computer crackle great pop hits, from California Dreaming to Rape Me, in a nasal synthesized voice. The rock attitude is also no stranger to the crazy performances of the Pavu collective with the group's hyberbard, Clément Thomas, who transposes insulting messages broadcast on mailing lists into song (Flame Song). "Is it just to make a childhood dream come true? Is it a desire to make the body present on the screen? Is it because we believe that the rock stars of the 21st century will come from the Internet?" or, more prosaically, "is it a need to become more pop(ular)?", ask the two curators of the exhibition. Intrigued by these postures, Annie Abrahams, Net-artist, and Clément Charmet, from the group Thirtytwobit (versed in computer torture), tried to list the Net stars with an affinity for rock in this web-exhibition hosted by Turbulence and Panoplie: Cory Arcangel, chipmusic tinkerer, member of the Beige collective and 8-bit Construction Set, Richard Stallman, guru of free software whose anthem is said to be his Free-Software Song, the angry collective vnatrc, which campaigns for free music, but also Alan Sondheim and Frédéric Madre, who treat the reader to a text for the exhibition, Talan Memmott, host of the hypertext literature review Beehive, who says he rubbed shoulders with punks in his youth... "I think that the rock attitude is the healthy expression of a body in need," says Annie Abrahams. "Net artists manipulate the archetypal figure of the rock star all the better because they operate in a world where the audience is easily accessible, the staging is omnipresent and its diffusion is immediate," believes Clément Charmet. "Not to mention that in a world as impersonal and anonymous as the Web, the counterpoint of adopting the megalomaniac narcissism of the rocker, even if it is to ridicule it, can be extremely satisfying." And he concludes: "Isn't the computer the instrument that gives all its meaning to the "do it yourself" aesthetic launched by the punks?"

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1663

Brussels - Relations seem to be calming down between Microsoft, which has made a number of concessions, and the European Commission, which until a few days ago was determined to impose new fines on the American giant. Monday, the first act of reconciliation. Within a few hours of each other, the Commission and Microsoft announced that the American had come closer to Brussels' demands. Fourteen months earlier, the Commission had condemned the group for abuse of a dominant position, imposing a record fine of 497 million euros (760 million Canadian dollars). Demand Brussels has above all demanded that the software leader market a version of its flagship Windows operating system without the audio and video software player Media Player and that it disclose information allowing the interoperability of Windows with competing products. Tired of the American's prevarications, European Competition Commissioner Neelie Kroes decreed at the end of May that she would stop all discussions on 1 June. If Microsoft's latest proposals to implement the "corrective measures" are still insufficient, it will exercise its right to impose daily penalty payments on the group calculated on its turnover and which could be as high as 5 million euros (7.5 million Canadian dollars). Concessions To everyone's surprise, Microsoft announced "significant concessions" on Monday on the interoperability front, agreeing in particular to disclose certain information free of any royalties and to distribute interoperable products worldwide and not just in Europe. The only stumbling block: the group still refuses to allow free software publishers who have access to this information to circulate it among the entire free software community. Aware of this inadequacy, the Commission nevertheless suggests that it will not carry out its threat of a fine, at least not immediately. It prefers to wait for the European courts, to which Microsoft has filed an appeal, to deliver its ruling, scheduled for mid-2006. Second act of reconciliation: on Wednesday, Microsoft announced that it would distribute in Europe, within a week, versions of Windows purged of Media Player and taking into account the "latest clarifications from the Commission". A project that Brussels says it "welcomes favourably". However, "the game is not over", warns Thomas Vinje, lawyer for major industrialists such as IBM, Nokia and Red Hat, who support the Commission in its fight. Yesterday, the Commission also stressed that "the verification of conformity (to corrective measures) is an ongoing process and we reserve the right to review certain aspects of this version if it turns out, during the market test, that it presents certain functional problems". On the other hand, Brussels refuses to comment on the absence of a price difference between the full version and the truncated version of Windows, a practice which in itself kills the effectiveness of the corrective measure, because who would buy a less complete product for the same price? It is difficult for the Commission to criticize such a maneuver when, in its 2004 decision, it failed to mention a possible price difference... However, believes Mr. Vinje, "the Commission still has the possibility of acting on this, perhaps not in the context of the March 2004 decision, but it can open another procedure". "It is the determination of the Commission which forced Microsoft to back down on a certain number of points", he applauds, considering that the Commission acted "wisely" in choosing to "concentrate its energy on winning before the Court, before ensuring the application of the corrective measures". It will then be time to reopen the "fundamental" battle on the front of free software publishers, "the only potential competitors" according to him of the Redmond giant.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1664

Microsoft took an important step yesterday in resolving its long-running dispute with the European Commission over how to improve the dialogue between its flagship Windows program and competitors' products. Its latest proposals on the matter have been welcomed by the EU executive, with the threat of a maximum fine of $5 million per day receding. The Commission said it was satisfied with most of the software giant's new proposals to comply with its demands. "I am pleased that Microsoft has agreed to some principles that should underpin the implementation of the Commission's decision," said Neelie Kroes, the European Commissioner for Competition. "To resolve some complex issues in recent weeks, we have made some important concessions," said Steve Ballmer, Microsoft's CEO. "We take our responsibilities in Europe very seriously and will continue to meet our obligations in every way we can." » The software empire has however acknowledged that it has not reached an agreement with the Commission on the possibility for makers of "open source" software to benefit from sensitive information on Microsoft technology. Microsoft has confirmed that the European Commission will "test" the new measures proposed by the American software publisher with the computer industry. Regarding the rights to be paid on some of the information that it is now obliged to disclose, Microsoft has agreed that the level of these "will be set in such a way that it allows other producers to use it" without creating commercial difficulties.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1665

Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer announced yesterday that he had made concessions to meet the European Commission's transparency requirements. Brussels, for its part, assured that Microsoft had come closer to what it wanted. The world's number one software company notably agreed that a category of information it would be obliged to disclose would be royalty-free. "To resolve some complex issues in recent weeks, we have made some significant concessions," Ballmer said. "We take our responsibilities in Europe very seriously and we will continue to meet all of our obligations in every way possible." The software empire, however, acknowledged that it had not reached an agreement with the Commission on the fact that manufacturers of "open source" software, i.e. its main competitors, could benefit from sensitive information on Microsoft technology. Microsoft confirmed that the European Commission would "test" the new measures proposed by the American software publisher with the IT industry. Regarding the royalties to be paid on some of the information it is now forced to disclose, Microsoft has agreed that the level of these "should be set in such a way that it allows other producers to use them" without creating commercial difficulties. Brussels condemned the software empire in March 2004 for abuse of a dominant position. Brussels had mainly demanded that the group market a version of its flagship Windows operating system without the audio and video software player Media Player.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1666

There is bad blood between French photographers and Adobe, the American giant of digital image software (Photoshop, Illustrator, Acrobat, etc.). The cause: in the latest version of its products, Adobe has "wired" a link to a photo library containing the main "royalty-free" image banks, i.e. on which photographers have waived all copyright: Getty Images, Comstock, DigitalVision and others. "Creative people no longer need to leave our software to consult image banks. They can do it directly from the application; everything is integrated and therefore simpler," they rejoice at Adobe. At the Union of Creative Photographers (UPC), one of the main professional associations (1,500 members), people are choking. "Royalty-free photos have already harmed photographers. "With the integration that Adobe is implementing, the phenomenon can only grow," worries Jorge Alvarez, Secretary General of the UPC. Adobe software, and especially its star product, Photoshop, are carving out a major share of the market. In fact, many photographers use them. Now these tools are going to automatically redirect to this world without copyright that professionals abhor. As a result, the UPC is demanding that the link to the Adobe photo library be removed from the software. Otherwise? "We will consider a boycott of the products," threatens Alvarez, who points out that the open source sector (free software) offers a credible (and free) alternative to Photoshop with the Gimp program. "Adobe is very concerned about people paying for the licenses for its software (around 1,000 euros for Photoshop, editor's note) but on the other hand, this company seems to have little regard for intellectual property among photographers," denounces the secretary general of the UPC. At Adobe, people are upset. "The world of professional photographers is very important to us," assures Jean-Luc Petorin, European head of marketing for creative professionals. But he considers the concerns unjustified: "Using royalty-free image banks is a work reflex among creatives. We are only giving them easier access to this daily tool." However, he admits that Adobe is doing more than improving its tools: the company will, as an intermediary, take a commission on each sale of royalty-free photos made via its software platforms. Adobe therefore has a financial interest in the development of this type of business. Perhaps anticipating this type of trial, Adobe has decided to put online in each country a directory of photographers who are members of professional associations, this for software users who are not satisfied with "royalty free". But does this really compensate for that? Funny detail: Adobe has been one of the sponsors of the UPC since last year, contributing a few thousand euros to its funding! This partnership has apparently not encouraged dialogue: during the demonstration days organized last week by Adobe at the Cité des sciences in Paris, members of the UPC were reduced to distributing leaflets in lecture halls to alert professionals to the concerns of photographers.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1667

Programmers who are dissatisfied with Google's limitations regularly create new websites that draw on the search giant's databases to offer a service that the search giant had not thought of. Some ideas are brilliant, others are completely useless, like a Google results page! Google may have gone public and is making money like water, but that doesn't stop it from remaining true to its roots, which are in the free software community - that programmer's paradise, where everyone can freely tweak each other's software. That's why it is the only search engine to freely offer its APIs (application program interfaces) to the public, which is like the grocery basket you have in your kitchen. To continue with the culinary metaphor, let's say that Google allows the public to make sunny-side-up eggs with the ingredients of its omelette. So a programmer can decide to improve Google himself by creating software that draws its power from the search giant's eight billion pages. Even the use of the Google trademark does not seem to pose a problem to the interested party, since everyone appropriates it without seeing a shadow of a lawyer. A few Google offshoots In recent years, Google offshoots have multiplied. Here are a few. The most interesting idea is that of Housing Maps (www.paulrademacher.com/housing ), a site that combines data from Google Maps road maps with that of the popular free classifieds service Craigslist (which also offers its APIs to the public), to display housing for sale or rent on the maps of about twenty North American cities. This allows you to immediately locate Craigslist ads on the map of Montreal (montreal.craigslist.org). On the map, we see immediately that Craigslist Montreal is especially popular among English speakers (which is a shame, because it is very useful); the housing is mainly in the West Island. Geobloggers (geobloggers.com) has combined Google Maps with the popular personal photo album site Flickr (www.flickr.com ) to show every place in a given city that people have taken a photo of. That's a lot, a lot of photos. Perfect for showing off your graffiti photos in a techno way, and renaming them "pictorial anthropology of urban wastelands" without anyone batting an eyelid. Google Talk (douweosinga.com/projects/googletalk) combats writer's block (and encourages plagiarism) by allowing users to dig into Google's pages for the rest of an incomplete sentence. If you type "attache ta tuque avec," it adds "de la broche." But it gets weirder the more you type (it's designed for English, so avoid accents). Sensitive or logical minds need not apply. Google Battle (douweosinga.com/projects/googlebattle) compares the rate at which two terms appear on the web, allowing you to determine who is more popular, Rembrandt or Van Gogh (it's Rembrandt, by five to three with a brushstroke in the last period). Google Poetry (douweosinga.com/projects/visualpoetry) draws on Google's image search engine to translate the sentence you propose into images corresponding to the keywords, which gives completely unexpected results. If you write "I went to Montreal this summer," the word "Montreal" gives a view of the city center, while the word "summer" offers a sunset on the Jacques-Cartier bridge. The word "am," meanwhile, returns a fat naked woman in the fetal position, which induces in you a metaphysical state worthy of the most profound Albanian films.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1668

The Internet, however ambivalent it may be (a control and marketing apparatus on the one hand, a place of emancipation and collective creation on the other), has profoundly changed social and artistic practices. LOGS, a new collection launched by èÆe editions, offers, with this first volume devoted to "cooperation", elements of reflection on networked spaces. The pleasantly eclectic work invites authors from diverse backgrounds (science fiction, philosophy, art, sociology, economics, computer science, etc.) including Olivier Blondeau, Patrick Bernier, Bureau d'études, Jean-Paul Fourmentraux, Bernard Guelton, Bernard Stiegler, etc. Conceived as a critical toolbox by its authors (Lib\_ laboratory, led by Silvia Argüello and Jérôme Joy), LOGS articulates in an original way texts or extracts of all kinds, essays, fictions, etc. already published or unpublished which nourish the hypotheses put forward by Lib\_. Among which, the crucial one of individual emancipation. "What must be noted are the conditions that mean that, in these networked devices, the collective does not immerse the individual, does not consume him, does not standardize him, quite the contrary", suggests the composer Jérôme Joy (1), echoing the philosopher Bernard Stiegler for whom the cultural industry destroys the individual. From free software to online performances, from flash mobs to networked democracy, from intellectual property to the culture of giving, cooperation, through forums, discussion lists, chats, blogs, is the common thread of these networked spaces that erase the usual distinction between producer and consumer. Exemplary in this respect, the SF novel by the American Jean-Michel Smith punctuating LOGS: the author published the text online under a free license as it was written, the French translation being provided by a team of volunteers. "These collective spaces of individual emancipation are spaces of invention and creation (and not of commercial and industrial uses and behaviors), maintains Jérôme Joy, whether they are artistic (online projects), technical (open source workshops and sharing of technical resources) or social (mailing lists). Generalized consumption would be salutarily responded to by deliberate circulation, and to social futility, by the voluntary construction of networks." (1) Who is participating today in the debate "From the electronic creation laboratory to the sharing of knowledge" (www.te05.org/article.php3?id\_article=73) on the occasion of the "Electronic Territories" in Aix-en-Provence.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1669

The arm wrestling match between Microsoft and the European Commission continues. As demanded by Neelie Kroes, the European Commissioner for Competition, the software giant submitted its proposals yesterday evening. Tired of the lack of cooperation from the firm founded by Bill Gates, Neelie Kroes had given it an ultimatum that expired at midnight (our editions of Monday, May 30). She had even threatened Microsoft with a daily fine of up to $5 million if the group did not submit concrete proposals. "Contacts continued late Tuesday evening," explained Jonathan Todd, the spokesperson for the European Commissioner for Competition, Neelie Kroes. "We will now examine what they have put on the table." At Microsoft, a spokesperson simply stated that "proposals had been submitted to the Commission. We are awaiting their response." The stakes are high because Brussels is demanding that Microsoft market a version of its flagship Windows program that does not include the MediaPlayer software that allows users to listen to music and watch videos on their personal computers. The issue is also technical. This explains why Brussels services are asking for several weeks to analyze Microsoft's proposals in detail. Brussels hopes that these measures will give new life to the software empire's competitors. This objective explains why it also wants the American giant to share certain information with these competitors marketing free software. "These publishers are today the only real challengers to Windows on the server market," explains a person familiar with the issue. Microsoft assures for its part that it respects Brussels' requirements. It has already developed a version of Windows without the Media Player program. This must still receive approval from Brussels. But some experts doubt the effectiveness of such a measure if the group sells the two versions of Windows with or without MediaPlayer at the same price. Its American competitor RealNetworks, founded by Rob Glaser, a former Microsoft employee, fears such a situation. It has developed a software that competes with MediaPlayer called RealPlayer. Its directors have been waging an anti-Microsoft crusade for several months. They pleaded their case in Brussels by citing the example of the Netscape Internet browser to demonstrate the omnipotence of the firm founded by Bill Gates. Netscape, which had been chosen by many consumers in the 1990s, saw its market share decline when Microsoft decided to integrate its own Internet browsing program into Windows. For their part, computer manufacturers have already declared that they do not want to equip their machines with a version of Windows stripped of MediaPlayer.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1670

COMPETITION. The organizers of the 6th Du grain à démoudre film festival (from October 7 to 15 in Gonfreville-l'Orcher, Seine-Maritime) are organizing a screenwriting competition on the theme of the absurd, for those under 25, until June 15. Screenplays must be three to five pages long. The winners will be judged at the festival (transport, accommodation and activities paid for) and their screenplays will be read by actors and then posted online. Info: www.dugrainademoudre.net CONFERENCE. ISG Finance, the financial association of the Institut supérieur de gestion, is organizing a round table on the theme: "The Weight of Shareholders on Corporate Decisions", on June 6 at 6 p.m. at the ISG premises. This conference will be hosted by Michel Guithaux (business consultant and professor at the University of Paris-XII) in the presence of Pierre Bilger (former CEO of Alstom), Michel Aglietta (professor at Paris-X, advisor to CEPII), Joseph Gouranton (president of Adacte) and Emmanuel Paquette (economic journalist). Free admission. Meet at 8, rue de Lota, Paris XVI e. Info.: 06.61.63.02.32 or hadrien.gausseres@gmail.com CONFERENCE-DEBATE. The École nationale d'assurances and its president, François Ewald, welcome the mathematician Benoît Mandelbrot who will speak about the impacts of fractal theory on insurance. The event will take place on Wednesday, June 1 at 6 p.m. at Enass, 8, rue Chaptal 75009 Paris, M° Saint-Georges. Info. : Laure Tequi : 01.44.63.58.05. SPORT. From July 5 to 10, at the Stade de la Grenouillère in the Parc de Sceaux, the 20th BNP Paribas-Open de France will take place. This disabled tennis tournament will bring together 120 players. Free entry. Stade de la Grenouillère, Parc de Sceaux, Antony (92). Info.: www.tennishandisport.com COMPUTING. The ESGI (École supérieure de génie informatique), a school specializing in development, systems and network engineering, is organizing in partnership with the Slyunix association, a “Linux and free software” day, on Saturday, June 4, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. On the program: multimedia presentations, self-service demonstrations, meetings with users, installation of your machine and a distribution of Linux and free software CDs. Many conferences are also planned. Free and open access. See you on Saturday, June 4 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the ESGI, 28, rue du Plateau, Paris XIX e. Info.: 01.42.41.24.24 or www.esgi.fr CONCERT. The association Musique en Sorbonne presents a concert by the Choir and Orchestra of Paris-Sorbonne, conducted by Jacques Grimbert, on Friday, June 24 at the Church of the Trinity. With Virginie Besson, soprano, Blandine Staskiewicz, mezzo, Mathias Vidal, tenor, and Jean-Vincent Blot, baritone. They will perform Stabat Mater by Rossini. Prices: 20; under 25s, 10 . At 8:30 p.m. at the Church of the Trinity, place Estienne-d'Orves, Paris 9 e. Info. Music at the Sorbonne, 2, rue Francis-de-Croisset, Paris XVIII e or 01.42.62.71.71.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1671

Brussels - Microsoft has only a few hours left to comply with Brussels' injunctions, failing which the European Commission could decide to impose daily penalty payments of around $5 million on the American giant. After months of procrastination, the European Commissioner for Competition, Neelie Kroes, finally banged her fist on the table a week ago. No more hours of negotiations. Microsoft has therefore been given an ultimatum of midnight on May 31. By tomorrow evening, the world's number one software company must have satisfactorily implemented the "corrective measures" imposed in March 2004 by Brussels, or face having to pay a daily penalty payment that could represent up to 5% of its daily global turnover. Convicted of abuse of a dominant position, the Redmond group has already paid a fine of 497 million euros. It must also market a version of its flagship Windows operating system without the Media Player audio and video software player and disclose information allowing the "interoperability" of Windows, which is used on 95% of personal computers, with competing products. Microsoft has not changed its tune and one of its spokesmen in Brussels still claims that the group "is working with the Commission to achieve full compliance". For its part, the Commission repeats that it is not negotiating because its decision is "non-negotiable". Microsoft just has to provide proof that it will meet its requirements. The rapprochement between the two parties seems all the less obvious since their interpretation of the March 2004 decision differs. "The words are very simple, but the act is much more complex", Microsoft stresses. The most crucial point remains interoperability, which would mean for Microsoft revealing its juicy, as well as sacrosanct, protocols. The Commission is not very appreciative of the ban on vendors of free or open source software, such as Linux, from acquiring a license. Because, as a source close to the case points out, free software is today "the only real challenger to Windows on the server market."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1672

NEW YORK from our correspondent - It is gradually creating a system offering functions identical to Windows, but via the Internet Google had barely existed for two years when, on June 8, 2000, the trial against Microsoft for "abuse of dominant position" almost went badly for the group founded by Bill Gates. Convicted at first instance and on appeal in the largest antitrust trial in history since that of John Rockefeller's Standard Oil in 1911, the world's number one software company had nevertheless ultimately escaped the dismantling ordered by federal judge Thomas Penfield Jackson. Indeed, two months after the attacks of September 11, the Justice Department disavowed what it had done under the Clinton presidency and used the difficult period as a pretext to conclude an amicable transaction very favorable to Microsoft. Today, it is not justice but Google that is considered the greatest threat to Microsoft's hegemony. The search engine star is gradually creating a parallel system, offering functions identical to Windows but via the Internet. Google is no longer betting on decentralized computing, but on the contrary intends to provide its users with the largest and most powerful computer system in the world. The confrontation is reminiscent of those of the past, between the operating systems of Microsoft, IBM and Apple in the 1980s or between the browsers Netscape and Internet Explorer in the 1990s. A former Microsoft executive, Tod Nielsen, explained in an interview with the New York Times that some time ago the group would have quickly added an Internet search function to Windows to face Google. "We would have also found a way to torpedo their business model," he adds. OTHERS HAVE BURNED THEIR WINGS This strategy of constantly adding functions to Windows has allowed Microsoft to marginalize Apple and Netscape. But today, the firm is hesitant. Longhorn, its operating system that is to replace Windows, has been significantly delayed. It should only be released at the end of 2006. It will reportedly include search software, and Microsoft will ensure with its lawyers that the risks of antitrust lawsuits are minimized. But the underlying issue remains the same. Microsoft believes it has an inalienable right to add features to its operating system: an Internet browser, a music and video player, antivirus software, a search system, etc. By following this strategy, and by offering its enhanced system at no extra cost to more than 90% of personal computer users worldwide, Microsoft has been in the habit of creating a standard in a matter of months or years. Google is not unaware of the threat and says so explicitly in its annual report. Its CEO, Eric Schmidt, knows his subject well; he already clashed with Microsoft when he worked at the computer groups Sun Microsystems and Novell. Having become a more cautious, more bureaucratic company in a more mature market, Microsoft retains two considerable assets in the form of two monopolies: the Windows operating system and the Office desktop applications. Even if the free software Linux is successful in the server field and if Apple with its OS X system offers greater security and superior technology to those of Microsoft, the firm founded by Bill Gates retains an overwhelming domination. Preserving it seems to be its only strategy today, at least in the field of computing. To counter it, and not to suffer the fate of Netscape and other companies that have burned their wings by wanting to confront Microsoft too closely, "Google must in turn become a little evil itself", recommends the very serious Technology Review, the magazine of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) which devoted an article to Google in January. Which means, in plain English, that the company must adopt some of the strategy that brought Microsoft victory, but also earned it a lot of animosity from the software development community. Google should thus transform its search engine technology into a de facto standard, capable of imposing its rules on software developers who want to create applications requiring the use of Google.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1673

Americans have a tasty adage to express the fact that everything has its price: There is no such thing as a free lunch. But as appealing as it may be, this formula is becoming less and less viable, as a handful of web enthusiasts in Montreal prove every day. The gradual implementation of a free wireless Internet access system across the island shows that it is indeed possible to enjoy a free meal... if, of course, an army of volunteers agrees to devote time and energy to the cause. Let's first define the concept behind the initiative: Wi-Fi (wireless fidelity). This is a technology that allows laptops equipped with a wireless card to connect to the Internet, as if by magic, within a radius of several dozen meters to several kilometers. A business that wants to offer its customers such a service only has to pay a few dollars to get a small transmitter and thus become a "hot spot." Posters advertising free Internet access are currently multiplying at a frantic pace in Montreal bars and cafés. Saint-Laurent Street, for example, is completely covered in Wi-Fi from Sherbrooke Street to Mont-Royal Avenue. Interestingly, this excitement does not come from big players like Videotron or Rogers but rather from a modest non-profit organization that is the leader in this technology on the island. Which obviously explains why the service is free. Île sans fil, a small team of about thirty volunteers, has been working hard for two years to increase the number of hot spots and, of course, the number of users of the service. At last count, more than 5,500 users were benefiting from about fifty wireless terminals. That's more than Videotron offers! The idea may seem crazy: professionals investing their heart and soul in a project that doesn't earn them a cent. Now, these pioneers, inspired by the philosophy of free software and sharing with the greatest number, have no other goal than to democratize access to new technologies. Some will argue that you still need to have a laptop, a Wi-Fi card and be able to afford a $4 latte to take advantage of this free service. True. But we're not asking these people to turn the planet upside down and put an end to capitalism! The goal of this grassroots organization is rather to help break the isolation of citizens at the local level. And so far, this challenge has been met brilliantly... without anyone's help. The City of Montreal, without going as far as cities like Philadelphia that have decided to municipalize Wi-Fi access, would also have every interest in looking into this project. Île sans fil will probably not be able to continue its growth without the help of one or two employees. A tiny $100,000 grant would keep the wheel turning. Nothing but peccadilloes, in short, for a project that allows citizens and tourists to benefit from a free public service, to break the isolation of self-employed workers and artists, and to get Montreal talked about all over the web. Not bad, for such a ridiculous sum.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1674

It doesn't attract as many crowds as Cannes, won't reach the referendum turnout, but will easily fill the French digital creation scene, despite the vagaries of the sector (web design studios are far from being in good shape, art centers are failing...) and the slightly self-interested side of the affair. The Flash Festival, named after the technology that dominates graphic creation on the Net, is sponsored by Macromedia (which will take advantage of it to make its last demo) and hosted for four years by the Pompidou Center. The counterpart of this visibility is the happy opening to other artistic forms, far from being confined to a "proprietary" format (a whole artistic movement advocates the emancipation of these formats, via software writing and free software). The Flash Festival offers two days of focus on Net Art and the intimate: conferences, interventions by authors of emblematic sites (with guest of honor, the master of generative Jared Tarbell of Levitated.net or the Canadian Jeoff Lillemon of the enigmatic Oculart.net), installations and performances are on the program. Not to mention the essential webjams. Online, the competition of sites and animations is uneven: weak on animation, which nevertheless made the great hours of Flash, it finds favor with sure values like Incandescence or Incorect. We recommend going to click on the site of Agnès de Cayeux (www.internetmonamour.net), a distorted mirror of online flirting. She sets up a meeting with Mélanie, Delphine, Alexandra or Isabelle, in their "reading room". At Beaubourg, the offline version of In my Room, with actress, webcam and text to hear, will invent a form between live performance and stage on the Net.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1675

INFORMATION. ESGI (Ecole supérieure de génie informatique), a leading school specializing in development, systems and network engineering, is organizing, in partnership with the Slyunix association, a "Linux and free software" day on Saturday, June 4, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. On the program: multimedia presentations, self-service demonstrations, meetings with users, installation of your machine and a distribution of Linux and free software CDs. Many conferences are also planned. Free access. See you on Saturday, June 4, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at ESGI, 28, rue du Plateau, Paris-XIX e. Info. 01.42.41.24.24 or www.esgi.fr RAID. The first edition of the Xtremaroc sports and humanitarian raid will take place from June 18 to 26. Teams of four students will compete in four sports disciplines: mountain and desert mountain biking, orienteering, canoe waves and bike and run. Each team member will have to bring a backpack filled with 10 kilos of school supplies to the Moroccan League for the Protection of Children (under the aegis of UNICEF). The Raid Xtremaroc is open to all students regardless of their education. Association Xtrememaroc, Escem, 1, rue Léo-Delibes, BP 0535, Tours Cedex 3. Info. 02.47.71.72.69, xtremaroc@escem.fr or www.xtremaroc.com SPORT. The Boyard Staps association will bring together 200 students from French universities for a sports tournament from June 24 to 27. It will take place on the island of Oléron, in the town of Saint-Georges d'Oléron. Over four days, students will take part in various sports and festive activities. Two tournaments will be organized on Boyardville beach: a beach volleyball tournament on Saturday, June 25, and a beach soccer tournament on Sunday, June 26. Several theme evenings will be organized. Prices: 130 including transport, camping pitch, catering, tournaments, club entry and one drink per evening. Individual or group registrations. Information and registration: www.boyardstaps.com COMPETITION. The fourth edition of the European utility vehicle design competition is launched this week. This year's theme is the desertification of the countryside. The aim will be to propose a utility vehicle dedicated to local services and adapted to rural areas. A total prize of 5,000 will be distributed among the three winners. The winner will be able to do an internship in the design office of a major car manufacturer. Submission of copies before November 7. Info. www.argusauto.com/trophees EVENING. The Point gamma evening organized by Polytechnique students will be held on Saturday, June 4 on the school campus in Palaiseau. The organizers have invited Superbus, The Servant, La Ruda Salska, Elie Semoun and DJs Benny Benassi and Philippe B. Prices: 23 in advance, 30 on site. From 8 p.m. Campus of the Polytechnique school, route de Saclay, Palaiseau (91). Info. www.pointgamma.com DEBATE. Jean-François Lamour, Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Life and the Charter of the Grandes Écoles invite you at 5 p.m. at ESCP-EAP for a conference and debate on individual and community volunteering. ESCP-EAP, 79, av. of the Republic, Paris-XI e. Rens. www.lacharte.net

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1676

Nokia launched yesterday in New York, for the first time in its history, a product using a version of the free software Linux. This is a first for Nokia, which has preferred to use its own software or that designed by the British Symbian, of which the Finnish group is the main shareholder. The latest Nokia product, called the 770 Internet Tablet, is a wireless, high-speed Internet browser and this device does not have a telephone function.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1677

Let's imagine: a travel enthusiast, living in San Francisco or Strasbourg, surfs the Internet, from site to site, to find the destination at the best price. But it is no longer on travel agency sites that he makes his choice, but on those of the countries concerned. These virtual tourist houses allow him to check the absence of attacks in Ethiopia or monsoons in Cambodia at the time of his trip as well as to put together as he pleases a "salt route" combining the Algerian and Moroccan deserts or a stay with a local on the Senegalese Petite Côte or even a "voodoo" tour in Benin. It is this rapprochement between destination countries in the South and their potential customers in the North that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) intends to promote as part of its "e-tourism for developing countries" initiative. As its former Secretary General, Rubens Ricupero, stated, "if the tourism sector is properly integrated into development strategies, it can be the cornerstone of new productive systems that will reduce poverty and better integrate these countries into the global economy." The priority that seems necessary to give to tourism is based on the observation of its importance in the economy of the most disadvantaged countries. It is the main export item for 37 of the 50 least developed countries (LDCs); it accounts for 57.7% of the gross national product (GNP) of the Maldives and employs 37% of its active population. On the other hand, it only accounts for 7.2% of the GNP of a country with a tourist vocation like Cambodia and 3% of that of Madagascar. These tourist sources could contribute significantly to development if they were not the victims of "leaks". It is estimated, in fact, that the least developed countries of Africa see 85% of their tourism revenues escape them. Why? "Because three-quarters of tourists' food is imported to the Caribbean," replies Jean-François Baylocq, coordinator of the UNCTAD initiative. "Because these countries must buy their means of transport abroad and pay for foreign capital invested in holiday infrastructure. In addition, the vertical integration of operators from the North places these countries in a situation of strong dependency: it is estimated that only 38% of tourist revenue remains in Kenya. Not to mention the invisible or criminal leaks of revenue, environmental destruction, etc." Minimizing these leaks and maximizing the supply of local goods and services, breaking the monopoly of operators from the North by taking advantage of the consumer's desire to travel à la carte, reducing the digital divide that isolates LDCs from world markets, banking on local small and medium-sized enterprises: these multiple reasons convinced the eleventh session of UNCTAD, meeting in Sao Paulo in June 2004, to launch an initiative on electronic tourism, which is now in place. PLATFORMS The system involves offering the countries concerned a computer platform running on free software. The World Tourism Organization (WTO), a specialized agency of the UN, has already published a comparative study on the ergonomics of the sites and "bouquets" that could be built from these platforms customized according to the countries. UNCTAD also offers to help countries build their commercial offer in terms of tourism and crafts and to set up the operation and financing of the platform. Public-private partnerships, "collaborative competitions" organizing the pooling of technical resources, training in sustainable tourism are the instruments of this aid. Countries such as Angola, Benin, Mauritania, Lebanon and Madagascar have expressed interest in the initiative and could be the first to experiment with this flexible and inexpensive tool, which would also allow countries in the South to improve and control their image: today, in fact, it is to the Quai d'Orsay or the British Foreign Office that consumers turn first to find out whether they can envisage a worry-free trip.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1678

Boston - Housed in a building designed by architect Ieoh Ming Pei, MIT's "Media Lab" is a strange place. High-tech but messy, serious but crazy, respectable but childish. Cables run everywhere, pizzas are placed on keyboards, boxes of Lego next to the latest machines. It is also the only place in the world where someone can assure you, in all seriousness: "In 20 years, when you need, say, a toaster, your computer will make it right away." Amy Sun, the young woman who has just promised the toaster of the future, is a student who works closely with Neil Gershenfeld, the head of the Center for Bits and Atoms (CBA), prophet of "digital manufacturing." Everett, a Belgian Malinois shepherd, follows her everywhere in the corridors. Former Lockheed Martin employee Amy Sun, 30, explains: "Your computer will search a database for the open-source (copyright-free) plans for the toaster; then a machine, the equivalent of your printer, will make it." She seems to hesitate for a second, but goes further: "If it's not big enough for you, you could one day atomize it, and the machine will recover its components (plastic, metal, etc.) to remake another one a little bigger." Beside her, Sherry Lassiter, who manages the Fab Labs network, adds: "It sounds crazy, but we're much closer than we think. We're starting to print DNA, or nanomachines... Computers can also build buildings in 3D...." Everett seems to approve. In this world of mad scientists, if he started talking, we wouldn't be surprised. Visionary The day we visited, the guru, Neil Gershensfeld, was not there. "He went to Europe to meet a very famous musician for a project, but if I told you more, he would kill me," confides Sherry Lassiter. Gershenfeld has just published FAB, a visionary book announcing the revolution of "PFs" (personal fabricators), which will be, he assures us, even more upsetting than that of PCs (personal computers). Bearded, bespectacled and overexcited, he is originally a physicist, also a tinkerer. In his book, he says that he became aware of the potential of "personal fabrication" in 1998, when he gave a course entitled How to Make (Almost) Everything. His idea was to make the CBA machines, worth $5 or $6 million, available to a few students. Surprise: instead of the ten students he expected, a hundred signed up. Not only engineers, but also architects, artists... They all repeated: "All my life, I've dreamed of a course like this." He then thought: "Something must be wrong with all the people in this class, or else all my other courses are wrong." The second hypothesis won out. His students produced lots of objects that did not exist: an alarm clock that you had to fight to stop, a device that allowed you to scream without disturbing others... Gershenfeld then imagined a typical collection of numerically controlled machines, the cheapest and most efficient possible. This was the "Fab Lab": a precision milling machine, a jigsaw, a laser cutter, software for programming cheap microprocessors. Prices Falling Today, the whole thing is worth about $20,000. But the CBA team predicts that prices will fall as quickly as the first PCs. "You see that milling machine that can do micron precision? Ten years ago, you would have had to spend $50,000 for that machine. Today, it's $3,000, and you can put it on your desk," says Manu Prakash, 25, another Fab Lab stalwart, who has exported one to India. And that's just the beginning, he adds. In 2002, the National Science Foundation (NSF) decided to fund the project. Seven Fab Labs are now set up in India, Costa Rica, South Africa, Norway, and a grassroots training center in Boston. They exchange ideas and even "things" by email. Gershenfeld is convinced that the success of Fab Labs will come from the Third World, where needs are a powerful spur to inventiveness: "In London or Paris," he once explained, "people tell us: why bother? We already have everything we want..." To read: - The Coming Revolution on Your Desktop - From Personal Computers to Personal Fabrication, Neil Gershenfeld, Basic Books, 2005. - When Things Start to Think, Neil Gershenfeld, Owl Books, 2000. On the Internet: - www.vigyanashram.com: the Vigyan Ashram website presents all of its projects and activities - cba.mit.edu/ projects/fablab/: The Fab Lab website at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology presents the first achievements of the laboratories equipped with the technology. It also contains a complete description of the equipment made available to users. - cba.mit.edu/ people/index.html: why not take advantage of a virtual tour of the Center for Bits and Atoms to discover the work of the group of thinkers in this laboratory? Quantum information, molecular machines, artificial intelligence, enough to satisfy many curiosities...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1679

For the past five years, a motley crew of artists and activists have been crisscrossing Canada and the United States in their 1950s Airstream trailer to promote independently produced books. There’s no trace of Margaret Atwood or Marie Laberge books in their collection of some 300 different books, including single-copy, artisanal publications. The project, called Mobilivre-Bookmobile, will be at the sixth Salon du livre anarchiste de Montréal, which is being held this weekend. The bohemians of Mobilivre stop wherever they please: community centres, schools, libraries, festivals, etc. This month alone, they’ve travelled to Matane, La Pocatière, Gatineau and Cornwall. After Montreal, they’ll end the month in Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Winnipeg. In September, they’ll be visiting some fifteen American states. In addition to opening the doors of their library on wheels, they offer bookbinding workshops and conferences. For them, art and political activism are inseparable. "We want to show that we don't need big publishing houses to express our ideas. It's a power grab to handcraft your own publications and then share them," explains Onya Hogan-Finlay, one of the founders of the project. Then a graduate in arts at Concordia University, the 23-year-old woman bought an old trailer with two other friends for $1,000 without the help of any grant. Destination: Canada, armed with a good dose of courage and, above all, their works created during their undergraduate studies. Five years later, the collective has grown. There are about twenty artists who take turns (three at a time) in the trailer (since changed, but still just as warm, so much so that it doesn't run in July and August). Today, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec are giving them a major helping hand with grants totaling approximately $50,000. Living Theatre Another major guest at the Salon: two artists from the Living Theatre, including founder Judith Malina. This New York collective founded in 1947 revolutionized committed theatre. From 1963 to 1983, the troupe members went into exile in Europe, where they lived in communities, often in unheated farmhouses. A highlight of their career came in 1968, when they presented Paradise Now, where they frolicked naked on stage, urging the audience to "join the revolution." The two artists will perform the bilingual play Love and Politics tonight at 7:30 p.m. at Place d'à côté, a small bar on Papineau Avenue. For those who can't get in, the same artists are presenting a documentary followed by a conference at the same time the next day in the Hall building of Concordia University. The Montreal event - the culmination of the Anarchy Festival that began on April 28 - is the largest of its kind in North America with more than 75 exhibitors and 1,000 to 2,000 visitors each year. Tomorrow, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., there will be a series of introductory workshops on anarchy at the same time as the book sale. Children are welcome. A series of activities (soccer, films, crafts, theatre) are intended for them. On Sunday, the exhibitors will have packed up, but there will still be conferences on more advanced subjects such as free software and militant unionism. A notice to the curious who do not all oppose capitalism, imperialism and patriarchy with the same vigor. The Salon's website clearly states that "non-anarchists" are also invited. The event is being held at a community centre at 2515 Delisle Street, near the Lionel-Groulx metro station.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1680

We no longer eat, we no longer walk, we no longer cry in the same way since the world revolves around the Web. How do we live, then? This is the question that the 7th HTMlles event is trying to answer. Since yesterday and until Saturday, this international biennial of women's cyberart offers performances, installations and conferences to the curious. At the Monument-National today: clothing as a second skin. With Textiles électroniques 101 by Joanna Berzowska, micro-action at 6:30 p.m., and Front v.3-0 by the Millefiore Effect collective, which presents clothing sensitive to the emotions of those who wear them (our photo). Also, at La Centrale, at 9 p.m., an evening of performances juxtaposing accordion, voice and multimedia. On the program tomorrow: an urban tour to see the city differently, through surveillance cameras. Departure from the Monument-National at 7:30 p.m. Finally, on Saturday, a very musical closing night with, among others, Alice and the Serial Numbers and the GNU Girl Power Collective, which uses switches, lipstick (!) and "free" software for its performance. At 9pm at the Just for Laughs Museum. Info: www.htmlles.net

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1681

New Delhi, from our correspondent. Its inventors present it as "the cheapest and easiest to use computer in the world". Unveiled last week in New Delhi, the SofComp could mark the beginning of a new computer revolution: that of developing countries. Created by the Indian company Encore Software, partly thanks to public funding, it constitutes an innovative alternative to the classic desktop computer. "For the average user, it's the same thing, only cheaper", says the CEO, Vinay Deshpande. Equipped with the basic functions of a PC and equipped with open source software (modifiable at will and often free, like Linux), the SofComp, which will be marketed in three to four months, is indeed breaking all price records: less than 180 euros per unit (270 euros with a plasma screen). Described as "the anywhere, anytime computer", its portable version, the Mobilis, weighs only 750 grams and should cost 180 euros. On condition, however, that the manufacturer records enough orders. "These prices are calculated on the basis of at least 50,000 units produced for the SofComp, and 100,000 for the Mobilis", specifies Vinay Deshpande. According to him, requests are already coming from India and Africa, and even from Europe for industrial applications. In 2002, Encore Software had already captured the world's imagination by releasing the Simputer, described as "the poor man's computer". The size of a Palm, equipped with multilingual voice recognition software and sold for around 200 euros, the machine aimed to "break the digital divide" by introducing computers into the countryside of the Third World. In three years, the Simputer has nevertheless sold only 5,000 copies. "The bet was ambitious because this product was aimed at the rural masses," argues Vinay Deshpande. Equipped with a large screen, the SofComp and the Mobilis constitute a real alternative to the PC. We imagined them with India and developing countries in mind, but they could very well be adopted by Western countries. It is a product intended for the global market." Illiterate. Developed in less than a year and a half and for "less than 900,000 euros," the SofComp-Mobilis is first and foremost "an Indian solution to Indian problems," explains the Minister of Science and Technology, Kapil Sibal. If it keeps its promises, the machine could however go far beyond borders. Not only because of its price, but also because it was designed for neophytes. Each software is thus activated by simple keys added to the keyboard, and the touch screen facilitates interaction with the user. The presence of a voice recognition system and the "text to speech" function makes it accessible even to illiterate people. The machine can in fact read aloud a document or an Internet page, in English but also in three Indian regional languages, soon to be five. Deprived of a hard disk, the machine can only store data on a memory card (between 120 and 512 Mb), a specificity which, combined with the use of open source software, is supposed to reduce the risk of viruses. As big as a paperback book, the SofComp-Mobilis remains compatible with PCs and can be connected to a CD-Rom reader or an external hard drive. It also only requires 8 watts to operate, a major asset for a country like India where power fluctuations are daily. Autonomy. Equipped with a choice of an integrated or separate keyboard, the Mobilis, embedded in a small bag, has a battery life of six hours. It comes with a word processor, accounting software, a personal calendar, an Internet browser, an e-book reader as well as audio, video and photo programs. "They are more than sufficient for the vast majority of users who only use a small fraction of the capabilities of a PC anyway," says Deshpande. "From individuals to small traders, including village councils, hospitals and government departments, the potential applications for this product are innumerable." Not to mention industrial applications. Even before its official launch, the device has already been tested and adopted by several companies. Based in Bangalore, the electric car manufacturer Reva has made an electronic dashboard out of it. In the United States, a security equipment company is using it as an interactive platform for alarms installed in private homes. A research institute based in Bombay is studying possible agricultural applications. But for individuals, the price, size and ease of use remain the major assets of this new device, which is bound to be exported. From this point of view, the development strategy of the SofComp is similar to that of the Logan, the so-called "poor man's" car, manufactured by Dacia (Renault) in Romania and sold for 5,800 euros there (7,500 euros in France). Like the Logan, which was initially intended for Eastern countries, the SofComp is aimed at countries in the South that have little or no computer equipment. But, like Renault, the designers of the computer costing less than 200 euros are hoping to go beyond the borders of the South and cross those of developed countries.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1682

ACCOMMODATION. Adele and Smerep are offering the 1st Spring of Student Housing until July 12. It will improve access and the quality of information for students looking for housing by offering reception points, weekly expert conferences at the Smerep reception, on Tuesday afternoons from 3 to 5 p.m., on financing the deposit by Locapass, housing assistance from the CAF, legal formalities, banking solutions, staying with a senior, etc. A student installation kit will be distributed in universities, grandes écoles and in Smerep centers (CD-ROM and booklet). A new Internet address will provide access to housing offers and will provide advice on the different stages of the housing search. Info. www.logement-etudiant.net COMPETITION. The Ecole nationale d'assurances, an institute of the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers, prepares students for a diploma in senior insurance management approved at level I (bac + 5). The entrance exam (free of charge) is open to bac + 2. Submit applications before this evening. Info. www.enass.fr CONFERENCE. The next Rendez-vous de l'imaginaire will take place on May 18 at the Espace Paul-Ricard, on the theme of "The Europe of Culture". Michel Maffesoli, accompanied by the philosopher Nicolas Setari and Giuliano da Empoli, director of the magazine Zero, will question the specificity of Europe as a cultural space. By referring to the various meanings of the word "commerce", the debate will attempt to show how this open space can allow a revitalization of intellectual discourse. Free admission. Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Espace Paul-Ricard, 9, rue Royale, Paris-83 e. Info. www.espacepaulricard.com EVENING. The BDE Télécom Paris is organizing its last evening of the year, on Friday, May 20, at the Complexe 13'53, Insomnia Brazil Instinct. On the menu: a multi-colored decor, three bars, two dancefloors, the main one of which will be hosted by DJ Ko (electro house). DJ Vayn and DJ Oliv' will be in charge of the second room, for a more general atmosphere. Dress code: Rio carnival. The organizers promise surprises. Prices: 9 in advance; 11 on site. Info. 01.45.81.76.99. COMPETITION. The TopDev IT development competition will take place online on May 21 and 22. This event, which is aimed at all players in the IT world (universities, companies, IT specialists, students, etc.), will bring together more than 500 IT participants, salaried or independent consultants, who will compete on the Internet for two days in a Web application development test (under PHP, Java or C#), UML design, or Zope software integration, for OpenSource technicians who have mastered this content management tool. The competition will be an opportunity for students to meet professionals in the sector. Registration closes today. Info. www.TopDevOne.com

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1683

Beware of the quagmire. More than thirteen months after Microsoft was convicted of abuse of a dominant position, no agreement has yet been reached between Bill Gates' firm and Brussels on the application of the two "corrective measures" intended to restore competition in the software market. "We are losing patience," threatens a spokesperson for the Directorate General for Competition, who is brandishing the threat of additional fines. On Microsoft's side, however, they are playing it cool: Bill Gates spoke on Thursday in the daily newspaper La Tribune of a "good dialogue with the Commission." While the director of public affairs for the French subsidiary, Thaima Samman, says she hopes for an agreement "quickly, because playing for time is not in our interest." Decoding Microsoft's strategy to confuse Brussels. Exploiting the Commission's failures One of the remedies imposed on Microsoft by the Commission turned out to be a flop: in order to give Microsoft's competitors in the audio-video playback software niche a bit of breathing room, the Commission demanded the provision of a version of the flagship operating system, Windows XP, without the Media Player. After some waffling over the name of this second version, Microsoft notably proposed calling it Reduced Edition, which the Commission rejected for lack of glamour, the deal is almost over... but none of the major PC manufacturers are considering selling machines with this stripped-down version. "There is no demand from our customers," explains Florent Lafarge of Toshiba. And for good reason: no price difference is imposed between the two versions and manufacturers find it difficult to offer a version without an audio-video player at the same price as one with one. By keeping control of its prices, "it is ultimately Microsoft that has the main control" of this remedy, judges Eric Greffier, marketing director of the PC activity at Hewlett-Packard. One competitor even goes so far as to estimate that this remedy "will change absolutely nothing". Negotiate point by point The second measure imposed by Brussels obliges Microsoft to provide, at a "reasonable and non-discriminatory price", technical information to its competitors so that their products can communicate without obstacles with in-house software. A crucial point to prevent Microsoft from extending its quasi monopoly on operating systems with Windows to other areas. Result? The Commission was unhappy with the firm's first proposals: prices too high, draconian confidentiality conditions ("The guy who has access to the data no longer has the right to go pee without being accompanied", jokes a Brussels lobbyist). And, above all, "refusal to make available to competitors using free software", notes a spokesperson for the Commission. But free software, these programs that can be modified at will and are often free, such as the Linux operating system or the Firefox browser, are the most credible of Microsoft's competitors. "Blocking free software players amounts to almost completely emptying the remedy of its meaning," believes Thomas Vinje, one of the lawyers for Microsoft's opponents. Even though the firm has just made new proposals to the Commission, François Lévêque, an economist at the École des Mines, predicts that it will be "long" to find an agreement: "Applying such a remedy is subjective: we must agree on what a reasonable amount is, on the technical information concerned. Microsoft's interest is to give as little as possible." Calming things down with big checks Microsoft, which is extremely rich, has a habit of settling its disputes with its competitors with big checks: this is how the software publisher Sun, one of the Commission's supporters, let go last year for 1.3 billion euros. In November, it was the Computer and Communications Industry Association, a group of several competitors, that gave in for 16 million. A good way to weaken the Commission by depriving it of industrial support. It was not until last month that five companies (including IBM and Nokia) took up their positions alongside Brussels, after the rout of 2004. According to Thomas Vinje, the firm "is simply doing what it has always done in antitrust trials, it is dragging things out to the point where technological developments make the remedies meaningless". The Commission is responding to this cash-spill in the same way: after an initial historic fine of 497 million euros, it is now threatening to impose periodic penalty payments, for a maximum sum of 5% of its daily turnover, or 5 million dollars per day. "If you consider Microsoft's resources, it is the equivalent for everyone of a fine for parking illegally", Thomas Vinje says ironically. At the end of 2004, the firm had $35 billion in reserves, after having just given away $32 billion to its shareholders. And it made a profit of $8.2 billion in 2004.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1684

The Brazilian government has announced a plan to subsidize the purchase of low-cost personal computers equipped with free software in an effort to increase the use of new technologies in the world's fifth most populous country. Computers running proprietary software such as Microsoft's will be excluded from the subsidy program, but the government will provide tax breaks for all low-cost computers, regardless of operating system. The subsidy program, called PC Conectado, is aimed at increasing the penetration of computers among the middle and lower classes, with the goal of selling one million machines. Computers sold with free software will cost just 1,400 reais (C$717) and will be partially subsidized by up to 10 percent of the total price through a government credit and a tax break. The offer will also include low-cost Internet access.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1685

Boston special correspondent Housed in a building designed by architect Ieoh Ming Pei, MIT's "Media Lab" is a strange place. High-tech but messy, serious but crazy, respectable but childish. Cables run everywhere, pizzas are placed on keyboards, boxes of Lego next to the latest machines. It is also the only place in the world where someone can assure you, in all seriousness: "In twenty years, when you need, say, a toaster, your computer will make it on the spot." Amy Sun, the young woman who has just promised the toaster of the future, is a student who works closely with Neil Gershenfeld, the head of the Center for Bits and Atoms (CBA), prophet of "digital manufacturing." Everett, a Belgian Malinois shepherd, follows her everywhere in the corridors. Lockheed Martin alum Amy Sun, 30, explains: "Your computer will search a database for the open-source plans for the toaster; then a machine, the equivalent of your printer, will make it." She seems to hesitate for a second, but goes further: "If it's not big enough for you, you could one day atomize it, and the machine will take its components (plastic, metal, etc.) and make another one a little bigger." Beside her, Sherry Lassiter, who is in charge of the Fab Labs network, adds: "It sounds crazy, but we're much closer than we think. We're starting to print DNA, or nanomachines... Computers can also build buildings in 3D..." Everett seems to approve. In this world of mad scientists, if he started talking, we wouldn't be surprised. Visionary. The day we visited, the guru, Neil Gershensfeld, was not there. "He went to Europe to meet a very famous musician for a project, but if I told you more, he would kill me," confides Sherry Lassiter. Gershenfeld has just published FAB, a visionary book announcing the revolution of "PFs" (personal fabricators), which will be, he assures us, even more upsetting than that of PCs (personal computers). Bearded, bespectacled and overexcited, he is originally a physicist, also a tinkerer. In his book, he says that he became aware of the potential of "personal fabrication" in 1998, when he gave a course entitled How to Make (Almost) Everything. His idea was to make the CBA machines, worth $5 or $6 million, available to a few students. Surprise: instead of the dozen students he expected, a hundred signed up. Not only engineers, but also architects, artists... They all repeated: "All my life I've dreamed of a course like this." He then thought: "Something must be wrong with all the people in this class, or else all my other courses are wrong." The second hypothesis won out. His students produced lots of objects that did not exist: an alarm clock that you had to fight to stop, a device that allowed you to scream without disturbing the others... Gershenfeld then imagined a typical collection of numerically controlled machines, the cheapest and most efficient possible. This was the "Fab Lab": a precision milling machine, a jigsaw, a laser cutter, software for programming cheap microprocessors. Prices dropped. Today, the whole thing is worth about $20,000. But the CBA team predicts that prices will fall as quickly as the first PCs. "You see this milling machine, which can work to the micron? Ten years ago, you would have had to spend $50,000 for that machine. Today, it's only $3,000, and you can put it on your desk," says Manu Prakash, 25, another pillar of Fab Labs, which he exported to India (see opposite). And this, he adds, is just the beginning. In 2002, the National Science Foundation (NSF) decided to fund the project. Seven Fab Labs are now set up in India, Costa Rica, South Africa, Norway, and a popular training center in Boston. They exchange ideas and even "objects" by e-mail. Gershenfeld is convinced that the success of Fab Labs will come from the Third World, where needs are a powerful spur to inventiveness: "In London or Paris," he once explained, "people tell us: why bother? We already have everything we want..."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1686

As if by symbol, xAI, Elon Musk’s artificial intelligence (AI) startup, has set up shop in the former offices of OpenAI, the parent company of the famous chatbot ChatGPT, which has become the most valuable startup in the sector. The most recent and least known project from the boss of Tesla, SpaceX, X, Neuralink and Starlink assumes its ambitions. OpenAI, Anthropic, Google and xAI will be the main players in the race for AI in the next five years, Mr. Musk assured on October 2, during a small party organized in this historic building in the Mission district of San Francisco, where xAI settled in the fall, reported The Verge. For the entrepreneur, there is no doubt that his startup will become a leader like SpaceX in the space sector. To do this, he used the metaphor of an American stealth spy plane from the 1970s: "No SR-71 Blackbird has ever been shot down and it had only one strategy: accelerate," he said, according to a witness. However, when, in November 2022, the arrival of ChatGPT launched the wave of enthusiasm for so-called "generative" AI, capable of creating text or images, the hyperactive and provocative entrepreneur was not present in the sector. He had co-founded OpenAI in 2015, but he had left it in 2018. Mr. Musk observed the success of the service launched by Sam Altman as a spectator, even signing an open letter pointing out the risks of AI and calling for a six-month suspension of the "uncontrolled race to develop ever more powerful digital brains." Wider use This did not prevent Mr. Musk from launching his own project, xAI, in March 2023, by bringing together a handful of engineers in the offices of his social network X, including Igor Babuschkin, a former employee of OpenAI and DeepMind (Google's AI subsidiary), and Manuel Kroiss, who also worked for DeepMind. Arriving late on the market, xAI managed to make a name for itself: in November 2023, it launched its assistant Grok. Presented as a conversational robot with a freer and more provocative tone than ChatGPT or Gemini (Google), this service was then enhanced, like its competitors, with the ability to create images, write code, do online searches, etc. In the spring, Grok was launched in Europe and its use extended to all paying subscribers of X. And its code was made accessible in open source, for businesses. On December 6, Elon Musk took another step forward by making Grok free for X's 500 million monthly users, making it a more serious rival to ChatGPT (300 million users per week) or MetaAI (600 million monthly users on Instagram and Facebook). In addition, Elon Musk impressed by announcing that he had set up, "in just one hundred and twenty-two days," Colossus, a huge data center equipped with 100,000 state-of-the-art graphics chips. Located near Memphis, Tennessee, it is "the fastest supercomputer installed on a single site," praised Jensen Huang, the boss of their manufacturer, Nvidia. Finally, on December 5, xAI announced that it had raised $6 billion (€5.77 billion) based on a valuation of $50 billion, according to the Wall Street Journal , bringing the total funds raised to $12 billion. These figures bring it closer to OpenAI, which has raised around $19 billion and is valued at $157 billion. Elon Musk's entry into the generative AI market and its rapid rise to power also worries his competitors for other reasons. While he presents himself as a troublemaker opposed to the domination of AI giants Google, Meta or OpenAI and its partner Microsoft, the entrepreneur also plays on group logic between his various commercial projects. xAI trains Grok on content published on X (except in the European Union) and is distributed exclusively on the social network. According to the Wall Street Journal , xAI also plans to train its AI on data collected by Tesla cars, which also use this technology for autonomous driving or its humanoid robot Optimus. Mr. Musk also has satellite images with his operator Starlink and uses AI for brain-machine interfaces Neuralink. Above all, Elon Musk's closeness to Donald Trump, the new president of the United States, has his rivals fearing conflicts of interest. "I take at face value [the statements that] he's not going to use his political power to advantage his own companies or disadvantage his competitors," said Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, a partner of Anthropic, in early December at a New York Times conference. "It would be un-American to use your political power," added Sam Altman, hoping that "Elon will do the right thing." "They're right," commented Mr. Musk on X. Legal and financial disputes But tensions are very real, particularly with OpenAI. Mr. Musk has filed several complaints against Sam Altman's company, sometimes nicknamed "a scammer." Mr. Musk accuses OpenAI of having betrayed its vocation as a non-profit organization, which he had funded, by partnering with Microsoft and creating a for-profit structure. Mr. Altman's company has in return criticized him for wanting to create a for-profit structure, which he wanted to control personally... In addition to these legal and financial quarrels, there is a final front: Mr. Musk, self-proclaimed champion of "absolute freedom of expression", accuses ChatGPT, Gemini or MetaAI of being too "woke" and "politically correct" because these services have set up systems for moderating content deemed problematic: racist, sexist, defamatory... Grok refuses to create nude images but not of a (fake) meeting between François Bayrou and Marine Le Pen, of Elon Musk touching a child in a swimsuit or of a Toy Story character (protected by copyright) hitting a dog... In the United States, members of the Trump administration have said, like Mr. Musk, that they want to fight against the "censorship" of AI, but in the EU, xAI's activities could fall within the scope regulation on competition or on the responsibility of platforms or AI manufacturers. A potential subject of additional transatlantic tension, as Mr. Musk is, with Mr. Trump, invited to the AI summit organized in Paris in February.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1687

In some sports, coaches designate impact players, players whose entry onto the field during a match can change the outcome. In science, too, there are "impact" players. Gaël Varoquaux, a computer scientist at the National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology (Inria), is perhaps one of them. In addition, he is an athlete, a federal sailing instructor since he was 18, a cross-country skier and a fan of climbing and long bike rides. At 43, he is above all the most cited French researcher in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). An article he co-authored in 2011 is mentioned more than 62,000 times in other works, according to the Scopus database, while those of Yann Le Cun, another national star in the field, are mentioned a maximum of 60,000 times. However, his contribution is not linked to generative AI like ChatGPT or even to deep learning, which revolutionized image recognition. It is machine learning, which he helped facilitate the use of by being co-author of the most widely used software in the field, Scikit-learn. This toolbox is packed with more than 150 statistical methods to classify objects, group them by similarity or identify their particularities automatically. Everything to make large masses of data talk, in a few lines of code. Scikit-learn is downloaded around 80 million times per month, when deep learning tools, PyTorch or TensorFlow, from the giants Meta and Google, are downloaded less than 30 million times, Gaël Varoquaux recalled during a presentation at the dotAI conference on October 18 in Paris. "We forget that in laboratories or companies, the data to be studied are not texts or images, but tables of numbers and not in huge sizes, says the researcher. Scikit-learn is everywhere, but we don't see it." "I made ugly programs" Such success was not a foregone conclusion, because the researcher was trained in physics at the École Normale Supérieure, integrated in 2001, a discipline that he followed until his thesis, defended in 2008, within the quantum optics laboratory of Alain Aspect, who will be Nobel in 2022. "He was very creative and dynamic. He started from scratch and created two experimental devices, when we only expected one. We quickly felt his appetite for mathematics and computer science," remembers Philippe Bouyer, a CNRS researcher, co-supervisor of the doctoral student, who tinkered with computer interfaces as much as lasers. This taste for computers goes back to his youth, when he created his first programs on the Thomson TO7 computer and the TI-92 calculator. In Alain Aspect's laboratory, he immersed himself in the Python language. "Part of the motivation was to do without Matlab software, a commercial product," explains the man who then began to set foot in a community that he would never leave, that of free software. He thus contributed to several software programs, including IPython, the ancestor of the very popular Jupyter, an electronic notepad. "I even made ugly programs," says this modest man, embarrassed by the idea Le Monde draws his portrait, "except to say that [he] works within a fantastic team." After his thesis, he continued his research in Italy, still in quantum optics. Following an experimental incident on the laser, he decided to move on to programming. After three weeks of reflection during a trek in Uzbekistan, he left for a few months in the United States, where he had lived as a high school student when his father, a physicist, worked there. He joined a start-up, Enthought, which develops free scientific software in Python. "Free software is great for understanding what we are doing. It is defined by a license that gives several rights, of use, modification, distribution... But what matters most is that it is also a community," says the researcher, who has worked with colleagues from all over the world, some of whom suggested that he move into medical imaging. "The idea of applying mathematical models to understand the brain attracted me," he recalls. "The best thing I did was recruit Gaël," says Bertrand Thirion, also at Inria, who welcomed his colleague in 2008 after leaving physics. "We needed new analysis tools. Gaël quickly understood that we had to look further and not just develop software for us, but try to convince a wider community,” recalls Bertrand Thirion. The idea for Scikit-learn was born from this vision, based on a concept imagined in 2007 by David Cournapeau. Then the project grew from 2009. Thanks to his charisma and energy, the young researcher convinced his employer to recruit engineers. It all worked out. The project grew with the community. Since the end of 2023, it has even taken on a new dimension. A start-up, Probabl, of which Gaël Varoquaux is co-founder and part-time advisor, was created to promote the treasure developed within Inria, which does not own it. The company already sells “certifications” in Scikit-learn, a sort of reassuring diploma for companies. “There were 600 registered in the first few days!” ", says the boss of Probabl, Yann Lechelle. "We wanted to put the cutting-edge tools of machine learning in the hands of non-specialists. To do "machine learning without the machine", as they used to say," says Alexandre Gramfort, who now works at Meta. It's not all about technique. Hot-blooded The soft voice and mischievous eye are a bit misleading. Gaël Varoquaux is also known for not mincing his words. "He has strong convictions, and I sometimes had to smooth things over," adds Alexandre Gramfort with amusement. "He is hot-blooded and can quickly get carried away when he doesn't agree, but he is in dialogue," says Yann Lechelle. Some remember that he did not appreciate that Cédric Villani's report on AI in 2018 did not mention the success of Scikit-learn. “He may seem divisive, but he doesn’t get angry with people,” says Marine Le Morvan, a researcher at Inria who supervises postdocs with him. This temperament guides part of his scientific production, which is focused on criticism. In 2018, he warned about the too small sample size in neuroimaging. In 2022, he highlighted methodological “failures” in medical imaging. In September, he co-authored an article denouncing the exaggerations in the use of AI in this field. In October, he questioned the trend of AI moving towards increasingly large and greedy models. “He has a reputation for saying things that people don’t like to hear. And it’s appreciated. He throws stones in the pond, but explains why methods don’t work. He fights the buzz with scientific rigor,” summarizes Arthur Mensch, boss of the start-up Mistral AI, who did his thesis with Gaël Varoquaux. The latter did not remain confined to his first field. He moved from brain imaging to health data, then to causality analysis methods, or recently, with an economist, to "targeting strategies in political communication". His skills and character earned him a place on the AI commission, which submitted its report to the President of the Republic in March. "What guides me is understanding the world, and the desire to be useful for something", he says, citing free software as a way to achieve this. In addition, as a good climber, level "6a-6b", he has just proposed a new avenue of research, called "tabular artificial intelligence", so that "data in tables learns to transform itself". "I invented the word as a snub to the fashion for generative AI." What will be the impact?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1688

The Inria researcher is the most cited Frenchman in international literature on artificial intelligence

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1689

It was the Drunken Hour." The topic of discussion here has nothing to do with any attraction to "binge drinking." It is the name of the font used by Julie Lacoste, a 26-year-old lawyer living in Rodez, for the fanzine she created for a friend's birthday. "It's a bit of a punk font, like letters cut out of a newspaper. The result looks like anonymous letters sent by a crow," she jokes. In 2023, she also imagined a "newsletter for married couples" for a couple of friends who had said yes, as well as a role-playing game inspired by the world of Harry Potter comprising six character cards and around ten spell cards: "With, each time, particular care taken in choosing the fonts. Everything is homemade." And made possible thanks to Canva. Created in 2012 in Australia, this graphic design tool offers blank or pre-designed templates for websites, Instagram posts, and invitations, with a simple free registration, with a paid subscription if you upgrade to the Canva Pro package. It attracts a diverse audience of people who create posters, amateur publications, announcements, greeting cards, etc. It now has 200 million monthly users in more than 190 countries, according to official figures for 2024, and in France alone, one in eight Internet users uses it every month. Among them, therefore, is Julie Lacoste, who "fell into it" six years ago: "It's so time-consuming, I can spend hours trying out different fonts [typefaces] by varying the weight, size, colors, etc." With its intuitive interface and its smartphone app version, Canva turns out to be child's play. And there's plenty to enjoy, with 40,000 fonts available. "It's the improved version of Paint and WordArt," Julie emphasizes. "Anyone can now create super-catchy PowerPoints, CVs, birth announcements, flyers or social media posts using neat fonts and playing with text blocks," adds the lawyer. There's no doubt that this type of accessible tool helps to break down the barriers to graphic design and make it more abundant, at a time when everyone has become the artistic director of their digital life. With a rendering that's visible in a variety of spheres, as Yorgo Tloupas, head of the Yorgo & Co graphic design studio in Paris, confirms: "Just by wanting to publish a 'story' or a Reel [short videos] on social media, the question of choosing a font arises. Abandoned in the 1990s, we are currently witnessing an improvement in the visual landscape in France: cultural institutions, small communities and businesses of all kinds are perfecting their identity through neat logos and fonts, used on communication tools, posters, signs, derivative products, etc. Among those who have tried their hand at this type of meticulous and fun exercise, Guillaume-André Morinet, 70 years old. This painter, graphic designer by training and former journalist, participated in 2021 in the creation workshops of Clamatica, the font of the city of Clamart (Hauts-de-Seine). Spread over two months, they brought together a handful of volunteers from Clamart: "Graphic designer Thibault Robin, who ran these workshops, gave each of us letters to work on by hand before digitizing them. I was in charge of the H and the Y. The brief was to make drawings that were as crazy as possible, even if it meant they were illegible. The result is fanciful, all the letters are different." While free software such as Calligraphr, Inkscape and FontForge allow you to create your own fonts in your own corner, workshops now invite you to learn this typographic art in a group without any prerequisites - no need to master the Adobe suite or be good at drawing. This is the case of the one held in May in Bordeaux, during the Aperçu festival dedicated to graphic design and hosted by Emilie Rigaud, who created her foundry, A is for fonts, in 2010. According to this teacher of typographic design at the Atelier national de recherche typographique de Nancy, if these workshops find their audience, it is because typography has long suffered from a gap in teaching: "Since 2010, and to meet the growing demand from students, more and more training and specializations in font creation are offered in postmaster, which, in my time, in the 2000s, was not the case. This coincides with the emergence, at the same time, of a young free typography scene." The Velvetyne collective is one of them. Founded in 2010, it distributes free and open source characters, meaning that they can be modified as desired. Velvetyne also runs workshops. The most recent one, organized in October at La Générale in Paris, consisted of making a "fork" of the Velvelyne typographic character. In other words, imagining artistic and experimental forms based on it. Previously, the Pic-Nic workshop was held, during which participants "cooked the characters to make a real edible typographic picnic," one of them, Mariel Nils, 28, explained. Julie Lacoste is convinced that these typographic experiments are a form of artistic expression: "It allows me to express a creativity that has been repressed for a long time. When I was little, I forbade myself from drawing because I thought I had no talent. » For our artist Guillaume-André, Clamatica was an opportunity to reconnect with his first loves: "It plunged me into nostalgia and reminded me how much, as a child, I loved learning to write and to apply myself to forming letters. It also revived knowledge dating back to my years of graphic design studies. I rediscovered calligraphy. In the M, we find the Egyptian hieroglyph for water, all in undulations… The history of letters is fascinating." Our lawyer from Aveyron has not yet decided to create her own font, which she could very well call "Eiluj" (her artist name, with which she signs her creations): "I'm not at that stage yet! For the moment, I'm content to play Kern Type, an online game whose goal is to find the right spacing between each letter that makes up the word displayed on the screen. » Enough to sharpen a little more the compass she already has in her eye.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1690

Anne Bouverot is the special envoy of the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, to the summit for action on artificial intelligence (AI), planned for Paris on February 10 and 11, 2025 (with events spread over six days starting on February 6), eighteen months after a first edition in London. Chair of the board of directors and holder of a doctorate in AI from the Ecole Normale Supérieure, this engineer, who has lived in the United States and made a career in technology companies such as Orange, had already co-chaired the AI commission, responsible for a report to develop this technology in France. Ms. Bouverot sets out the axes of the summit, which, despite the political instability in France, should welcome to the Grand Palais in Paris, AI companies, NGOs and representatives from 100 countries, including the United States, China, India and African nations. It highlights three "markers": a foundation to create digital "commons", a coalition for sustainable AI and an initiative to "clarify" global AI governance. After the London summit, which focused on security and risks related to AI, you want to highlight the "opportunities". Are the conversations around this technology too negative? In the world, the main discourse that I hear during my travels is rather a fear of seeing AI made by others, and of not being able to appropriate it. This fear is something other than the fear of the end of the world. More broadly, in the global conversation, there is everything: alarmist science fiction-type speeches, speeches promising that AI will solve everything... AI, like all technologies, carries risks, but also opportunities. The ambition of our summit "for action" on AI is to act against the risks and above all to act to maximize the shared benefits. We want to create the "commons" of AI. Specifically, one of the five themes of the summit is dedicated to "AI for the general interest", and aims to produce "commons". What is this, concretely? It responds to the fear of seeing AI developed mainly by large private companies, in English and with a certain vision of the world. There is an expectation of something more shared and less concentrated. Concretely, the "commons" are, for example, scientific databases. The generation of new 3D protein structures - studied by the 2024 Nobel Prize winners in chemistry Demis Hassabis and John Jumper, directors of the Google subsidiary, DeepMind - was made possible by AI. But also, by the protein database already decoded and fed by Europe, Japan or the United States. Another example is the creation of content corpora, in order to train AI models in languages other than the ten or so most represented on the Internet. A third option is the open source tool, freely accessible. These tools can be used to test AI models and ensure their security, or to automatically moderate content and detect content created by AI, in order to combat disinformation. These initiatives could be carried out through a foundation, a permanent international organization, very decentralized, with public and private funding. However, activists, worried about the risks to national security, consider it dangerous to publish advanced AI models in open source… On security, an open technology like open source can certainly be used by bad actors. But it can also be tested by developers from all over the world, and therefore have fewer risks and flaws. One possible comparison is electricity: it can be used for very positive purposes, but also negative ones. This does not mean that it can be locked up. The summit aims to be “inclusive” with 100 countries invited, such as China or India. And you want to "clarify" global governance. How? The United Nations, which is made up of nearly 200 countries around the world, has taken up the subject: the International Labour Organization is setting up an observatory on work in the age of AI; UNESCO is looking at cultural issues; and a global digital pact has enshrined the willingness of countries to participate in dialogue and have access to training, funding and scientific research. Clarifying how organizations work together would be a first point on which to move forward. For example, the International Labour Organization and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] are seeking, according to different parameters, to set up observatories. At the same time, there are discussions between seven, ten or twenty countries – at the G7, the G20 or in the network of AI safety institutes [from the London summit] – with the actors at the heart of the development of the most advanced AI models. A second question is how to share these tools with as many people as possible, in order to strengthen the capacity of countries, which are currently furthest from the heart of AI decision-making, to appropriate the technology. To do this, between the United Nations, the G7 or the G20, there is a need for an intermediate level, with the countries most committed to AI issues and wishing to conduct research together. The Global Partnership on AI [created in 2020 at the initiative of France and Canada] can offer a forum for discussion and sharing of experience. It is backed by the OECD, but it offers an inclusive approach, not just limited to the 36 members of the OECD. It can accommodate 40, 60 or 80 countries, in a constructive spirit, with the United Nations and others, and not in competition. Emmanuel Macron and Paris have chosen to oppose regulation, sometimes accused of threatening innovation in Europe, as in the debate on the European AI Act regulation. Isn't this line a godsend for the American giants? The summit does not have the legitimacy to propose new regulations. There are regulatory initiatives in different countries and forums. On the generative AI models, there are obligations in the AI Act and voluntary commitments made at the London and Seoul summits, or by the G7. The summit aims rather to clarify how things work together and could be interoperable, which can be useful for local start-ups. In Europe, it is very good that there is the AI Act, but it would be a shame if it were the only expression. We must have a vision against risks and for innovation, to create our version of AI. This is the idea of the report by [former European Central Bank President] Mario Draghi on the competitiveness of the Twenty-Seven. On culture, you will highlight creation through AI. Are there not risks that the creative professions and the press will criticize France for not supporting their fight enough to have the use of their content remunerated in training AI? The weekend of February 8 and 9 will be devoted to cultural events on AI and creation, but not only. There are also round tables on subjects that do not yet have a consensus, including copyright. Artists want to be able to refuse to have their works used to train AI – and this right to “opt-out” is recognized by the AI Act. They also want to be remunerated if they authorize training – and, on this point, we do not yet have a collective solution. We are not trying to avoid discussion. On the remuneration mechanisms, we are waiting for feedback from the missions entrusted on the subject by the Ministry of Culture to professors Alexandra Bensamoun and Joëlle Farchy. We could imagine a platform, private or public, that connects AI manufacturers and content owners, or transparency mechanisms on contracts signed, even if these choices belong, of course, to the authors of the missions. On work, you say that we must seek a consensus among economists, during the scientific days of the summit, on February 6 and 7, 2025. So we do not know whether this technology will create or destroy jobs… Indeed, we do not know exactly. Not all technological revolutions, such as the arrival of the PC or computers, have led to a massive reduction in employment. But there is a transformation, even an upheaval for many professions. Some voices have claimed that AI will replace a massive portion of jobs. At this stage, the majority of economists say that some jobs – such as film dubbing or shorthand typing – will disappear, and new ones will be created – such as AI specialist in a field. And we can see that a significant number of jobs will change. Having a scientific consensus helps guide public policies. If it predicted that half of the jobs would disappear, then we would have to consider a universal minimum income. But if it anticipates, as is currently the case, that around 70% of jobs will change, we need to work on training, in order to help people adapt. While paying attention to the quality of jobs and the greater or lesser capacity of people to adapt. On the environment, you propose standardizing the measurements of the energy costs of AI. Is this enough, given the explosion in data center consumption? No, and so we want to launch a coalition for sustainable AI. It would be a gathering of States, companies or NGOs, who want to launch initiatives. There is the idea of a standard, to measure, with the same criteria, the consumption of electricity, water and the carbon impact of an AI. We can also consider incentives for the development of a more frugal AI, such as prizes for researchers. We could also promote rankings of models according to their environmental impact. Isn't it paradoxical that in parallel France and the European Union are seeking to accelerate the establishment of data centers? When we want a more sustainable AI, we start by wanting an AI. We could outsource, that is to say let the data centers be installed in other countries and the AIs developed in other languages and cultures, in order to be customers. But, if we want to participate in the creation of AI, the question arises of how to make it more sustainable. And we need data centers, researchers, start-ups… The President-elect of the United States, Donald Trump, and his advisor Elon Musk are invited. But what can we expect from them, when the new president has sworn to do everything to consolidate American dominance in AI against China? Each country is of course trying to stand out, in AI or other areas. At the same time, this technology does not really have borders. There is a tension between the desire to promote its own ecosystem and the need to work together. There are points of convergence. Standards or interoperability between regulations, this interests all countries. And the idea of developing local ecosystems, with start-ups, I have also heard it in the United States. It is the idea of "little tech" [as opposed to the digital giants called Big Tech], notably defended by people close to Donald Trump. This summit applies a very open and multi-actor multilateralism. There will be a final declaration signed, we hope, by as many countries as possible. There will also be topics, such as the foundation for digital commons or the coalition for sustainable AI, which will only be supported by certain participants. Don't you risk displaying a vision that is too optimistic, technophile and pro-business? Concerns, such as the risk of autonomous weapons, discrimination in public services or surveillance, seem to be little present... We will talk about these topics, which are real issues, as well as disinformation and the impact of AI on children or on culture. Until [2023], we have heard a lot of comparisons between AI and nuclear power. It does not seem relevant to me because this technology is developing in closed spaces. I prefer the parallel with electricity, or with medicines and chemistry. We can make bacteriological weapons or poison from it, but also vaccinate populations, treat cancer. Of course, it is necessary to test AI and contain negative uses, but also, as much as possible, to allow the development of solutions.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1691

This is the price of success. After being one of the big winners of the exodus of X (formerly Twitter) users, Bluesky must now show its credentials to regulators. For a week now, the social network, which has passed the 22 million user mark and is one of the most downloaded applications on app stores, has been trying to respond to the questions of the European Commission. Bluesky has, in fact, been ordered to comply with the Digital Services Regulation (DSA) which governs online platforms. On November 25, Brussels announced that the social network was failing to meet its obligations. While Bluesky is not yet required to follow the entire DSA (transparency reports, risk assessment, etc.) because it does not have the status of a "very large platform" (more than 45 million users), it must nevertheless publish certain data. “All EU platforms, even the smallest ones that are below the threshold, which is the case with Bluesky, must have a dedicated page on their website that indicates the number of users they have in the EU and where they are legally established,” says Thomas Regnier, a spokesman for the European Commission. “This is not the case for Bluesky to date.” The company must also appoint a European representative who will serve as a point of contact with the Commission, and set up offices in the European Union. The Commission, which now has an account on the blue butterfly network, as well as its president Ursula von der Leyen, has asked the governments of the 27 member states whether they have identified Bluesky on their soil. This is not the case for the Netherlands or Ireland according to their media regulators. Dublin, home to 13 of the 25 very large platforms including Google, TikTok, Meta and X, is the natural choice for many tech companies because of its attractive tax framework. Bluesky is undoubtedly the big winner of the disenchantment with X. In the ten days following Trump's election, the social network launched by Jack Dorsey, the co-founder of Twitter, had gained 1 million subscribers. It has been gaining 1 million more per day since then. Bluesky, which has been open to the general public since February after being accessible only by invitation, thus crossed the 20 million registration mark in mid-November, compared to 9 in September. While it remains far behind X (550 million monthly active users) and Threads (275 million), the gap with the latter is narrowing in terms of daily use in the United States. Launched last year, Bluesky presents itself as an independent platform. The company has to date raised two rounds of funding, of 8 and 15 million dollars. Its code is open source. It is also a decentralized social network: users can manage their own data and content without depending on a central authority. The application sorts content in chronological order. Above all, users can easily create their own filters and share news feeds around a theme (cinema, politics, literature, sociology, etc.) with all users. The Internet user therefore regains control over what they want to see. Many users are delighted to find on Bluesky the spirit of Twitter in its early days, with conversations without aggression. But the influx of new users quickly overwhelmed the moderation teams. "In the last 24 hours, we have received more than 42,000 reports," indicated the teams dedicated to security on November 15, noting "an influx of spam, scams, and trolls." The social network thus committed a few days ago to increasing the number of its moderators from 25 people to a hundred. It said that “on some very sensitive topics like child safety,” it had recently changed its moderation policy to prioritize content removal, even though in some cases it may have seemed rushed. “This has led to over-enforcement and the temporary suspension of many users’ accounts,” the company acknowledged. “We have reinstated some accounts and continue to review appeals.” Bluesky uses Safer, a machine-learning tool developed by the Thorn Foundation, to detect child abuse. Bluesky is also expected to do more on account verification. A recent analysis by independent expert Alexios Mantzarlis, director of the Security Trust and Safety Initiative at Cornell Tech, found that 44% of the 100 most-followed accounts on Bluesky had at least one “duplicate.” That’s because instead of proactively verifying notable accounts itself, the platform encourages users to use a custom domain name as their handle in order to “self-verify.” "With more and more users joining Bluesky, we know how important it is to identify real accounts," the platform said. "Users deserve to be assured that the accounts they interact with are authentic." As a result, its identity theft policy will now be more "aggressive." Fake accounts will be deleted. Also prohibited is identity churning with the aim of misleading users. Bluesky also says it is "exploring other options to improve account verification." As for parody, satirical or fan accounts, they will remain authorized but must be "clearly identified in both the display name and the biography so that users know that the account is not official." A small revolution in prospect at Bluesky, forced to reform if it wants to enter the big leagues. KL

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1692

Since November 5, the declarations have been piling up: I am leaving X/Twitter/this network that has become toxic. Anonymous people, personalities (the very active writer Stephen King, the singer Barbra Streisand, the actress Alyssa Milano, who helped launch the #metoo movement there), companies (Best Buy, Target) or media (the American radio station NPR, The Guardian, Ouest-France). Direction Threads for some, Mastodon for others, or even Bluesky. The latter, developed by Jack Dorsey, the co-founder of Twitter, seems to be the main beneficiary of this digital migration. The platform has accumulated more than 7 million new users in the two weeks following the American presidential election and now has more than 22 million – the count is kept here in real time. Since his acquisition of the social network in 2022, billionaire Elon Musk has instrumentalized its operation to serve his interests and opinions, and violent content and false information have multiplied there. It has been documented many times that hateful messages are more "liked" and shared than others and that fake news circulates more and faster than factual messages. The boss of Tesla and SpaceX made certifications that allow publications to be promoted chargeable, then modified the content moderation policies, notably allowing the reinstatement of previously banned accounts - including the most notorious, that of Donald Trump. In August 2023, Musk announced that the platform would no longer allow users to block accounts. His own publications benefit from a multiplier coefficient of 1,000, making exposure to his tweets and his shares of often unreliable content almost inevitable. "X is a machine for creating fragmentation and bipolarization within society," summarizes David Chavalarias, research director at the CNRS and author of Toxic Data (Flammarion, 2022). In other words, its effects are not only measured on X. Would we have subscribed to this network if it had been presented to us like this? Probably not. Unless you are delighted by the picture, the moral dilemma is resolved fairly quickly: being on X means giving an audience, and therefore weight, to a toxic network that aims to destroy traditional media. So why are we hesitant to leave? “Because it’s impossible!” says a former journalist still stuck in his old habits. “It’s still Twitter that dictates the news. We no longer know how to think other than by looking at the topics that are coming up, and who is reacting to what.” He did create an account on Bluesky, where he finds “good people, with whom [he] got along well on Twitter. It’s like being in a local bar.” His impression, in short? “It’s bland.” » He is not the only one to keep a guilty taste for X. The network being what it is, this #Xit (for exit) or #Xodus (for exodus) does not happen without lively discussions between users. Where else, other than here, can you come across the richest man in the world but also the pope, Barack Obama or Joyce Carol Oates?, some ask. How, others remind us, could protest movements like Black Lives Matter or Metoo have taken on such proportions without a network like this? If X is the paradise of disinformation, shouldn't serious media resist rather than desert it? Isn't this free-for-all also a form of exposure to otherness that we never experience in real life? I add here to these arguments: how could I, myself, know and relay these various opinions expressed on the other side of the world by people I would not know without my X account? Some are admissible. Even if the network looks less and less like an egalitarian agora (which it never was), with still some 500 million users, it is not comparable to Gab or Parlor, networks confined to a far-right audience. X, undeniably, is useful. At UNICEF, for example, they explain that they have not yet decided the question. The concentration of journalists and politicians on the network makes the decision "not easy", explains the director of communications, Lucile Grosjean. Nevertheless, the "negative aspects" of X mean that they are seriously considering it. But Unicef's problem is that of all active users who have accumulated an audience, and textual capital with all their tweets and threads: they have an aversion to loss. "There is a dilemma between, on the one hand, morality, the ethical values that we want to defend, and, on the other hand, the comfort and time invested in Twitter," says Mr. Chavalarias. It is to resolve this conflict that he launched the HelloQuitX initiative: the objective is to build a migration tool that will allow you to leave X by taking your texts, your followers and your followed accounts. And to take them to Mastodon or Bluesky, two platforms without advertising, open source, decentralized, which no one can take control of. Spaces, adds David Chavalarias, "where the user's freedom is much greater, both from the point of view of privacy and from the point of view of searching for information." This tool will have to be operational by January 20, 2025, the date on which Elon Musk will take over the Trump administration's "Department of Government Efficiency." "He will then be able to escape all prosecution and will be freewheeling," comments David Chavalarias. What will become of X if the "liberals" desert? Will this exodus be massive enough to reshape our methods of information and debate? Will we be able to get rid of the habits we have acquired on Twitter? Note that the messages posted on Mastodon are called "toots": those who choose the #Xode have until January 20 to get used to it.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1693

After the Olympics, artificial intelligence (AI)? Paris intends to attract global attention again with the Summit for Action on AI, which will be held at the Grand Palais. On February 10 and 11, 100 heads of state from around the world will be invited, including the American Donald Trump and Chinese officials. A total of 700 personalities will be invited, business leaders – including Elon Musk or executives from American companies OpenAI, Google or Meta or French companies such as Mistral or LightOn –, but also "researchers or representatives of civil society", the Elysée specified on Friday, November 29. To present itself as one of the world capitals of AI and stand out from previous summits, Paris is taking a fairly positive and optimistic line on this technology. "We will highlight the risks of AI, already well discussed in London in November 2023 and in Seoul in May, but also the opportunities and benefits of this technology," explains the Elysée, praising the potential benefits of AI for health, the climate and productivity. Hence the name "action" summit. In continuity This line is in continuity with the position adopted by Emmanuel Macron who, over the last two years, has been "personally involved" in the debates on the European AI Act regulation, described as a possible brake on innovation. The orientation is reminiscent of that of the report of the AI Commission, chaired by Anne Bouverot, now the Head of State's special envoy for the organization of the February 2025 summit. It should be the occasion to publish the recommendations of the European AI Champions Initiative, a group of business leaders and institutional representatives responsible for promoting the creation of local giants. France is also seeking to distinguish itself through an "inclusive" diplomatic approach: "We want to show that in Paris, we can hold multilateral meetings and have a conversation on AI as on other subjects," explains the Elysée, citing the risk of seeing the digital world "fragment". The objective is in particular to "clarify" the global governance of AI, discussed at the United Nations, the G7, the OECD, etc. What can we expect on this front from Trump, who is a priori in favor of deregulating AI to defend American leadership? "He seems to defend the idea of "little tech", that is to say start-ups and SMEs, against the giants of "big tech". This is also our agenda, or that of African countries, for example," they respond at the Elysée. One of the themes of the summit is devoted to "AI in the service of the general interest" and plans to promote, through a foundation, the creation of "commons" and freely accessible "open source" technologies. The aim is to counter the "closed" AI systems of large private groups or to promote multilingual AI. To avoid appearing to have an overly idealistic conception of a controversial technology, the Elysée also assures that it is promoting "responsible AI". The organizers hope to initiate a "coalition" at the summit aimed at "standardizing" energy consumption measurements. In the cultural field, artists' creations with AI will be shown and debates will be organized on the "sometimes difficult questions" for the future of creation. On the sensitive issue of copyright and remuneration for content used to train AI, the organizers say that they will rely on the conclusions of the missions entrusted by the Ministry of Culture to the lawyer Alexandra Bensamoun. Finally, the summit plans to discuss disinformation and employment. On this theme, the idea is to seek to create a "consensus" of economists on forecasts of productivity and job losses or gains. And to insist on training.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1694

From the Olympia stage to Station F, Xavier Niel continues to perform the art of the one-man show. Just a week ago, the billionaire was on the stage of the Parisian start-up campus, for the opening of the second AI summit (ai-Pulse) of his cloud subsidiary Scaleway. Invited to launch the debates, in hesitant but obligatory English given the cosmopolitan audience present in the room, the founder of Free was interrupted during his speech by a slightly teasing vocal AI: "I'm sorry, I don't understand what you're saying, I only speak English!" Savoring the laughter in the room, Xavier Niel jumped at the opportunity to present this AI, Moshi, publicly presented last July by the teams at Kyutai, his AI laboratory. Exactly a year ago, at the first ai-Pulse summit, Xavier Niel, Rodolphe Saadé (CEO of CMA CGM) and Eric Schmidt (ex-CEO of Google) announced an investment of 300 million euros to set up this non-profit structure. All this while poaching a handful of researchers from the best AI laboratories of American giants such as Meta (Fair), Google (Deepmind) and Microsoft. "We have brought together the Avengers of AI," Xavier Niel assured again on Thursday, in reference to the superheroes of the Marvel universe. His objective, with this laboratory, is to make the voice of France and Europe emerge in a global race for AI dominated by the United States and China. Moshi, this AI capable of conversing in real time in English, is the first major project of the commando of researchers based in the 3rd arrondissement of Paris, rue Montmorency. “Releasing a product in the space of six months is quite rare in research,” says Neil Zeghidour, one of the founding members of Kyutai and ex-Google Deepmind. Launching a multimodal AI with voice capabilities quickly became obvious. “This is a project on which progress was non-existent, particularly the live conversation aspect, and on which we knew we were well placed, given the expertise of some of us on audio subjects.” The result is a mix of audacity and technical prowess. The voice AI was trained using a large in-house language model (LLM) of 7 billion parameters, Helium, as well as hours of public audio data. But Kyutai sought to go further, in order to give Moshi the capacity to respond to the infinite diversity of situations encountered in natural language. From the 200 hours of audio recorded in the studio with an actress, Alice (the voice of Moshi), Kyutai internally generated a hundred million hours of synthetic data on which the AI was trained. Its strong point is latency: less than 160 milliseconds to respond to a request. Moshi is even capable of interrupting the person speaking. “To give you an idea, GPT 3.5 was trained with 185 billion parameters. They do better with fewer, which explains why the latency is low,” says Hanan Ouazan, partner in charge of AI at the company Artefact. Another reason is the way voice AI works. As this expert points out, the first generations of assistants (Siri, Alexa, Google) work as follows: the model listens to the incoming voice, transforms this voice into text to interpret the command and provide a response, before transforming this text back into voice. “Moshi is able to remove this text layer, the model speaks but also “thinks” in voice,” explains Hanan Ouazan. “The assistants work a bit like walkie-talkies, they decide that you have finished speaking to start. But this is not the way a conversation works, in which people interrupt each other and speak at the same time,” adds Neil Zeghidour. This break with traditional AI opens up a whole range of possibilities in recruitment, call centers and even education. According to Patrick Perez, director of the laboratory, the demo still online on the Kyutai site has recorded nearly 500,000 sessions opened by third parties. But the open source version has been downloaded several million times, according to Neil Zeghidour. True to its DNA as a non-profit laboratory and its open source philosophy, Kyutai has shared all the manufacturing secrets, including 70 pages of the technical reference for training Moshi. "What they managed to do with a team of eight researchers and without the resources of the big players is quite impressive," summarizes Hanan Ouazan. The laboratory teams want to go further. A French version is currently being developed. Kyutai is also working on the intelligence of a model with still limited capabilities, but also on its efficiency, in order to be able to run it locally on a smartphone, after having succeeded on a computer. The rate of publications and new launches is however limited by the laboratory's human resources. In the recruitment phase, Kyutai continues to look for new donors. Even if it seems that the laboratory has only consumed a still small part of its initial budget. While the American digital giants are jostling to acquire tens of thousands of the famous GPU (graphic processing unit) graphics cards, widely used for training models, Kyutai also insists on its frugality. The IT infrastructure of its partner Scaleway - which should pass the 5,000 GPU mark on its supercomputer in the coming days - is enough for the moment. The laboratory's ambition is evident in the background. Claiming to be able to do a lot with a little, it is confident in its ability to revolutionize voice AI technologies and create a global standard. Kyutai also wants to impose the mode of open and transparent research. "AI is far too important to be developed behind closed doors," hammered Patrick Perez at the ai-Pulse summit. A barely veiled response to the turn taken by OpenAI, which, from a laboratory similar to Kyutai, has become a for-profit company. By depriving itself of any economic recipe linked to its model, "the French laboratory has obviously not made it easy for itself to compete with this American rival," recalls Hanan Ouazan. Coincidentally, Kyutai's birthday coincides with the opening of an OpenAI office in Paris, which opened on Thursday evening. The American giant wants to strengthen its presence in France and has already launched a French version of its vocal AI, a rival to Moshi. A show of strength and a way to attract local players in the ecosystem. For Neil Zeghidour, while the dynamics of open source may have suffered with OpenAI's change of model a few months ago, there is now a clear resurgence of interest. "We are in a phase of reopening laboratories. Just look at Meta with its Llama model or Google with Gema. This brings visibility to these groups. We hope to contribute to this effort." LM

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1695

Two years almost to the day separate the plunge into the depths from its new all-time high. After suffering the backlash from the bankruptcy of the FTX exchange platform in November 2022, the price of bitcoin exceeded $91,000 on Wednesday, November 13. The result of an exceptional surge, the most famous cryptocurrency has gained more than 30% since the election of Donald Trump. The increase even exceeds 110% since the beginning of 2024, marked by the mass entry of institutional investors into the cryptocurrency market. Its total capitalization exceeded $3,100 billion on Wednesday, for the first time since the post-Covid pandemic era. In the wake of bitcoin, other cryptocurrencies are experiencing strong growth, such as ethereum, whose price jumped by more than 30% in seven days. "Donald Trump's pro-crypto stance during his campaign and his promises to create a more favorable regulatory environment have strengthened investor confidence and optimism," analyzes Jean-Marie Mognetti, CEO and co-founder of CoinShares, which specializes in regulated financial products backed by cryptocurrencies. Especially since the House of Representatives and the Senate are also won over to the Republican camp, which is decisive in terms of regulation. "America is going to follow the path of economic freedom!", thus congratulated Brian Armstrong, CEO of the Coinbase exchange platform and major donor to the Republican campaign, the day after the elections. Contrary to his statements in 2016, when he called bitcoin a "scam" or denounced competition on the dollar threatening the monetary sovereignty of the United States, candidate Donald Trump - whose campaign was largely financed by a few major players in the sector - promised more favorable regulation of cryptoassets, and even the creation of a federal strategic reserve of bitcoins. The US government currently holds more than 203,000 bitcoins in assets, according to data from Arkham Intelligence, most of which come from seizures. "Bitcoin is now recognized as a financial asset class in its own right, with an interest for savers and institutions as well as a real technological contribution that can no longer be ignored," emphasizes Alexandre Baradez, market analyst for the financial company IG. By proposing to include bitcoins in state reserves, Donald Trump is giving it even more letters of nobility by adding a sovereign aspect." Until now, only countries like El Salvador and Venezuela have granted official recognition to this asset. But Donald Trump's victory alone does not explain the underlying movements underlying this new surge in prices. Institutional investors have entered the game en masse since the beginning of January and the green light from the American stock market watchdog (the SEC) for bitcoin spot ETFs, a major upheaval in the history of cryptoassets. These bitcoin-based investment products, called exchange traded funds (ETFs), closely track the performance of the cryptocurrency. They allow large investors, such as family offices or pension funds, to diversify their investments. On November 7, the bitcoin ETF from BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager, generated $750 million in net inflows and recorded record trading volumes of $4.7 billion. Result: with more than $41 billion as of November 12, this ETF launched in January surpasses the gold ETF. Quite symbolic. Encouraged by a more risk-friendly global financial environment, as shown by US stock indices, “trading volumes have been significantly higher on BTC ETFs over the past week, showing that there is significant institutional interest in this rally,” observes Adam Morgan McCarthy, an analyst at crypto asset market data provider Kaiko. “We are seeing a notable increase in institutional interest, particularly from university endowments, pension funds and hedge funds, and increasing participation from mainstream investors via ETFs,” adds Jean-Marie Mognetti. With the growing presence of these large institutions in this market, demand is outstripping supply, especially since bitcoin has experienced a very unique phenomenon this year, known as the “halving.” According to the open-source computer program imagined by its “creator” Satoshi Nakamoto in 2008, the issuance of bitcoins – the reward allocated to those who guarantee the security of the system – is reduced by half every 4 years. However, "in each of the cycles observed since the creation of bitcoin, a halving always corresponds to a significant increase in the price. It was therefore expected," recalls Nicolas Louvet, CEO of the French broker Coinhouse. This surge in prices, however, goes beyond bitcoin alone, with notable performances in the valuation of other cryptocurrencies such as ethereum, solana, cardano, etc. "The use of cryptoassets is starting to become widespread because the technology is of interest," continues Nicolas Louvet. In France, banks are starting to circulate more and more financial assets on the blockchain, like Société Générale, which issued its first digital green bond on ethereum last year. Projects are multiplying, because financial institutions and companies also see an interest in them in terms of cost and the possibility of intervening on the markets 7 days a week and at all hours. These cryptocurrencies are also used in the growing space of decentralized finance, which covers these new ways of exchanging, buying and selling, and investing money with few or no intermediaries. As a result, "investors are increasingly interested in Ethereum, such as the Michigan State Pension Fund, which is one of the main holders of the ETH spot ETF of digital asset manager Grayscale," adds Adam Morgan McCarthy. The possibilities for financial gains on these alternative cryptocurrencies are now greater than what is possible on Bitcoin. The speculative part of the movements observed in recent days should not be ignored. "It is important to note that the cryptocurrency market remains highly volatile. Rapid price increases, particularly for certain altcoins and "meme" coins, suggest speculative behavior that could lead to brutal corrections," warns Jean-Marie Mognetti. Thus, dogecoin, a currency supported by Elon Musk but without real utility, has gained 123% over the last 7 days. "There is overheating on quite a few assets, as we can also see on Tesla shares, and Bitcoin is the spearhead," underlines Alexandre Baradez. The passage of certain valuation levels can also trigger certain hedge fund algorithms. "The market's reaction to political events and promises of regulatory changes underlines its sensitivity to policy changes. This highlights the importance of regulatory developments in shaping the future of cryptocurrencies, as we can see in Europe with the implementation of MiCA (the European regulation on cryptoasset markets, in force since June 2023, Editor's note)", insists Jean-Marie Mognetti. It remains to be seen what the concrete decisions of the new Trump administration and the American Parliament will be, which has so far been unable to agree on legislation. "This is a real industry, there is innovation. Regulation is needed, but it must not be too aggressive, Jeremy Allaire, CEO of the American company Circle, explains to Le Figaro. We must give this industry time to develop." Among the changes most awaited by the sector, a body of clear rules from the various regulators that does not impose on young players obligations as restrictive as those of financial institutions established for decades, the authorization of ETFs on other cryptocurrencies and the facilitation of the use of these cryptoassets in banks or in businesses. IV

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1696

While the second-hand market is enjoying some success in many areas, there are still sectors where it is struggling to take off due to a lack of sufficient confidence in the condition of the products offered. Household appliances are one of them. How can you be sure that the fridge or oven offered on a platform is the age indicated or if it has been repaired with manufacturer-quality parts? Today, technologies make it possible to bring together in one place - and with confidence - information from different stakeholders involved in the life cycle of a product. Hence the initiative launched in France by Fnac Darty and Ecosystem (the organization that collects the eco-participation paid when purchasing an electrical appliance for its future recycling): providing each product with a digital passport, making it possible to reliably trace its history by recording any significant event and having more transparency on its real condition. Concretely, the consumer will be able, on the sales platform or in store, to scan a QR Code which will give them access to a cryptographic certificate listing several pieces of information related to the object (origin, composition, manufacturing, etc.) before possibly finalizing their purchase. "This maintenance passport meets several needs. On the one hand, consumers can be secured by access to useful information. On the other hand, we can offer them content and services to better use and care for their products, in order to extend their lifespan" underlines Vincent Gufflet, director of services and operations at Fnac Darty. Open to the entire industry (manufacturers, distributors, repairers, reconditioning and recycling players), the project hopes to promote the development of a second-life market and encourage repair rather than pure and simple replacement. The longer-term goal is to improve product sustainability, an important issue for the entire sector and made even more crucial by the Agec anti-waste law that came into force in 2022, designed to reduce waste and better preserve natural resources by extending the lifespan of products. "The problem is that this law concerns a group of players on board the same boat, but who do not share data on what happens to the product they build or resell. Technology makes it possible to achieve this in a transparent and secure manner," explains Pierre-Nicolas Hurstel, CEO of Arianee, the open-source blockchain-based protocol that underpins these digital passports. They can be created at different stages of the life cycle: during manufacturing, during sale, during repair or when it is collected for resale second-hand. Thanks to "tokenization", all stakeholders - suppliers, producers and consumers - have secure and transparent access to the different blocks of the chain. The ramp-up will be gradual. To start, Fnac Darty is offering a first version of this passport for the 4,000 fridges, dryers, washing machines, freezers and other household appliances recovered from the Paris 2024 Olympic Village, repaired and reconditioned by it and resold on its 2nde Vie Collectors platform and in stores. The digital passport contains the history of the product, from its installation in the athletes' village to its reconditioning in the Darty after-sales service workshops. It also contains a product maintenance sheet and the instruction manual. Customers can be notified throughout the year of the maintenance actions to be carried out to extend the product's lifespan. Fnac Darty plans to generalize this digital passport to all second-life household appliances in the first quarter of 2025, before gradually extending it to new or repaired products, as well as to other industry players. "This initiative is only the first step in a great ambition, shared by Ecosystem, to lay the foundations of a robust, common platform open to all industry players," insists Vincent Gufflet. Discussions are already open with several manufacturers. "Other manufacturers, distributors and reuse players have already confirmed their interest in joining the initiative to co-construct this solution," confirms Nathalie Yserd, CEO of Ecosystem. This initiative prefigures what will develop with the gradual entry into force of the digital product passport (or DPP) from 2027. This passport, which aims to ensure digital traceability of devices placed on the European market, whether manufactured inside or outside the EU, will gradually become mandatory for all physical goods. IV

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1697

Being from Rio, Marcelo Frota has nothing to do with the king of carnival. It is in London, where he settled after having scoured the arteries of Chicago and Lisbon, that he recorded this seventh album. And more precisely at the Total Refreshment Center, centrifuge of an alternative scene. We will therefore hardly be surprised to find throughout the tracks guests of the genre kindly crazy like Alabaster DePlume, whose saxophone traces strange sinusoidal waves on the rhythms printed by the hinge formed by the bass of Caetano Malta, spotted in particular with Lucas Santtana, and the drummer Nick Woodmansey, at the head of Emanative, a trendy collective Sun Ra. Enough to bring an unusual touch to the universe of the singer-songwriter, who marks with this record an aesthetic turning point to paraphrase the title in a career until now rather oriented towards classy pop. Jacques Denis

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1698

Hello, I am Optimus, the virtual assistant of the city of Plaisir. » This is the first sentence that citizens of this town in the Yvelines hear when they contact the municipality by telephone. To deal with the 450 daily calls, the city has set up a virtual agent capable of answering most user questions in natural language. An innovative solution based, for the most part, on generative AI. Use cases, limits, technical orchestration... How does this new device work? Developed in 2022, the virtual agent Optimus has been able to communicate in an almost human way with its interlocutors since April 2024. It answers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It is capable of answering more than 284 different questions and can respond to user requests. For more complex questions that it cannot handle alone, Optimus knows how to qualify them before transferring the call to human agents. In most cases, Optimus is able to provide a relevant response in less than two minutes. The system can also trigger actions such as sending SMS messages to provide additional information. And the results are there: since its implementation, the assistant has optimized the response rate to users, increasing it to 92% compared to 30% previously! To deploy Optimus, the Plaisir teams called on the services of YeldaAI, a voice artificial intelligence start-up for customer relations. It already works with Fnac Darty, Sodebo, Eiffage and BNP Paribas and has developed a clever model orchestration to develop the virtual agent. The process takes place in three main stages: transcription, generation of a text response and voice generation of the response. A complex architecture To transcribe the user's question, YeldaAI uses several "text-to-speech" models adapted to different use cases. “In some contexts, transcription can be more complex than it seems. An interesting case is spelling a license plate. When a person hesitates and says, “Uh…”, you have to distinguish whether it’s the letter E or a simple hesitation. Another example is when a person dictates their email address, they can mix normal pronunciation and spelling. Our system must be able to distinguish between these different modes of enunciation and combine them correctly,” explains Thomas Guenoux, head of YeldaAI. OpenAI’s Whisper and several other models are then used to capture the different nuances. Once the query is transcribed, the analysis and generation of the response comes. Quite classically, here it is an LLM (large language model) that analyzes the user query and provides a response based on the data made available. "We use both well-known proprietary solutions from OpenAI and Anthropic and opensource models from Mistral or Meta," explains Thomas Guenoux. The choice will depend directly on the preference of the company or administration wishing to deploy the system for an "opensource" or proprietary technology. Note that the requests addressed to the model are previously cleaned of any personal data, thus making the orchestration "GDPR by design" (optimal protection of personal data). Finally, for the response, YeldaAI is based on several "text-to-speech" models; in particular, but not limited to, those of the French Voxygen. The most complex being that the orchestration of the model requires minimal latency. Thus, the entire system is based on a streaming flow. "The LLM continuously analyzes the flow of the conversation. Once we have generated a potential response, we move on to the speech synthesis stage. This is also done in streaming. Concretely, as soon as the system starts writing the response, we launch the voice synthesis and start broadcasting the voice. Thus, the sentence can start to be pronounced even before its complete generation is finished,” Thomas Guenoux further explains. The strength of the system lies in its ability to adapt in real time. Thanks to the flexibility of the cloud, the system is able to adapt and deploy additional hardware resources if many users call at the same time. “Whether it is to manage a thousand, two thousand or even five thousand simultaneous calls, our infrastructure adapts automatically. There is therefore no practical limit to our call processing capacity,” assures the head of YeldaAI. Finally, to further reduce latency, the company is closely monitoring the development of new multimodal models, such as Moshi, developed by Kyutai, which Thomas Guenoux describes as “very promising”. Progress that should further contribute to democratizing AI telephony agents. However, Thomas Guenoux assures us that the impact on employment will not necessarily be negative. "For organizations such as town halls, it is above all about improving the quality of service by ensuring a 100% response rate. Human agents remain essential but their role is changing. They are now focusing on interactions requiring real human added value," he assures us. In Plaisir, this development is generally well received, with agents seeing AI as a new colleague who assists them."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1699

U - new big bang! Considered a revolution, the launch of consumer generative artificial intelligence tools two years ago is gradually invading professional spaces. To date, the world is divided into three categories of companies... On the one hand, those that are not moving, to avoid a radical change in organization. On the other hand, those that have taken the bull by the horns and are investing man-time. Finally, the wait-and-see players, who are scrutinizing the successes and missteps of each other. "In any case, it is not a question of knowing if we will be led, whatever our sector, to use artificial intelligence. The only question that matters is: "When?"", estimates Frédéric Muh, director of BEA Solutions, a digital services company. His clients are these VSEs and SMEs, which represent 99.9% of companies. "In our country," he continues, "VSEs have not taken the measure of the wave that is coming. SMEs have identified a potential gain in man-time. But they do not know where to start with AI. For them, before being a social issue, it is first and foremost an organizational issue, a vector for improving team skills. However, I imagine that in mid-sized companies or large groups, HR choices could be more radical." According to the research company Statista, the artificial intelligence market could represent more than 1,800 billion dollars worldwide by 2030, compared to 95 billion in 2021. Now, thanks to the open-source codes of the "foundation models" put on the market by Gafam since 2018, many companies are developing their own applications on this basis. "We are witnessing a real revolution," insists Marc Brun, director of Exavision, within the Equans group (Bouygues), working in optronics in extreme environments. These foundation models are trained with billions of parameters. There is now a real quantum leap that will break real barriers. Some signs are unmistakable. Engineering schools now provide courses in "prompting" (the art of questioning AI, editor's note). Many companies are created by using these models to respond to a customer problem. This is leading many companies to take the plunge and find a profitable use for AI. To see this progress, all you have to do is question a consumer artificial intelligence today on the same subject that you asked it a year ago. You will be surprised by the progress." "Disturbing similarities" AI still needs to be used... intelligently. "During calls for tenders, we have found disturbing similarities from one candidate to another, even though I do not suspect any agreement between candidates...", says the general director of services for a local authority in the south of France. Similarly, HR departments use AI to assist them in their recruitment and automatically send unsuccessful candidates a standardized message? The latter return the favor! According to surveys conducted by Canva, Neurasigh Data and Beamery, between 33% and 57% of applicants also use AI for their CV and cover letter. Hidden behind the avatars of a stork and a fox, Jean de La Fontaine already warned: "Deceivers, it is for you that I write :/ Expect the same." GUILLAUME MOLLARET

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1700

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE Investigation It got off to a bad start. First of all, it's called Chat. It's a chatbot like ChatGPT, but French. In the spring, we started the conversation: "Who is Arthur Mensch?" — Arthur Mensch is a software developer and an active contributor to the open source community […]. In addition to his work in software development, Arthur Mensch is an accomplished musician and an electronic music enthusiast. He currently lives in Berlin, Germany. — Are you sure? — I'm sorry, it seems I made a mistake in my previous answer. After checking, Arthur Mensch is not a known software developer or open source contributor. It's possible that I made a mistake in my answer due to confusion with another person with the same name. — Thanks for checking. Now that this misunderstanding is cleared up, can you tell me more about Arthur Mensch? — I'm sorry, but I couldn't find any reliable information on a person named Arthur Mensch. It is possible that this person is not a public figure or that they do not have a significant online presence." Let's try again: when we ask the Cat who its creators are, it cites three names that are not those of the founders of Mistral AI; when we ask for the date of creation of the company, it answers 2018 (failed) or 2020 (failed again, the correct answer is 2023). In the jargon of artificial intelligence, this type of error has a name: hallucination. It's enough to rub your eyes. With his impeccably tousled hair, Arthur Mensch is the French face of artificial intelligence. At 32, he is therefore at the head of Mistral AI, a company valued at nearly 6 billion euros and which has already raised 1 billion since its creation, praised as the European champion of artificial intelligence... From the start, the thirty-year-old warned the competition in the Financial Times: "We compete with everybody." In plain French: "We'll take everyone." American-style entrepreneur In eighteen months, we've seen him: on stage with Emmanuel Macron at the big VivaTech trade show; at a conference in Silicon Valley; in a photo in the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal; in all the amazing rankings the press has to offer: 45th in Challenges' list of the richest French people, one of the 100 most influential people in AI according to Time - whose owner happens to be the CEO of the software publisher Salesforce, an investor in Mistral - or, on May 22, in front of an assembly of graying senators scrutinizing him with a mixture of fascination and concern about the future. In French Tech, a shower of praise: he's an "extraordinary talent," a "little genius," "an example we'd like to see repeated," the darling of Emmanuel Macron, who was still promoting Mistral AI in an interview published on October 9 in the American magazine Variety. A strange unicorn, with a President of the Republic as a sales rep and fundraising led by American companies. "In Silicon Valley, no one knows them," says French engineer Luc Julia, designer of the voice assistant Siri and author of the book Artificial Intelligence Doesn't Exist (First, 2019). "It's a gold rush, you're going to come across a lot of shovel salesmen," warns a researcher. So calm down. When Mistral AI announced a €600 million funding round in June, Open AI raised €6.6 billion in early October. In the race for the best AI models, can Mistral be a winner? Telling the story of Mistral AI is walking a tightrope between pure fantasy and real technological advances. It is also about entering the factory of a European AI champion, from Strasbourg to California, via the gilded walls of the Republic, trying to grasp a new world where the kings of AI are considered heads of state. Finally, it is about retracing the journey of a brain trained in the public in the process of transforming into an American-style entrepreneur, summoned by an era to become a kind of French Sam Altman, or a European Elon Musk. Does he really want to? He hasn't given an interview for months. After several attempts left unanswered, an appointment is set on a product of his main competitor: Google Meet. Finally, it will be a good old phone call. "You have nineteen minutes with him," says the press officer. It's American style. Top time. "It's a race," agrees the man who, just two years ago, had never run a company. Right now, I spend time on the product, on sales, a lot of time on recruitment: that's the role of a CEO." Quiet voice, sympathetic-mechanical answers, exercise required. When we tell him that the Cat is hallucinating - an astonishing sentence to write - he responds like a mechanic who has just taken a look under the hood: "It's quite simple: the model you used several months ago is a model that was not at all connected to external data sources. The way to resolve it is simply by connecting this model to sources of knowledge, to the Internet, to Wikipedia..." Engineer's approach: in his vision as in his career, everything is a matter of logic. Born in Sèvres, in the Hauts-de-Seine, straight education (Polytechnique, Télécom Paris, Ecole Normale Supérieure) and passion for computers. At 14, he installed Linux on his PC and discovered the joys of open source, computer programs that anyone can use, such as the VLC player or the Mozilla Firefox search engine. In 2015, he did his first internship at the National Institute for Research in Digital Science and Technology (Inria). "One of the reasons he wanted to join us is that we have always done free software," recalls Gaël Varoquaux, a researcher at Inria, who was also one of his thesis supervisors. "Arthur is a fan of what is called reproducible research," explains Professor Jalal Fadili. "That is to say, I write a paper and to prove my thesis, I make my codes and results available so that the community can take hold of them." They remember a "brilliant" student, "a bit reserved", "a bit in his own world", the type to go hiking or "hackathons", i.e. retreats where geeks meet to solve a computer problem over a given period. "No particular appetite for entrepreneurship," points out researcher Julien Mairal. "We didn't think he would become CEO of a company valued at several billion." A thesis with a difficult title, "Learning representations in functional imagery" in this case, 200 pages mixing mathematics, computer science, algorithms... and in English. Jalal Fadili, who was the president of the jury for his defense, is one of the fans: "He's Arthur, you know: he does everything well." When Mensch applied to the CNRS, Google – which had welcomed the greatest, such as the future Nobel Prize in physics Geoffrey Hinton – knocked on the door, via DeepMind, a company between a start-up and a laboratory, co-founded by another Nobel Prize (in Chemistry, this time), Demis Habassis. The young researcher hesitated, spent hours with his professors on the phone… “He is someone who has a keen awareness of the public interest,” believes Jalal Fadili. When you do basic research in the public sector, you have more freedom, you can work on a niche subject and open up a horizon that is not yet perceptible.” Gaël Varoquaux also got a phone call: “He asked himself a lot of questions: was he going to be able to do quality science? A company like Google has many more computing resources at its disposal and salaries are five times higher there..." Brain drain effect: in 2020, Mensch went to Google, but stayed in Paris, where the firm has its offices. At 28, he has one foot in France, the other in America. "Parrot" stuffed with data To understand what happened next, let's take a step back: since its appearance in the scientific field in 1956, artificial intelligence has experienced hype and disillusionment, winters in the 70s and 80s, funding freezes... For the past ten years, AI has experienced a new spring with the rise of generative artificial intelligence and LLM, the large language models. Creating an LLM is inventing what Emily Bender, a computational linguistics researcher at the University of Washington, called a “probabilistic parrot”: in other words, these AIs do not know how to think like humans, but rather imitate them, with the help of statistics. First, you need a “neural network,” a type of computer architecture with artificial neurons all connected according to their semantic neighborhood, according to billions of parameters. Then, feed the parrot, Continued on page 4 Continued from page 3 stuff it with data, lots of data: this is the training phase of the neural network. Then, the neural network evaluates the probability that one term will follow the next. In truth, it is even a little more than a parrot: an LLM can predict the continuation of a sentence, fill in a blank text. Example. If we take the beginning of the sentence: "Arthur Mensch is a...", the model will assign a certain probability to the occurrences "scientist", "entrepreneur", "boss of Mistral AI". Unless hallucinating, in which case it will talk about a Berlin musician. Since 2012, and the victory of the AlexNet neural network in a major annual competition called ImageNet, the AI boom has been based on a paradigm: big is beautiful, the most efficient models are those trained on the largest datasets, therefore the most expensive, the best models are the largest models, which strengthens the biggest players. In 2022, OpenAI launches ChatGPT 3.5, Google releases its Chinchilla model. The race is on, competitors publish less and less and are secretive about their results. At DeepMind, the team is growing. Among the pioneers, Arthur Mensch, who asks himself new questions, or always the same ones: leave or stay? France or America? He prefers the start-up nation to Big Tech. "I've always been keen to promote technological excellence in Europe," he sums up. "DeepMind was great, huh, we simply had the opportunity to do something ourselves and do things differently." Great pitch. "He's rude" In April 2023, Arthur Mensch filed the articles of association of Mistral AI with two young people like him, Guillaume Lample and Timothée Lacroix, who had been through the Meta labs only to come back better. They wanted to move quickly, with a small team, agility and open source, that is to say, publish their models in open access, a philosophy that can always be reproduced. French Tech is getting into battle order. The founders of Alan, a French unicorn specializing in health, are investing in the capital. The former Secretary of State for Digital Affairs Cédric O is donning the costume of "consultant-founder". "There must be about fifty people in the world who have a perfect command of AI technologies," he told Les Echos in January. "The three co-founders are among them." He bought 17,610 shares at 1 cent. From the start, everything went very quickly. In a few months, Mistral became the new flagship of the start-up nation. Three months after its launch, it announced that it had raised 105 million euros, notably from Xavier Niel, Rodolphe Saadé and Eric Schmidt, the former boss of Google. In June 2023, Arthur Mensch appeared with Emmanuel Macron. In December 2023, a new round of funding: 385 million euros. The start-up released a model called Mistral 7B, for a robot trained on 7 billion parameters, compared to 175 billion for its competitor Open AI. The team is growing, the models too, Mistral 8x7B, Mistral Large, the Chat… The unicorn is expanding, opening an office in London, another in the United States. For its first anniversary, another fundraising: 600 million euros. Cédric O's shares are now worth several tens of millions. Now the question: what are Mistral AI's models worth? The pitch is based on several ideas. The first: to do as well as the competition, with fewer resources. "It's less impressive than ChatGPT," analyzes Julien Mairal of Inria. They must position themselves on a more reasonable segment: Mistral, these are models that evolve, are lighter and cost a lot to run." "The challenge is frugal AI," says Arthur Mensch. We're stopping with the big is beautiful, we don't need over-parameterized models, we don't have to scrape the entire Web while ignoring copyright," insists Jalal Fadili. The second: open source. Unlike its competitors, the start-up prides itself on making some of its models available to developers, who can take them and do what they want with them, adapt them to a language, a European culture. The third: it is therefore a cultural issue, one of soft power and sovereignty. "When we talk about Mistral, we are talking about the position of France and Europe in the digital industry," resituates Gaël Varoquaux. "Whatever happens, it is important to have players who are not solely in the hands of the Americans," judges Julien Mairal. A final, more troubling one: a lot of people don't understand anything about it and are afraid of missing the boat. On November 21, 2023, Pascal Rogard, director of the Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques (SACD), is waiting for Arthur Mensch in his office. Here, he has received the biggest names: Netflix boss Reed Hastings, Microsoft bigwigs, Google… At 9 a.m., the coffees and croissants are ready. At 9:30 a.m., still no one. When he asks for news, he is told that Arthur Mensch forgot their meeting. The interview is postponed until the following week. The day before, another cancellation. So for Pascal Rogard, he is no longer a little genius or an entrepreneur who wants it. “It’s simple,” he says. “He’s rude.” Proof that you can’t raise millions by the hundreds without attracting some criticism. “Insistent” lobbying Everything is moving faster and faster, including legislation. At the end of 2023, negotiations on the AI Act, the European regulation on artificial intelligence, are progressing between, on the one hand, the pro-innovation and on the other, the pro-regulation. The sticking point: the obligation, provided for by law, for AI companies to publish a detailed summary of the data used to train their models. France is seeking to form a blocking minority with Germany, Italy, Hungary. Bercy and the Elysée are putting pressure to protect start-ups. "For the first time in its history, France has renounced its historical values on copyright," believes Pascal Rogard of the SACD. All this to please Mistral." The company is at the forefront of lobbying. Cédric O maneuvers behind the scenes. "His lobbying was legitimate but also insistent," says Brando Benifei, rapporteur of the bill. "He met with members of Parliament, he used his influence, he was so insistent that it ended up in the press." On February 2, after seven months of opposition, France finally agreed to validate the AI Act. Asked by Libération, the former European Commissioner Thierry Breton did not respond. "We said nothing behind closed doors, we were perfectly transparent about what we said," continues Arthur Mensch. "The thing to regulate is the applications of technology, what we do with it, rather than the technology we use." On the question of copyright, the young CEO is optimistic. "Today, we are in friendly relations with the rights holders, because we are trying to find solutions so that the value is shared well," he says. In this respect, we work with media, authors, to do it correctly. We also work with the rights holders to find an implementation of the AI Act on the subject of transparency on the training dataset that suits everyone." Questioned on the role of the founding advisor by the Senate Economic Affairs Committee, the young CEO replied: "I think there is a French tension on the back and forth between the private and public sectors. In this respect, I think it is not a good frustration, I think it rather facilitates communication, and this communication is important. Cédric O has no conflict of interest in his participation in Mistral." "We live in a bubble" At the end of February, another thunderbolt. Mistral AI announced a partnership with the giant Microsoft. "We were angry because Mistral was not honest," explains MEP Brando Benifei. "They were putting pressure on us by telling us that we were reducing their competitiveness compared to American companies, while keeping their agreement with Microsoft secret." Several MEPs wrote a letter to the Commission to request an investigation into the lobbying carried out by the French start-up. On X, Arthur Mensch wrote that the announcement had given rise to "creative interpretations": "It is a small passive investment, under a small distribution partnership, like we could have done many with Snowflake, Amazon, Google... Today, we are independent and we maintain this independence in our structure and our governance and especially in the way we distribute the models." On X, parliamentary assistant Kai Zenner published this: "Mistral AI is no longer the independent European champion that we had in mind at the time of the negotiations on the AI Act." Can it even be? Arthur Mensch still thinks so: "Today, we are promoting a global company whose headquarters are in France. It is our ambition to compete with them, we have demonstrated that with the capital we were able to raise, we had succeeded in making models that were competitive with those of our competitors. Our latest models are completely at the level of Open AI models, there is no reason for it to stop, and it is not going to stop." Specialists are waiting to see, some are talking about a loss of independence: "When you are an actor in this world, you need computing resources, there is a risk of becoming dependent, explains researcher Gaël Varoquaux. We are on crazy investments, with risks of loss of control and vassalization." Other criticisms are not long in surfacing: to protect its manufacturing secrets, Mistral only publishes part of its models in open source. "We promote a much more open model than our competitors," assures Arthur Mensch. "I am convinced that open source is what allows us to have the level of decentralization that we need for technologies that are so important for humanity." More generally, the AI sector is facing doubts about the bursting of a bubble. During the summer, the race continues, the big ones are eating the small ones: Amazon recruited the teams of the start-up Adept, Google hired that of Character, and Aleph Alpha, the German cousin of Mistral, knelt down after the publication of an investigation by Manager Magazin. In a serene voice, Arthur Mensch puts things into perspective: "The importance of generative AI is, today and in the years to come, absolutely incontestable. It is a frontier technology, which will change the way we create software, the way we work in companies. It's a technology that will take time to be adopted, but fundamentally, powerful enough to change everything where it is used." An unknown, not the least, remains on the economic model: "the $600 billion question" according to David Cahn, partner at Sequoia Partners, a Silicon Valley investment fund. "It's a technology that will take time to be adopted, but it's a technology that, fundamentally, is powerful enough to change everything where it is used, continues Arthur Mensch. What we observe is that there is indeed a lot of investment, among our competitors too, to accelerate this adoption. Between the investments and the return, there is a latency period and a little uncertainty, but what is certain is that the return will be there." Everything is under control. Gaël Varoquaux qualifies: "We live in a bubble, but it is not an empty bubble, what is behind the bubble is not empty." Persistent hallucinations When talking about generative artificial intelligence, engineer Luc Julia already uses the past tense. "It's an ecological aberration and there is no economic model." According to Professor Jalil Fadili, Mistral faces the same challenge: "Beyond economic viability, there remains the question of the sustainability of the model from an environmental and energy point of view." Arthur Mensch agrees: there is a subject there. "It's a major issue, which we have always had in mind, in particular because it is something that is more important and more considered in Europe," he concedes. "Today, we have the best technology to make small models that are deployed on phones and computers. This allows us to avoid deploying on the cloud. It is one of the ways to reduce the carbon footprint of our models." Engineer's approach: one problem, one solution. Unlike his American counterparts, he refutes the idea that humanity is at existential risk from artificial intelligence. "It's an absurd debate," he says. "The issue of loss of control is a distraction from other, more important topics, such as cultural diversity, moderation issues, and safety issues. It would be a distraction to look at what would happen if the technologies we build became autonomous. That doesn't mean anything." Once a researcher in the public eye, Arthur Mensch is now an American entrepreneur, or even an AI ambassador, like Altman or Musk. "One thing sets him apart from all these people," Gaël Varoquaux points out. Arthur has maintained scientific rigor. He hasn't gotten a big head, he's not in a delusional position, and he doesn't have an outsized ego like Elon Musk. Would French society be reassured to see an Elon Musk emerge in France? Not necessarily." To understand this, Jalal Fadili gives a clue. "When he released the Chat, the first thing he did was publish a paper," he says. "At heart, he remains an engineer." The problem of hallucinations persists. The solution: "The subject of hallucinations requires considering this technology as a set of complex systems, which have inputs and outputs, and which are connected to constantly updated data sources, rather than as a pure model," explains Arthur Mensch. It is also worth noting: six months after our first test on the Chat, the mistakes have been corrected. Now, when we ask the robot who its creator is, bingo: "Arthur Mensch is a French entrepreneur, co-founder of Mistral AI, a Paris-based start-up specializing in the development of advanced language models. Mistral AI was created in April 2023 and focuses on innovation in the field of artificial intelligence, particularly large language models." And that's not so bad. Telling the story of Mistral AI is walking a tightrope between pure fantasy and real technological advances. It is also entering the making of a European champion, from Strasbourg to California. "[AI] is a technology that will take time to be adopted, but it is powerful enough to change everything where it is used." Arthur Mensch, CEO of Mistral AI

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1701

With ChatGPT and DALL-E at your fingertips, artificial intelligence has never been more accessible… and resource-intensive. Now that we know the catastrophic environmental costs of these technological behemoths, why not think about ways to use them ethically and ecologically? “In many cases, you can’t escape AI. The applications [we use daily] don’t give us a choice to use it,” says Sasha Luccioni, a pioneer in research on the environmental impact of AI and named one of the 100 most influential people in the world of AI by Time magazine in 2024. It’s unrealistic, then, to recommend that you completely deprive yourself of these technologies. Her tips, which are aimed as much at Mr. and Mrs. Average as at leaders of the tech world, are more about healthy living than restrictive dieting. Here are four of them. 1. Be frugal in your use of AI “We now talk a lot about frugal AI, which refers to not using generative AI when it is not necessary. There are people who use ChatGPT to do a calculation or write a shopping list. A calculator and a piece of paper do the same thing!” says the researcher. Some types of artificial intelligence are more energy-intensive than others. One of the most voracious (and popular): generative AI. When it receives a query, the tool generates a new response, based on this query. For example, ask ChatGPT for a recipe for egg-free banana bread, and it will create one from A to Z, just for you. The same query, made on a traditional search engine, would have instead used recipes already published on the Web… and would have consumed 30 times less energy, according to the researcher. “Sometimes, users don’t even know they’re using this kind of AI. It’s everywhere,” says Luccioni. Her trick to spotting it? “As soon as you ask an app to create something that doesn’t exist, that’s generative AI.” 2. Think about the ethics… and potential blunders Generative AI is all the rage. In fact, the chances are that your insurer’s or grocer’s website is using ChatGPT to answer certain queries, or as a search engine, are high. A false good idea, warns the expert. The fact is that, left to its own devices, AI can sometimes create wacky, offensive and even dangerous responses. Last year, for example, a New Zealand supermarket’s meal planning tool gave a user a recipe for “aromatic water.” The ingredients? Two litres of water, one cup of ammonia and a quarter cup of bleach. In 2022, Air Canada’s virtual assistant promised a passenger a discount that didn’t exist. The airline was ultimately held liable for the mistake, after arguing that the bot was “responsible for its own actions.” “Yes, it’s bad for the environment, but it’s also a question of ethics and corporate responsibility.” 3. Turn to other tools Google now uses generative AI to answer certain queries. The same goes for WhatsApp, Meta’s calling and messaging app. On some image banks, like 123RF and Shutterstock, search results mix “real” photos (or illustrations) with AI-generated creations. Sasha Luccioni therefore likes to browse the Ecosia search engine, which is much smaller than Google and uses renewable energy to power its servers. Without completely doing without WhatsApp, the researcher sometimes turns to the Signal app, which does not use generative AI. For those looking for photos, it may be worth exploring platforms that prohibit AI-generated images, such as Unsplash. 4. Encourage transparent initiatives “Since the release of ChatGPT, the degree of transparency [in the industry] has been almost non-existent. So we don’t know the size of a model or the number of hours of training,” laments Ms. Luccioni. The researcher contributed to the creation of Code Carbon, a tool that tells developers the carbon footprint of an AI system. But the information on which the calculations are based must be accessible. It is therefore difficult to accurately assess the environmental impact of large AI software. She invites developers to opt for free (open source) and smaller software. And for us, AI novices, does she have more tips? The researcher hesitates. It is a responsibility, she says, that should rather fall to the decision-makers of the tech world. "I think we put a lot of emphasis on individual actions. But it's hard to blame consumers. In reality, we are very limited in our choices." "There are people who use ChatGPT to do a calculation or write a shopping list. A calculator and a piece of paper do the same thing!" ENVIRONMENT

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1702

Bluesky is on a roll. The social network started by Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey gained 500,000 subscribers in one day last week. A godsend for the platform which, three years after its birth, would like to join the big league, dominated by Facebook, TikTok, X and Snapchat. The fact that the former Twitter changed its blocking rules last week "in the name of greater transparency" did not go down well with some of its members. In short, people blocked by a user will still not be able to interact with them, but they will be able to continue to view their posts. "This is not good at all. Many people block abusive accounts for real-world security reasons. You just deprived them of that," reacted one angry user. In addition, X has updated its terms of use. This now allows it to use its users' public writings - provided it obtains the consent of those residing within the European Union - to train its AI models. This change has also caused concern. The impact on Bluesky was immediate. The social network initially rejoiced at having gained 100,000 subscribers in twelve hours, before announcing on October 17 that half a million people had joined in one day. This is not the first time that Bluesky has benefited from the upheavals at X. By the end of August, when the application was suspended in Brazil, the competing social network had seen its number of users increase by 33%, going from 6 to 8 million, according to the company. Portuguese had thus become the most used language on the social network. "Wow... Welcome to the million new users in the last three days!!", the group had rejoiced on August 31. "Congratulations Brazil, you made the right choice!" " wrote its leader, Jay Graber. An independent platform Bluesky, which was initially accessible by invitation, has been open to the general public since February. Its rise has been rapid: the number of its users now exceeds 11 million. It ranks third among microblogging platforms, far behind X (550 million monthly active users) and Threads (200 million), which benefits from the firepower of the Meta group. Bluesky intends to distinguish itself through its DNA. It presents itself as an independent platform that belongs to its leader as well as its employees. "We do not belong to a billionaire," could be read at the beginning of the month on Bluesky's Threads account. Its code is open source. It is also a decentralized social network: users can manage their own data and content without depending on a central authority. This has particularly sparked criticism regarding moderation, the social network having been accused of laxity. Bluesky, which raised $8 million in the summer of 2023, intends to remain free for its users, without becoming a prisoner of advertising. It is betting on the monetization of its services to continue to grow. But it is still in the early stages. KL

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1703

No, not the comedian who made us laugh so much with Oncle Georges, but rather the computer science professor at TÉLUQ University. The latter is far from having the notoriety of the former in Quebec, but the repercussions of his work are global. Without knowing it, all those who use the Chrome and Safari browsers benefit from it every day. “There have been significant performance gains,” Mr. Lemire told the Journal. “If you install an old browser from 15 years ago, you will realize that even on the computer you are using right now, it will not be able to render the sites correctly and it will be much slower.” As is often the case with important discoveries, Daniel Lemire’s first motivation was personal frustration. “I was doing projects and I was a little annoyed, as impatient people can sometimes be... I found that the loading times were long. I wondered: ‘Why is it so long?’” I started digging and they told me: "We are limited by the speed of our disks, our networks." ORIGINAL APPROACH The explanation did not convince Mr. Lemire. In fact, the performance of computers and networks has progressed impressively over the years. The problem is that the speed of software had not kept up. "In the early days of computing, people were very concerned about software efficiency and now, it has gone out of fashion a bit," explains Daniel Lemire. "With my colleagues, we tried to revive that and show that we could do lots of really interesting things by making software more efficient. That's a bit of the originality of my approach." The Quebec professor's work has resonated with digital giants, who have integrated the tools he helped create into several of their platforms. These include Google, Apple, Microsoft, Meta, Uber, Shopify and Netflix. How could such critical discoveries have come from a professor employed by a small university like TÉLUQ? “Before, it was easier to do high-level research in large universities with large libraries. But in computer science, today, all the resources are online,” emphasizes Mr. Lemire. “I’ve had offers [from other universities], he admits, but for now, I like my work at TÉLUQ.” AMONG THE MOST CITED According to a Stanford University ranking, Daniel Lemire is in the select group of the 2% of most cited scientists in the world, all disciplines combined. And he is among the 0.0006% of most followed programmers on GitHub, a platform that brings together more than 100 million developers. A fervent defender of free software, the professor has made almost no money from his discoveries. "My personal income is essentially my salary as a teacher," he says. [...] I have nothing against free enterprise, but that's not what I do." \*\*\*\*\* SOME CONTRIBUTIONS BY DANIEL LEMIRE - The simdjson parser, the first software library capable of processing data from web services (JSON) at speeds of gigabytes per second (used by Chrome and Safari) - Roaring Bitmaps, a data compression protocol used by Google (YouTube) - An algorithm that quadruples the speed of reading numbers, adopted by several programming languages and software such as Safari and Chrome - A library containing many algorithms that is part of the popular JavaScript runtime engine Node.js, which is used by Netflix, Uber, Microsoft (Teams and LinkedIn), Salesforce (Slack) and Discord

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1704

What if ChatGPT didn't just answer questions and instructions, but could also act? This type of software, called "agents," is the new dream horizon of the entire artificial intelligence (AI) sector. "We'll get there in the not-too-distant future," assured Sam Altman, the founder of OpenAI, which created ChatGPT, in early October. According to him, agents are level 3 on the in-house artificial intelligence assessment scale, after conversational robots and systems capable of "reasoning" and before hypothetical future AIs capable of "innovating" or "doing the work of an organization." Agents, AI manufacturers hope, are intended to be the improved version of current AI assistants such as Copilot (Microsoft), Gemini (Google), Claude (Anthropic) or Apple Intelligence. They also revive the disappointed dream of the first voice assistants such as Alexa (Amazon) or Siri (Apple). Their particularity is that, in order to act, they would be connected to other software or applications: the Web, an e-mail software, an e-commerce site, a business platform, etc. Combined with the new capabilities of AI to understand and generate sound or images, they could open up wide possibilities. For individuals, they could theoretically be used to update a calendar based on e-mails received, plan a trip, etc. For companies, they could take notes from a meeting, then conduct additional research online, send invoices, connect to internal sources and “send e-mails, update files or create customer support tickets,” according to the description of Copilot agents, a first series of “agentic” AI launched in September by Microsoft. Almost all AI players say they are working on these agents. From French start-ups like H or Dust to open source projects like AutoGPT, including giants like Salesforce or Amazon, which has just hired the team from the start-up Adept AI. These are “intelligent systems that can reason, plan, and memorize, ‘think’ several steps ahead, and work across multiple software or environments, all to accomplish a task for you,” Google CEO Sundar Pichai theorized in the spring. Many questions Anthropic boss Dario Amodei hopes to create AIs that can “carry out tasks autonomously, like an intelligent employee would, asking for clarification if necessary.” Meta’s Yann Le Cun imagines a future where “all our interactions with the digital world would go through this kind of AI assistant.” This industry’s Holy Grail raises, of course, many questions. First, this promising talk may appear as a way to maintain the interest of investors and large corporate clients, at a time when some are talking about a financial bubble in the sector. Several building blocks are missing at this stage to achieve the imagined capabilities. While the topic is controversial, current major language models have no reasoning capabilities or limited capabilities, and even OpenAI's latest model, o1, makes mistakes. Memorization is also a challenging area of research. Furthermore, the idea of deploying agents capable of acting is highlighted as an additional risk by the community of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and researchers concerned with the "security" of AI. "The more agentic a system is, the greater the risk of loss of control or misuse by malicious actors," explained AI specialist Professor Yoshua Bengio in October at a conference organized by the NGO Future of Life Institute. For example, these agents could replicate themselves or carry out cyberattacks... More simply, points out Joëlle Pineau of Meta, we must anticipate possible problems. If an agent can use your bank card or if two agents find themselves interacting by email... "There is still a lot of work to be done," she summarizes.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1705

I n American Lessons, a series of lectures published after his death, Italo Calvino states that "excessive ambition of intentions can be a cause for reproach in many fields of activity, but not in literature. Literature only lives if it sets itself excessive goals, even beyond any possibility of realization." The Italian author's eight novels are now collected in a volume of the Pléiade, reflecting the scope of an extraordinary career, from The Path of the Spider's Nests (1947) to Monsieur Palomar (1983). Calvino's "excessive ambition" is fully displayed there, which one could try to summarize by a desire to think about the world by constructing stories. To think about the world, that is to say, to try to understand it and to act in it, with the help of science and philosophy. Calvino's particularity is to have carried this aspiration not by writing essays, but by choosing to tell stories. And chiseled stories, which dare narrative efficiency, not hesitating to draw from the side of the tale and the epic. This doubtless explains why he was on the fringes of the avant-gardes of his time, considered too quickly as a classic, a misunderstanding from which his work had difficulty emerging, particularly in Italy. Mirror of Pinocchio. The Path of the Spider's Nests is the new feature of this volume: Roland Stragliati's 1978 translation has been entirely revised by Yves Hersant, who also directed this Pléiade. It follows the adventures of Pin, a young boy tossed about through the wanderings of war. Taking the opposite view of the realistic stories of the 1940s, with glorification of the exploits of the Resistance, Calvino places his hero, a mirror of Pinocchio, on the side of childhood – with all the naivety and opportunism that this can entail in the face of tragic events that are beyond his control. Despite the underlying drama exacerbated by the pettiness of adults, it is a luminous book. The other novels are based on recent translations, most of which are by Martin Rueff (and by Christophe Mileschi for Monsieur Palomar). We find there the famous trilogy of ancestors – The Cloven Viscount (1952), The Baron in the Trees (1957), The Nonexistent Knight (1959) –, The Invisible Cities (1972), the pinnacle of metaliterature that constitutes If on a Winter's Night a Traveler (1979), but also two serial novels in which Calvino deploys his great art of humor: Marcovaldo (1963) and the already mentioned Monsieur Palomar. Through these books, the Italian author never ceases to follow both a rigorous structure and to let himself be overwhelmed by the random phenomena of life. Even a pseudo-realist novel like The Path of the Spider's Nests lets itself be contaminated by the fantastic. As Yves Hersant sums up, in Calvino, "the search for a clear vision, the cutting of the visual field, observation from a good distance are constantly counterbalanced by the fascination aroused by the indistinct, the fog, the magma, the tangled: whether it is a question of feathered carcasses, as in The Cloven Viscount or the great disorder of the galaxies". A double movement that Calvino also exercised over the course of his many short stories, not yet available in French and which one wants to dream that they will constitute a next Pléiade. In the meantime, one can have an example of Calvino's very much alive legacy by reading Indivisible Cities, a collective work of the current members of Oulipo which is also coming out this fall. The book, as its name indicates, refers to Invisible Cities. In any case, it strictly follows its structure of fifty-five chapters separated into eleven parts. And that is the beauty of a project like Oulipo, to consider that the forms developed by authors to try to push literature into areas that have yet to be explored can be reused by everyone, applied to other motives, or even diverted, in short, to see the writer's tools not as a private hunting ground, but as an open source catalogue. And we can admire that sixty years after its founding, the group to which Calvino belonged is thus pursuing this fertile utopia. In these Indivisible Cities, the dialogue does not take place between an explorer (Marco Polo) and an emperor (Kublai Khan), as in the original book, but – on the phone – between a traveler (Amelia Earhart) and an entrepreneur (William Hearst). Earhart describes impossible cities to him, whether they are "sick", "biological", "ghostly", "circular" or "hostile". Over the course of the chapters that form as many poems in prose, we come across a city that sinks into the ground by digging to find materials, another that is nothing more than a gigantic prison, one where the inhabitants only live in trams, one that survives behind immense air purifiers, one where work is nothing more than a memory... Climatologists. More than a tribute to the masterpiece of poetry that is Invisible Cities, the book updates the Calvinist project by leading a real reflection on urban space. These fifty-five new chapters each explore a potentiality of the city, between nightmare and utopia: the writers of the Oulipo worked with urban planners and climatologists from the IPCC to develop their new landscapes. The book therefore also offers a reflection on the city, which we know is an important material of the Oulipian aesthetic, here confronted with current issues. It is finally an invitation to take a benevolent, questioning and amused look, that is to say Calvinist, at the things of today. "Perhaps the world," thought Hearst, "is nothing other than a constellation of answers that we have not yet been able to associate with questions." • Italo Calvino Novels Texts translated by Yves Hersant, Christophe Mileschi, Martin Rueff and Roland Stragliati, Gallimard "la Pléiade", 1,328 pp., €69 until December 31 then €76. Oulipo les Villes indivisibles, Nous, 182 pp., €22.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1706

The numbers are striking. Artificial intelligence (AI) startup OpenAI announced on Wednesday, October 2, that it had completed a $6.6 billion (€6 billion) fundraising round, valuing it at $157 billion. The creator of the chatbot ChatGPT has thus achieved the largest venture capital investment round, surpassing the $6 billion raised by Elon Musk's AI startup xAi, according to the Axios website. And the company led by Sam Altman is approaching the record valuation of an unlisted company, being surpassed only by the parent company of the Chinese social network TikTok, ByteDance, and by Elon Musk's space company, SpaceX, according to the Financial Times . The round includes the Thrive Capital fund, as well as Microsoft, Nvidia, Softbank, Khosla Ventures, Altimeter Capital, Fidelity, Tiger Global and MGX. However, this fundraising reflects the challenges that OpenAI is facing. It means that the start-up still needs funding, despite the $10 billion invested by Microsoft in early 2023. "It will allow us to consolidate our leadership in cutting-edge AI research, increase our computing capacity and build new tools to help people solve difficult problems," the company justifies in its press release. Wave of departures Training and operating large AI models is, in fact, very expensive, particularly in computer computing. According to The Information, OpenAI's revenues have doubled in one year and exceed $3 billion on an annual basis, but the company is said to be in deficit to the tune of $5 billion, in particular due to the $4 billion in computer calculations paid to its partner Microsoft. The company is forecasting $11 billion in revenue in 2025, according to the Financial Times. And ChatGPT now has 250 million weekly users, OpenAI wrote on Wednesday, October 2, to reassure. In order to increase its revenues, OpenAI is also said to be in the process of continuing its transformation into a more traditional commercial enterprise. Many articles have announced the transition to a for-profit structure – it would be planned within two years in the fundraising contracts, according to Axios. Such a structure was created in 2019, but it remains controlled by a non-profit structure, born from the original project of 2015. The latter's leaders had dismissed Sam Altman at the end of 2023, whose policy was considered too short-term and geared towards the rapid launch of commercial products, and his management too solitary. Sam Altman has been reinstated and OpenAI assures that the non-profit structure will remain, but Elon Musk, who had invested $1 billion in OpenAI's early days, remains determined to oppose the transition to a commercial structure in court. More broadly, OpenAI has been faced in recent months with a wave of departures of executives and leading researchers, including several co-founders and its technical director, Mira Murati. OpenAI continues to regularly release new cutting-edge AI models, including GPT o1, dedicated to tasks requiring reasoning. But the technical advances are less striking than when ChatGPT was launched in late 2022, or GPT-4 in March 2023. The cost of AI and its persistent errors are weighing on the pace of adoption in businesses. And competition has intensified, from American AI start-ups like Anthropic or French ones like Mistral, but also from giants such as Google or Meta, especially since the latter publishes its models in open source. "The models themselves are becoming more of a commodity," said Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, in a recent presentation. Giants like the latter have the advantage of controlling, through their cloud platform, the distribution of models to businesses. Apple recently integrated ChatGPT into its iPhones, but announced that it would soon also call on other AI providers than OpenAI.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1707

If there is one area in which the image of the puzzle, often overused in the world of popular science, is relevant, it is probably that of plate tectonics. It was in fact by noticing that the different continents seemed to be able to fit together quite naturally that the idea was first formulated, at the beginning of the 20th century, that they were perhaps all united a very long time ago in a single continent, Pangea. This supercontinent would have fragmented to give its particular appearance to the current world. This theory, then called "continental drift", would take time to gain ground, but would eventually become established with an accumulation of very diverse evidence (oceanographic, paleomagnetic, paleontological, sedimentary, geophysical, etc.). The exploration of the seabed after the Second World War would play a crucial role. Scientists were expecting to discover a thick layer of sediment at the bottom of the oceans, the result of several billion years of successive deposits. However, it is quite the opposite. The further away from the continental coasts, the thinner this layer is, and almost non-existent in the middle of the oceans. On the other hand, we discover a ridge, a sort of crest line, most often ripped open by a deep and burning rift. The most obvious interpretation is the following: the oceanic crust is in fact recent and is renewed from its center, via magmatic upwellings. The scenario is all the more coherent since we discover, conversely, near the coasts (but not only), gigantic oceanic trenches. A perfectly understandable phenomenon if we accept that these are areas where the ocean floor (denser than the continents) comes to plunge under the continents. These are the famous subduction zones that you heard about at school. Add to this the collisions between plates that form mountain ranges, and you get a fairly general, simplified view of the major mechanisms that govern plate tectonics. "The Earth's surface is not only a puzzle, but a puzzle that moves and whose number, size and shape of pieces change over time," summarizes Boris Robert, paleomagnetist, lecturer at the University of Paris Cité and the Institute of Earth Physics of Paris (IPGP). In a recent article published in the journal Geoscience Frontiers, an international team attempted to trace as finely as possible 1.8 billion years of evolution of all these plates on the surface of the globe. The result is a fairly hypnotic video, in which the plates are formed and unmade, expand and deform, regularly alternating between grouped phases (with one or two supercontinents) and dispersed phases (as is currently the case). The researchers found three putative supercontinents in particular: Nuna (around 1.5 billion years ago), Rodinia (between 900 and 750 million years ago) and Pangea (between 320 and 200 million years ago). "This is a very commendable attempt at a very difficult exercise, in which we rarely venture beyond a billion years," emphasizes Boris Robert, who did not participate in this work. "There are many points that will be subject to debate, but the authors readily acknowledge this, detailing their approach and their hypotheses. Their work has the merit of existing and of offering a solid basis for discussion." The team brings together six researchers with very diverse specialties around Dietmar Müller, head of the EarthByte consortium (a collaboration whose objective is to gather data to create a coherent geological model of the Earth from its bowels to its surface). Among them, a Frenchman, Nicolas Flament, a geodynamicist at the University of Wollongong. "We tried to be as transparent as possible, whether on the reference data we use or on the hypotheses we took and the mathematical reconstruction models we use which are open source," he explains. This can allow specialists to check what we have done, or to adapt it. The discussion is open." The great difficulty of the exercise lies in the extreme scarcity of data as we go back in time. In this type of reconstruction, geologists rely on bundles of clues. The most "objective" are paleomagnetic. Some rocks have the property of recording the direction of the magnetic field, like small compasses, at the time they were formed. By determining their age, we can know how the piece of plate to which they belonged was oriented and at what latitude it was located (thanks to its inclination relative to the horizontal: if we commonly use 2D compasses to orient ourselves, the direction of the field also has a vertical component). The problem is that this data on the fossilization of the magnetic field is very abundant for the ocean floor, but much rarer on the continents. However, the ocean floor is no more than 200 million years old... "To give you an idea, we have between 15,000 and 20,000 data points over this period (depending on the quality criterion that we consider, Editor's note), compared to only a few hundred points for the following 1.6 billion years," explains Nicolas Flament. This nevertheless gives some points of reference. The researchers then rely on other, more qualitative geological data, such as the location and age of ancient mountains (remains of collisions), the continuity of fossil records and stratigraphic data, the compositions of ancient rocks which give clues to their formation (magmatism is not the same in a subduction zone, collision zone or at the level of a rift). To fill the gaps and move the puzzle, scientists finally use what is called the principle of actualism. "We apply rules to the models that correspond to what we currently observe, whether to trace the boundaries between the plates, the speeds of movement, subduction, etc., recalls Maëlis Arnould, lecturer at the geology laboratory of Lyon Terre, planètes, environnement and at the Claude-Bernard Lyon 1 University. This is obviously debatable because we do not know how far back plate tectonics existed. Indeed, since the Earth was warmer 1.8 billion years ago, the surface tectonics and the convection movements of the mantle that caused it may have been completely different." For the time being, however, this is the canonical method, because we do not yet understand the entire process at work well enough to physically model the geodynamic evolution of the planet very precisely, especially over long time scales. "The idea of such a reconstruction is not to say: "This is exactly how it happened", but rather to give general ideas about what seems plausible to us," Nicolas Flament points out. TV

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1708

In September 2023, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) made headlines with the release of Falcon, its open-source large language model (LLM). Remarkably, Falcon has managed to compete with, and even surpass, LLMs from tech giants such as Meta (Facebook) and Alphabet (Google) on several key metrics. Since then, the UAE has positioned itself at the forefront of the global artificial intelligence (AI) race by regularly releasing updates to its powerful model. These efforts have not gone unnoticed: in April, Microsoft acquired a $1.5 billion (€1.35 billion) minority stake in G42, the UAE’s flagship AI firm, underscoring the country’s growing influence. Analysts often attribute the UAE’s emergence in the sector to several factors, including strong government support, abundant capital, and cheap electricity, all of which are necessary for LLM training. But another important, and often overlooked, factor is the country’s authoritarian governance model, which allows the government to leverage state power to drive technological innovation. The UAE is not alone. Authoritarian countries, such as China, have a competitive advantage in AI development, largely because of their demand for domestic surveillance, which fuels AI companies. Facial recognition technologies, for example, are used by these regimes not only to bolster public security, but also as powerful tools to surveil their populations and suppress dissent. In contrast, facial recognition has become a source of enormous controversy in the West. The European Union’s AI regulation, which came into effect on August 1, effectively banned its use in public spaces, with few exceptions. This gives AI companies in China and the UAE a significant advantage over their Western counterparts. Research by Harvard economics professor David Yang and his co-authors shows that Chinese AI companies with government contracts tend to be more innovative and commercially successful, accessing vast amounts of public and private data to train and refine their models. Similarly, UAE companies have been allowed to train their models on anonymized healthcare data from state-backed hospitals and industries. AI companies seeking to access such data in Western countries would face numerous legal hurdles. While European and American companies face strict compliance requirements and increased copyright infringement lawsuits, Chinese and UAE companies operate in a much more relaxed regulatory environment. This is not to say that authoritarian countries do not have laws protecting data privacy or intellectual property. But the national goal of promoting AI development often takes precedence, resulting in lax enforcement of legislation. Key Resources Furthermore, consumers in authoritarian countries tend to be more supportive of AI. A 2022 Ipsos survey ranked China and Saudi Arabia as the most optimistic countries about AI. The widespread use of surveillance tools by these regimes appears to have accelerated the commercial adoption of emerging technologies. In addition, authoritarian governments benefit from the ability to coordinate and direct resources toward innovation, including through state-owned enterprises and sovereign wealth funds. Both the UAE and China have implemented national strategies aimed at positioning themselves as global leaders in AI. The Chinese government is not only a policymaker, but also a supplier, customer, and investor in the sector. The UAE has taken a similar approach. In 2017, it became the first country to appoint a Minister of State for AI, whose primary mission is to facilitate public-private partnerships and provide companies with hands-on access to valuable training data. The Falcon AI model was notably developed by the Institute for Technology Innovation, a state-funded research center. G42, which is backed by the UAE’s sovereign wealth fund and chaired by the government’s national security adviser, collaborates with a variety of government agencies. Recognizing the critical role of academic research in technological advancement, the UAE also established the Mohamed Bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence, the world’s first dedicated exclusively to AI. Despite the many similarities between the UAE and China’s strategies, one key difference stands out: While China’s advances in cutting-edge technology may be hampered by Western restrictions on exports of chips and equipment, the UAE enjoys unfettered access to these critical resources. In 2023, G42 signed a $100 million deal with California-based startup Cerebras to build the world’s largest supercomputer, designed to train AI. In early 2024, the company reportedly began talks with OpenAI CEO Sam Altman about a potential investment in an ambitious semiconductor company that could challenge Nvidia’s dominance in the sector. But the real reasons for the UAE’s success remain largely obscured. Tellingly, Altman recently suggested that the country could “lead the conversation” on AI policy, acting as a “regulatory sandbox” for the rest of the world. In praising the UAE’s approach, he glosses over a fundamental point: it cannot be replicated in a democratic environment.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1709

In Menlo Park (California), at Meta's headquarters, Mark Zuckerberg put on a show of force on Wednesday evening. In black jeans and a t-shirt, the boss of Meta even took on the role of super salesman, presenting his new products and services for forty-five minutes, with demonstrations and guests to support him. The few bugs did not dampen his good mood. At the heart of most of these new features is his AI assistant, Meta AI, which can answer questions, write messages and provide different types of content (images, travel itineraries, etc.). Competition has intensified over the past two years with the breakthrough of generative AI and the arrival of new conversational assistants (Gemini, Copilot, etc.) in the wake of ChatGPT. "Meta AI is on track to become the most widely used AI assistant in the world by the end of the year. In fact, it probably already is," Mark Zuckerberg proudly declared. Its assistant has “nearly” 500 million monthly users, up from 400 million a month ago, and more than 185 million every week. For its part, its big rival, ChatGPT, has 200 million weekly users, twice as many as last November. Meta is reaching this milestone before even launching its AI assistant in several major markets such as Brazil and the European Union, where it has decided – like Apple – to give up marketing it for the moment due to regulations that are too restrictive for its taste. To date, India is its largest market, largely thanks to WhatsApp, which has 500 million users in the country. Meta's ambition is to integrate its AI assistant into all of its platforms, whether it's its social networks (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Threads, etc.), its Quest mixed reality headset - the more accessible "3S" version of which has just been released - or its connected glasses (Ray-Ban Meta) in order to improve the consumer experience and extend the duration of use. In a highly competitive landscape, where Microsoft, Google and OpenAI have taken a head start, Meta has accelerated its AI efforts in recent months. It has thus extended its range of open source language models (open and free for developers) to continue to expand uses. "Today, we are making our Meta AI assistant smarter with Llama 3.2," commented Mark Zuckerberg. Meta AI now also relies on voice, as has been the case since last June with ChatGPT. Internet users can therefore speak to their assistant when they use Meta's apps. And Meta AI answers them, with the possibility of choosing artificial voices or celebrity voices (Judi Dench, Awkwafina, etc.). "Voice will become an even more natural way to interact than text," predicts the boss of Meta. For users based in the United States, Meta AI will also be able to see. This will allow it to say more about what certain photos contain, or even modify them, by removing or adding an object, or changing the background. "Meta is no longer just fumbling around in AI, it aims to dominate it," comments Jeremy Goldman, a tech analyst at eMarketer. The assistant has also been integrated for several months into smart glasses designed by Meta and EssilorLuxottica, which have just renewed their partnership until 2030. Mark Zuckerberg sees glasses as a "new category of AI-based products", a "natural computing platform". With their integrated cameras, microphones and headphones, Ray-Ban Meta glasses - which are widely used today to take photos and videos - have been a commercial success for a year. They will now allow you to converse, scan QR Codes or telephone numbers. The assistant can translate what an interlocutor says, with a slight latency, or remind the user of certain things. It will soon be able to listen to audio via Spotify, Amazon Music or Audible with a simple voice command. "We are adding video to Meta AI so that the glasses can see what you see in real time. Meta AI will be able to help you more naturally, in real time, to explore a city or prepare a meal", the group explains. Meta also unveiled Orion on Wednesday, a prototype of augmented reality glasses that he has been working on for ten years, in direct competition with the model presented two weeks ago by Snap. This is the most futuristic part of his device. He designs them as a "time travel machine", convinced that these glasses with superpowers will eventually be able to replace smartphones: Mark Zuckerberg wants to build "the future of human interactions". KL

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1710

Bourg-Saint-Maurice, Chambéry (Savoie), Échirolles (Isère) - special correspondents - Ten years later, Aloïs Chassot is still surprised: "When we arrived at the town hall, in 2014, Chambéry was pretty close to zero in terms of digital technology." The man who was at the time deputy mayor (LR) took up the subject, equipped the schools of the Savoyard town of sixty thousand inhabitants and launched into the creation of a digital data collection network. He wanted to open up the field of possibilities: measuring, with a view to improving it, the air quality in different places; triggering a round of the garbage truck based on the quantity of waste already collected... "Until 2018, a water service agent crisscrossed the town on a scooter to send back the data collected by digital sensors, which allowed residents to receive a bill twice a year," he jokes. Today, data collection is carried out remotely. In 2020, when the left came to power, deputy Benjamin Louis took up the torch, without sweeping aside the work already accomplished but with other priorities. His roadmap has five objectives: digital technology must be of general interest, inclusive, social, respect the environment and support the local economy. Under his leadership, the youth space in the priority Hauts-de-Chambéry district, La Dynamo, has become a veritable hive of digital technology. Ten city agents work there (including work-study students and civic service), for eighteen thousand visits per year, according to the coordinator, Elsa Chapelle. The local branch of the Simplon digital school is setting up there, and more accessible workshops are offered to seniors and younger people. Finally, a FabLab welcomes young people who have dropped out of school. "We want to give them back the taste for doing, and they see that with digital technology it is possible to make different things," whether everyday objects or any invention, explains Mr. Louis. The Dynamo constitutes a "base camp", with an operating budget of 30,000 euros per year since 2023, but the goal is to reach as many residents as possible and therefore "shine across the entire city", assures the elected official. Four councilors from the third place offer their digital assistance in different neighborhoods of the municipality. A terminal, being tested in an annex town hall, also allows residents to carry out all the procedures useful to them, from the purchase of tax stamps to updates with France Travail. "We have no choice, it is urgent," assures Benjamin Louis. Digital technology still worries people, we must help users to take hold of it." Including city officials: "We must acculturate them to digital technology and help them transform their way of working. » Echirolles has also faced this challenge. To develop its digital strategy, this Isère town of thirty-seven thousand inhabitants has chosen to use open-source software, computer programs that can be used, developed and shared freely, in a spirit of collaboration between users. This has involved a significant change in organization and mentality internally. Hands in the grease "It's a challenge in terms of recruiting and training our teams," acknowledges Nicolas Vivant, director of digital strategy and culture at Echirolles. "But, over the past three years, the team has seen a huge increase in skills, because you really have to get your hands dirty. Our choice also attracts qualified young people from top schools who are looking for more meaning in their work," emphasizes the director, who is fighting against the inevitable "resistance to change." To overcome reluctance, the city's IT departments use software that is as close as possible to traditional software in terms of its operation and interface, or improve those that are already in use. "I am very careful to ensure that we do not lose quality. This also allows us to work on certain preconceived ideas and to show that free software is not ugly or complex," adds Nicolas Vivant. Ten years after signing the Free Software Charter in 2014, Echirolles has become exemplary and a driving force on the subject, through the Alpes Numérique libre collective of municipalities. Zorin OS instead of Windows, LibreOffice instead of Word, BigBlueButton instead of Teams... The city now uses free software in all areas, with the exception of human resources and finance. "These are areas that are too dependent on legislation and its developments," says Mr. Vivant. Originally, the will of Echirolles, a historic stronghold of the French Communist Party (PCF), was political. "Free software is at the crossroads of environmental transition, digital sovereignty, data protection, inclusion and the fight against digital divides," lists Aurélien Farge, deputy mayor in charge of the development of free digital technology. This type of software, which does not require paying a license or committing to a maintenance contract, also gives teams greater freedom. "It allows you to be agile and innovative, without the constraint of having to be profitable," argues Nicolas Vivant. For residents, who use services such as online appointment booking, the changes made are invisible. "On the other hand, what is not are the savings made on public finances," notes Mr. Vivant. These unspent sums thanks to free software have been estimated at 350,000 euros per year. Transition of the territory Some 140 kilometers away, in Bourg-Saint-Maurice (seven thousand inhabitants), the economic aspect also weighed in favor of integrating digital technology into local life. This Savoyard commune located in the heart of the Tarentaise, home to a ski resort, Les Arcs, has its eyes turned towards the future. "We live in a fantastic place and we have a very good activity around skiing, that's undeniable. But we are also quite isolated. And the major crisis that the ski industry is about to experience due to global warming must be anticipated," considers the mayor, Guillaume Desrues (various). Shortly after his election, in 2020, he opened a connected campus - there are now around a hundred of these places in France, which allow distance learning. Sylvain Cachat, 40, becomes the manager, responsible for supporting students, giving them confidence and helping them understand the courses. The first intake of the Alpine Campus (the only one in the sector located in a town supporting a resort) will take place in September 2022, in a district that is currently undergoing rapid development. "Training plays a key role in the transition of the territory," says Mr. Cachat. "We are showing here that everyone's destiny is not set in stone, that in Bourg-Saint-Maurice, there is more than just skiing or working in a resort." Twenty-three students are starting their school year this September. They are taking courses in geography, business or psychology, for example, with the National Center for Distance Learning (CNED), universities or French grandes écoles. "There are one hundred and forty distance learning courses offered on Parcoursup," recalls Sylvain Cachat. At a time when "local companies are struggling to recruit," work-study distance learning can, according to him, be one solution among others. "We can say to students: 'OK to accept you on campus, on the condition that you stay in the town for the part of your training in the company.'" It is also a way of keeping its population on site year-round, while Bourg-Saint-Maurice lost more than five hundred inhabitants between 2010 and 2021, a large proportion of them young people between 15 and 29 years old.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1711

Doctor of public law, teacher and secretary general of the National Digital Council, Jean Cattan analyzes France's strategy in the face of the democratic challenges raised by digital technology. France très haut débit, New Deal Mobile, French Tech, France 2030, Open Data… Have government plans to support digital inclusion created a "French-style digital"? Each of these programs works to empower as many people as possible to act. This marks a very favorable turning point in France, highlighted by Sébastien Soriano in his book Un avenir pour le service public (Odile Jacob, 2020). Thus, the France très haut débit plan, launched in 2013, or the New Deal Mobile, signed by telecom operators in 2018, have reversed the traditionally top-down relationship that the State can have with local and economic actors to give them power. A more recent event has reinforced this movement: following the lockdowns, the role played by some citizens in the deployment of digital portals linked to Covid has encouraged the State to support citizen initiatives contributing to public service missions. The citizen initiative accelerator of the Interministerial Directorate for Digital Transformation or the citizen digital reserve, currently being set up, which both echo ideas put forward by Paul Duan [a social entrepreneur], are moving in this direction. But much remains to be done: accessibility issues are far from being resolved and digital technology has a great deal of responsibility in the fragmentation of our society as well as in its control. This is why it is urgent to initiate a real debate on the relationship between the administrative State and citizens and to make digital technology an object of democracy. What are the priorities for the future? The rise since 2018 of the Numérique en commun[s] approach, intended to "build a digital world of general interest", shows the benefits of bringing together local stakeholders, which the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion, Mednum (digital mediation cooperative) and many other stakeholders work towards on a daily basis. The "France numérique ensemble" roadmap, established in 2023, should provide the foundations for this synergy. France is investing in the field of digital commons, these digital resources produced, managed and governed by communities of users. This is the case for the Forge des communs numériques éducatifs and its 1,300 projects, the deployment within the State of free software such as BigBlueButton (videoconferencing software) or PeerTube in all academies (decentralized video sharing). So many projects that owe a lot to the work of the agents of the digital education department and which indicate a way forward. But isn't this quest futile, even chimerical, in the face of the risk of digital downgrading and the power of Gafam (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft)? On the contrary, this perspective must be our response, and it will be a guarantee of social success for the future. Wherever digital giants try to increase their footprint on society, we must multiply the social ties that unite us. This is why we must capitalize on the network of thousands of digital advisors and the 2,700 France Services counters throughout the territory. Because, beyond online administrative assistance, these programs can be decisive in developing a social ties policy adapted to the digital age. As the National Digital Council (CNNum) points out in its book Itinéraires numériques (2023), these programs lead us to think about a new relationship between citizens and the administration, moving from face-to-face to side-by-side, and contribute to thinking about a local State, supporting the population, rather than a State that commands and controls remotely. Another innovation, on May 21, the President of the Republic entrusted CNNum with the task of structuring Café IA. This knowledge-sharing mechanism on artificial intelligence, in any place such as colleges, media libraries, businesses, associations or town halls, aims to allow everyone to debate and decide on their technological uses. Isn't this unique path contradictory to the digital single market dominated by the American Gafam, and to the global Internet? On the economic level, the strategy led by France is completely integrated into European policy. And the search for empowerment of the population joins the action taken against the nuisance power of a minority of dominant economic actors towards the majority. This action is a common thread of European digital economic policies from the telecoms directives of the 1980s to the Digital Markets Act (European regulation on digital markets), via the Open Internet Regulation (enshrining net neutrality), and numerous decisions on competition. While these digital giants are only capable of innovating for the common good on the margins, we, Europeans, must impose strong lines of conduct on them in terms of openness, but also respect for people and the environment. Isn't it David versus Goliath? I would say yes, because in history, it is David who wins. But the victory will be that of all and not that of one camp over another. To address the potential for harm from very large digital companies, we can and must remove their monopoly on all the features that make up their services. What we did yesterday for telecom operators, starting with unbundling [which opened up the fixed-line telephone network to competition], we must do for social networks and generative artificial intelligence. We must impose rules on them: interoperability, interconnection rates, non-discrimination, environmental thresholds, openness, information sharing, etc. This is the condition on which we will be able to reconcile innovation, well-being and democracy.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1712

Marseille - Correspondence - In Marseille, the issue of schools has been made a priority by the left-wing, civic and environmental coalition in power since June 2020. Launched in the high-stakes political challenge of renovating 188 schools in ten years for a budget of nearly 1.5 billion euros, the Printemps marseillais (PM) and its leader, the diverse left-wing mayor Benoît Payan, have also decided to implement a digital strategy for the city's 470 primary and nursery schools. This "major digital plan for schools", developed after a series of consultations with representatives of the educational community, was voted on in April 2021, then reoriented and extended in July 2023. It is part of a broader desire to better control the use, cost and effects of new technologies at the municipal level. A desire that was made concrete by joining the charter of good practices of the Responsible Digital Institute in April 2023. "This charter is based on four pillars: security, environmental and financial sobriety, accessibility and ethics... These are all areas that we are implementing in schools," explains the municipal councilor responsible for digital technology, Christophe Hugon (Pirate Party). "The new municipality has taken a clear turn. Where other cities treat digital technology in schools using a purely technical approach, in Marseille, political leaders are strongly committed to the issue," notes Dorie Bruyas, director of the Lyon association Fréquence écoles, which has been examining digital uses for thirty years. "Mobile digital classroom" First important choice: Marseille does not provide its students with a computer or tablet that they can take home with them, as the Bouches-du-Rhône departmental council does for middle schools. Too early, according to elected officials. Too expensive, too. "The idea is to train before equipping. We don't want students to be immersed in digital technology too much, but to enter middle school having mastered uses other than social networks," continues Christophe Hugon. "In primary school, we have decided to favor non-permanent use supervised by teachers. It is up to them to judge the educational interest of digital technology based on the activities," explains the deputy for schools Pierre Huguet (PM), pilot of the "major digital plan". To enable this occasional use, each elementary school has been equipped since 2023 with at least one "mobile digital classroom". This is a cart equipped with sixteen tablets and a station for the teacher providing access to a catalog of nearly 2,000 educational resources. At the start of the 2024 school year, 7,531 tablets were available for 40,000 primary school students. In 2026, there should be more than 8,500. The other equipment component of the "grand plan", validated by the national education system, consists of installing an interactive digital screen (ENI) in all primary school classes, but also one per nursery school. Easy in new buildings. It is more complex in old, degraded establishments or in restricted spaces. Despite everything, Marseille intends to reach its objective in 2026 with 2,450 screens in operation. Concerning these ENI, the rules are the same as for the rest of the municipal IT equipment. The machines must remain "open", accept the operating system and the digital work environment desired by the city, without the latter being captive to a subscription. A great supporter of free software, Christophe Hugon successfully negotiated this point. "Our advantage in convincing suppliers is that our orders are large", explains the elected official. The screens must also meet the sustainability criteria now imposed by the municipality. "There is no question of finding an ENI in a cellar, gathering dust," warns the digital advisor, who has made the reuse and reconditioning strategy a central axis of his policy. "We are implementing very precise monitoring so that the equipment deployed has three, four, five life cycles," he explains. In his vision, computers can go from administrative offices to classrooms, then to documentation rooms, and finally be offered, after being equipped with a free Linux operating system, to associations that fight against significant digital insecurity in the city. All this while relying on the repair and reconditioning workshop of the municipal service responsible for school IT (CIME), which has seen its staff increase over the past four years. "Apple has even agreed to train our agents and provide the equipment needed to repair its products. This allows us to have machines that are around ten years old and work perfectly," rejoices Christophe Hugon. A management that has made it possible to halve the municipality's annual equipment purchasing budget, assures the elected official. At SNUipp, the main union of primary school teachers, the "major digital plan" is being viewed with some hindsight. "It's not the priority issue in Marseille schools," judges Mickaël Brégliano, delegate in the city center sector. "I don't know many colleagues who say "Long live the ENIs". Some adapt to them, others less so. The majority were more in favor of deploying video projectors, which do not deprive them of a real board," he notes. For him, who teaches at the National school, whose premises are extremely dilapidated and whose renovation has been announced, teachers are rather suffering from the poor quality of the networks. Tinkering "The Wi-Fi doesn't work everywhere. We tinker a lot, sometimes with our own connections," he says. A problem identified by the municipality, which wants to reduce, wherever possible, the use of Wi-Fi, which consumes more energy than using cables (fiber or ADSL) to connect to the Internet. To finance its "grand plan", it responded to the call for projects from the Digital Educational Territories (TNE), launched by the State, and obtained a subsidy of 5 million euros from the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations, out of a total bill of 11.6 million. The agreement covers the equipment of schools, the provision of the catalog of educational resources, but also a "parenting and inclusion" component, entrusted to the Ligue de l'enseignement, with very broad objectives. "Helping parents access digital administrative procedures for registering and monitoring their children's schooling, raising their awareness of issues relating to the quantity and quality of screen time, safe Internet browsing, or enabling them to develop digital activities as a family," lists the head of the structure, Sophie Lorimier, whose teams have worked with 500 parents of pupils during around forty sessions during the 2023-2024 school year. Marseille has also launched a collaboration with the National Commission for Information Technology and Civil Liberties. One thousand one hundred pupils in nine pilot schools have been made aware of the dangers of digital technology, from fake news to cyberbullying. A system that the municipality intends to develop this year and offer to volunteer schools.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1713

Benoît Cœuré is the president of the Competition Authority, which issued an opinion on the artificial intelligence (AI) sector in June. The regulator, like its counterparts in Washington and Brussels, is warning of the risk of seeing giants like Google, Microsoft, Meta and Amazon use their strength in the digital sector to crush this market and its start-ups. The Competition Authority is also, Mr. Cœuré emphasizes, "completely" ready to intervene if necessary in negotiations between AI manufacturers and content producers, while initial agreements have been reached between OpenAI and News Corp (The Wall Street Journal, etc.), Prisa (El Pais, etc.) and, in France, Le Monde. How does AI pose a competition problem? Like all digital technologies, generative AI raises competition problems because it carries within it a logic of concentration and accumulation. The more data we have or the more users we have, the more we will be able to innovate. After an initial phase of a profusion of initiatives, we have often seen, in these sectors, a phase of consolidation until there are only a few players left, or even just one. These players then risk excluding their competitors or imposing unfair conditions on their customers and suppliers. They build a fortress or a walled garden. Why do digital giants like Google, Microsoft or Meta risk dominating AI? Because the production of generative AI is based on inputs that are data, computing capacity, i.e. processors, and talent. Its distribution, for companies, is based on online service platforms in the cloud [dematerialized computing] and, for individuals, on mobile environments, search engines, social networks, etc. However, today, a handful of companies, most of them American, already have a very strong position in all these areas. This is a new situation. AI is the first technology to be dominated by large players from the outset. Usually, a disruptive innovation carries the promise of replacing technologies and ending the rents of existing players. Thus, Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Microsoft or Netflix were, at the start, small players, who had a brilliant idea. In AI, there is of course the power of ideas, among smaller players like OpenAI or Mistral AI. But regulators fear that, very quickly, these will be used to strengthen the power of large players. What can we expect from competition investigations into the acquisition of stakes in the capital of AI start-ups by cloud giants who provide them with computing capacity, like Microsoft in OpenAI or Google and Amazon in Anthropic? I cannot comment on the investigations of other authorities, but I understand their concern. We are the arbiters of economic competition: it is normal for there to be winners, but we want to make sure that they have not doped themselves up or tripped up their competitors. Growth through acquisitions is part of the life cycle of companies, but it can also help eliminate rivals or create a powerful ecosystem that will deter competition. In AI, we do have evidence that large players will sometimes seek to acquire technology or skills by using their financial resources to take over other companies. This can also take the form of hiring teams from a start-up [like Microsoft, Google and Amazon with Inflection AI, Character.ai and Adept AI]. What types of partnerships between start-ups and giants do not pose competition problems? A non-exclusive partnership that allows small players to rely on larger companies is, in principle, less problematic. I am thinking, for example, of the partnerships that Mistral AI is establishing with Microsoft and other cloud platforms [which distribute the French start-up's AI models to companies]. Present in Anthropic, Amazon or Google argue that they do not have a representative on the board of directors or exclusive agreements. Is this convincing? I cannot speak about a subject that we are not investigating, but this is the kind of point that must be analyzed. Is there control? Where does it come from? It can be capitalistic or done through human resources, through technology or even economic, if the acquirer is a major client or a major supplier of its target. Microsoft is the exclusive distributor of OpenAI models in the cloud. And you have proposed integrating certain AI services present in the cloud into the European Digital Markets Act (DMA) regulation. Would this have an impact? The DMA was invented to complement competition law investigations, which are conducted a posteriori, with a regulation that prohibits certain anti-competitive behaviors a priori. It was created for search engines, social networks or mobile app stores, but it is normal to wonder how to apply it to AI. And cloud services, in particular platforms that make AI models available, seem to be a fairly natural application case. It is of course up to the European Commission to lead this reflection. This could make it possible to ensure that the distribution of AI tools to companies does not give rise to unfair behaviors such as “self-preference” – if an actor favors its services and those of its partners – or exclusion, if it sets technical or commercial conditions that disadvantage its competitors. The economic benefits of AI will only materialize if the public authorities impose competition, not only upstream of this market, to allow new players to remain present in the production of models, but also downstream, to ensure the distribution of this software under affordable conditions for all companies. The digital giants also have the advantage of deploying their AI on their consumer services: smartphones, search engines, office software, etc. On this other aspect of the downstream of AI, the risk is the creation of integrated systems with exclusive technologies or partnerships, in which users will be trapped. In digital, the barriers to entry can be technical – such as the lack of interoperability preventing the transfer of data from one ecosystem to another – or economic, such as the cost of changing operator. We recommend instead open systems allowing users to choose their services, from different providers. Should AI be included in the DMA so that, on the Google search engine, you can use ChatGPT instead of Google's AI assistant or, on your iPhone, Le Chat de Mistral AI instead of ChatGPT, Apple's partner? "Essential platform services", such as search engines, social networks or operating systems, are already covered by the DMA. The European Commission, which is responsible for its implementation, will be able to verify that the addition of AI functionalities does not create inequities or exclusions. Could this be a lever to force platforms to offer Internet users a choice of AI assistant? Yes, but with reasonable and objective implementation, because we are not here to make life difficult for users. Apple has said it is suspending the launch of its AI assistant on its smartphones in the EU because of the DMA, implying that the regulation deprives Europeans of innovation... Apple cannot impose its rules on Europe. The DMA is not a barrier to innovation, but rather aims to prevent the domination of a few players. If adaptations are necessary, the DMA itself provides that Apple can discuss them with the European Commission. This is not a reason to punish European users. Does the publication of AI models in open source improve competition or does it allow large players such as Meta to impose their model, as Google did with the Android mobile environment? In our June opinion, we took a nuanced position. In principle, open source is a good thing, because it allows small players to use the work of large creators of AI models. Innovation is "dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants", said Isaac Newton. However, Android's experience with Google shows that an open system can also be used to establish dominance and then close in on users who are held captive. We will therefore have to pay attention to the evolution of open source AI models. There is also a need for transparency and independent certification on their degree of openness: we often do not know on what data they were trained. The first paid agreements have been signed between AI manufacturers and content producers. Is there a risk that this will close the market to certain players? Yes, on both sides of the market. These agreements could benefit the largest content producers or those deemed most interesting by AI manufacturers, and not all rights holders. These partnerships could also only benefit the major AI players. For example, one of them could pay very generously for press articles so that it is the only one who can use them. Could you intervene, as you did in the negotiations between the French media and Google on the remuneration, through neighboring rights, for the reprinting of excerpts from their articles on its search engines? Yes, absolutely. We are also the first competition authority in the world to have done so: in March, in our condemnation of Google for failure to comply with its commitments on related rights, one of the reasons was that it had not informed press publishers that their articles were being used to train its AI assistant. In addition, at the time, Google had offered them the right of withdrawal that is enshrined in law in a way that was too dissuasive: if they had refused to train the AIs, their articles would have been removed from the search engine. In the future, economic questions will arise: what is the price of this content? Is it set fairly? It would be necessary to integrate the fact that different data can have different values in different contexts. And to propose varied contract structures, such as publisher grouping contracts. Should we also introduce a flat rate price for access to data for small publishers who do not have the administrative capacity to manage contracts? It is up to the industry and the public authorities to decide. Could the authority intervene if an AI manufacturer refused to negotiate with media outlets while promising not to use their content, as OpenAI did with the French unions APIG and SEPM? I cannot prejudge this because, if the authority were to be notified, it would analyse such a situation in a concrete manner, depending in particular – but not only – on the market power of the AI manufacturer and the nature of the content. But we would carry out a careful examination. More generally, if we consider that AI will change the future of the economy, or even of our societies, we cannot leave the allocation of its resources entirely to private actors. It is legitimate for public and political authorities to be interested in it.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1714

After being the subject of much attention, recycling, long presented as the solution to all-plastic, is now the subject of much criticism. On the other hand, a more virtuous alternative is emerging: the recovery of plastic. The difference may seem subtle, but it is far from it: in the first case, for example, the calorific value of used plastic will be used as a substitute for coal in a cement plant; in the other, the idea is to use the raw material to produce a new, more valuable item. This is developing in all sectors, from fashion to toys, including furniture. It is with this in mind that the idea of promoting "upcycling" in the field of furniture emerged, born from the meeting of two players in the protection of the oceans. On one side, the Fondation de la mer, which has been raising awareness of the subject for ten years and concretely fighting against this pollution, under the leadership of its president, Sabine Roux de Bézieux. On the other side, the Breton entrepreneur Didier Tabary, a sea lover, founder of the Kresk cosmetics group (SVR, Lazartigue, Filmed brands) and his Kresk 4 Oceans endowment fund, created in 2021. Together, they launched a so-called "upcycling" program in partnership. The idea is to set up local plastic processing channels, in a circular economy logic. "Acting on land is essential to prevent plastic from reaching the ocean. It is especially crucial to act upstream and reduce plastic production. But since it is there, we must recycle it, reuse it and, as soon as possible, give it back value, a more sustainable value," explains Didier Tabary. Eighty-nine associations were identified, 33 financed, including four refinanced, for a total amount of 350,000 euros, which represents 630 tonnes of waste avoided and 78 jobs in 23 territories. Some of them, such as La Plastiquerie in Bordeaux, mainly source from large manufacturers. The transformation of used SFR internet boxes into wall coverings for a shop of the operator in Sénart, in Seine-et-Marne, was its first demonstrator. Since then, the list of its suppliers has grown: Thales, Suez, Ikea... With the Swedish distributor, the idea is to prevent 2,000 yellow and blue bags from ending up in the trash each year. But it also makes screens with chocolate molds. "We tend to source our products from SMEs rather than large manufacturers, as our production quantities are limited to around ten tonnes per year," explains Nicolas Voisard, co-founder and designer of the Rehab workshop, located in Concarneau, near Quimper. Wall coverings are its most promising outlet, with the Tour de France (goodies for the VIP area), the surf brand Billabong (wax combs for boards) and Greet Hotel (Accor group) already serving as customer references. Resak, based in the Basque Country, responded to a call for tenders to reuse plastic waste from a hospital (Ramsay Santé) in a closed loop (insulation panels, creation of objects, etc.). "While most calls for tenders take place at the national level, Ademe is beginning to understand that local projects may make more sense and are more agile than national projects," says Lila Costes of the association. Régénération, based near Royan, which gets its supplies from the household waste collection and treatment company in Nord-Médoc, Smicotom, does not limit itself to working with plastic. "Since this program is reserved for associations, we have the status of SCIC (collective interest cooperative society, Editor's note). Because this financial support is a real boost for us. But like others, we want to switch to a business and become independent," says Julie Vigne, interior design project manager at the association. All these processes require complex equipment. "A machine can cost 10,000 to 15,000 euros," explains Étienne Poirier, president of the Atelier des Recycleurs fous. This collective of citizens composed of creatives, engineers, designers and craftsmen, based near Les Herbiers, in Vendée, has launched into the design and sale of tools to carry out these plastic recovery projects: crusher, milling machine, press, extruder, injector... The idea came to them when they discovered that the Precious Plastic movement, initiated by Dutch designer Dave Hakkens in 2015, shared the plans for its machines in open source (free license). It is up to each person to manufacture them on this basis. Most of the structures supported by the "upcycling" program of the Fondation de la mer and Kresk 4 Oceans obtain their supplies from the Vendée player. In fact, many of them work together and exchange contacts and best practices. In good logic of the circular economy.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1715

Cultural periodicals fear for their survival and are demanding better funding to be able to continue their mission Relations magazine is in a coma; À bâbord! and Hors champ are turning to crowdfunding. And the new funding allocation for the operations of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ) is proving insufficient for the majority of periodicals. The result? Lurelu, the only magazine devoted to children's literature, is also at stake for its survival. And the Société de développement des époquets culturels no longer has the means to maintain its brand new website... which pooled the sale and subscriptions of cultural publications. Review of the state of the periodicals. "Since July, everyone has been in shock at their budget columns," explains Hélène Hotton, general director of the Société de développement des époquets culturels (SODEP). "I feel like we're just a bunch of deer frozen in the headlights of our Excel files, wondering how not to run a structural deficit. "If, as is the case now, our subsidies do not allow us to keep up with the dramatic increase in the price of paper, printing and transportation, we are suffocating the magazines," continues Ms. Hotton. A survey conducted among SODEP members reveals that on average, local cultural magazines, historically not rich, have obtained 70% of the amount they had requested from the CALQ. The 15 publications that responded to the questionnaire will have an average of $70,529 per year for the next four years. To operate, pay rent, employees, collaborators and journalists, and produce, of course, issues. This CALQ subsidy constitutes for the majority of publications some 75% of the funding. Some also receive, or rather, money from the Conseil des arts de Montréal and the Canada Book Fund. To avoid red ink, "the magazines are making different choices: cutting pages, cutting issues, reducing the number of employees, cutting salaries, cutting columns, reducing collaborators," adds Hélène Hotton. "Which means that the conditions of cultural workers are getting worse. And some magazines are thinking about closing." Period magazines Esse, Planches, Ciel variable, Ciné-Bulles, Moveo, Nouveaux cahiers du socialisme (yes! yes!)... Very few Quebecers know about these publications, which are considered successful based on 1,000 subscribers. Too niche? No longer of their time? Absolutely not, according to Gina Cortopassi, assistant editor of Espace, which has 250 subscribers. "Cultural periodicals animate, fuel and legitimize specific artistic practice environments and communities," she explains. "They give their actors a voice and an influence outside of traditional presentation venues—artist centres, cultural centres, museums, theatres. They are essential to the development of practices and discourses to describe, understand and appreciate them." "Judging a cultural magazine with the same standards of performance and distribution as mass media is a profound injustice," believes Ms. Cortopassi. Hélène Hotton continues: "It's really the entire intelligentsia of Quebec that writes in cultural magazines. That's where most of the movements that have led to social change are born. That's where feminism, counterculture, and the artistic avant-gardes were first thought of." "I had a lot of hope when the government's new plan on the French language came out in April," continues the director of SODEP. "If the government says that it's its priority to promote and shine, protect, and defend French-language content, it seems to me that this should extend to cultural magazines." Because they have been, since the Gazette littéraire de Montréal in 1778, one of the "historic and privileged vehicles of Quebec and French thought. "It's not Bombardier, you little jerk, who's going to promote the French language in Quebec culture!" exclaims the director, before recovering with a laugh: "S'cuse, I have the Gaspésienne coming out again... I'm so discouraged..." Out of sight of readers, out of mind Cultural magazines are trying to recover from a serious distribution problem. During acquisitions between distributors, from 2014 to 2016, when Benjamin moved to LMPI then to Messageries Dynamiques, and then LMPI to Disticor, these publications were dumped: not profitable enough. "Whereas we could previously buy cultural magazines at Jean Coutu and at the convenience store, from one day to the next we no longer saw them at all, anywhere. We have been working for years at SODEP to repair this historic deficit in visibility," recalls Hélène Hotton. “Since the pandemic, the government has been telling us all the time, ‘Be bold!’, ‘Reinvent yourself!’, ‘Innovate!’, ‘Help your community!’ And we, the arts service organizations, have been told, ‘Share!’, ‘Create services!’, ‘Get off the platforms!’ The money was there. We got it. We did it. We developed SODEP Diffusion, with Dimedia, to meet the specific needs of magazines. We got them into bookstores. Now, we’re arriving in museum boutiques, theatres, artist centres, where there is a natural audience.” Hélène Hotton says that after designing a new website, her organization saw magazine sales increase by 30% in the first six months. But the lack of resources is now threatening the sustainability of the platforms developed to adapt to the new context. "These are cuts in the tools that we put in place so that things could start to go better for us. I find myself no longer able to pay for my website maintenance. And I'm in open source. Imagine the cultural organizations that had custom sites made with all the great subsidies granted to digital." "With our very small teams, we can't manage to boost subscriptions in two years, set up a specialized broadcasting service, or federate all subscriptions on a transactional site. We can just do it little by little." "When you give resources to develop, but not to support afterwards, what do you call that? For me, it's cultural money thrown down the drain." Money on paper SODEP was granted an increase by CALQ, however. "True," confirms Hélène Hotton, "but compared to the amount she received in 2017. It's less than what we received the two previous years, when bonuses were granted and mutualization projects were funded." "I have the same financial problem as my member magazines," says the person who runs their association. "First of all, I lowered my salary. I have to cut more. And it's not pretty, what I'm about to do to my employees' working conditions. I cried about it." "Magazines are living organisms: they live, they change, they die. I'm not saying to keep things alive that are no longer relevant. But here, we're talking about cuts to magazines that are performing," like Lettres québécoises, Caribou, Nouveau Projet, Liberté, Esse, the Revue d'histoire de la Nouvelle-France, whether in terms of notoriety or in terms of sales or number of subscribers. "Afterwards, when we react, the entire cultural environment seems to be begging, all the time. While the problem is the decision-makers who make incoherent decisions; who take one step forward and two steps back." CULTURAL MAGAZINES

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1716

PAGES 20-21 The Republican candidate has pledged to appoint the boss of X and Tesla to his government if he is elected. For political scientist Asma Mhalla, a specialist in the geopolitics of tech, the ideological power of this sector should not be underestimated. On September 4, Donald Trump announced before the Economic Club of New York that he would appoint Elon Musk to head a commission on "government effectiveness" if he is elected president in the November election. The boss of Tesla and the social network X immediately accepted the proposal to "serve America, without pay, title or recognition". After campaigning for the Republican candidate for weeks, Elon Musk is therefore considering active participation in Donald Trump's government. This raises many questions about the potential instrumentalization of this network during the American campaign, the perilous ideological rapprochement between this boss of "Big Tech" and a candidate known for his use of insurrectional disinformation. This finally reveals the beginning of a conservative revolution among Silicon Valley leaders. Deciphering the technological and ideological stakes of this alliance, with Asma Mhalla, political scientist specializing in the geopolitics of tech and essayist, author of the recent book Technopolitics: How Technologies Make Us Soldiers (Seuil, 2024). How do you react to this rapprochement between Donald Trump and Elon Musk? It doesn't surprise me at all. It is clear that Elon Musk has a lot to gain from working closely with the American government, whether it is to benefit from tax credits for Tesla, obtain NASA contracts for SpaceX, or push for the reduction of regulation of social networks for X. Donald Trump has promised to unravel the order of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris which regulates the use of artificial intelligence, to launch a whole bunch of mini "Manhattan" projects and develop military applications, which could greatly interest Elon Musk and certain venture capitalists from Silicon Valley, such as Andreessen Horowitz or Peter Thiel [co-founder of PayPal, boss of Palantir, editor's note]. So, from this point of view, we have an economic, geopolitical and ideological convergence. Donald Trump, for his part, needs the image of Elon Musk: with the withdrawal of Joe Biden from the presidential race and the arrival of Kamala Harris, his running mate J.-D. Vance has proven to be a bad casting, too conservative, which does not allow to broaden the base. Elon Musk, with his image of an efficient boss who will slim down the American state, and a guru for many, has much more resonance. In my point of view, Trump has almost made him his shadow VP, the second vice president. Is Donald Trump's proposal to appoint him to head this commission to reduce public spending realistic? The United States has a long tradition of bringing big bosses into governments, so it is not surprising. But where it will be more complicated is that Elon Musk has so many conflicts of interest between this mission and his own companies that it is not certain that his nomination will be validated by Congress. In any case, there will be a scandal. But with Trump, we can expect anything. This alliance between the two men is quite symbolic and goes beyond simple economic interests… DR Yes, it materializes the new keys to the distribution of power and strength between Big Techs and States. To put it simply, power is the vertical exercise of the function from the top down to the population. Power is a relationship, a balance of power between nations, it is projected. Large technology companies are at the intersection of power and strength. It is therefore not surprising that at a given moment, these two devices have converging interests. To understand the hybridity of these new players, I speak in my book of the “triptych of Big Techs”: they are economic players (choice of business models), technological players (design of platforms, algorithms, etc.), but also political and sometimes ideological. It is in particular this ideological aspect that emerges in this alliance between Trump and Musk. There is a convergence around the project of the new American ultraconservative right – a bigoted, racist, supremacist and neonatalist project promising a methodical unraveling of the federal state, to which part of Silicon Valley has adhered, out of conviction or opportunism. We know Donald Trump's ideas, a little less those of Elon Musk. How do you define him ideologically? Many present him as a "libertarian", a supporter of absolute freedom. I do not agree with this term "libertarian". For me, Elon Musk is a right-wing anarchist who has tragically radicalized towards the New Right. He sells himself as a defender of the anti-system, and he has a real hatred of traditional media and so all the work he does on X is to destroy the intermediation. And thanks to this, and because of his own messages, there is an exaggerated visibility of the content of far-right accounts on X. But when we look in detail, his position is selective: a study, released in May 2023, showed that X responded positively to 80% of requests for moderation from authoritarian or techno-authoritarian governments, such as Narendra Modi's India or Recep Tayyip Erdogan's Turkey. He has, in fact, no problem with regulation or freedom of speech, as long as it goes his way, promotes his business, or affects his competitors. This outrageous aspect of Musk is growing visibly. Now that Elon Musk is actively campaigning for Donald Trump, can he and his social network influence the choice of voters? Has he already modified X's algorithms in this direction? It is complicated to answer the question of the algorithm, because despite Elon Musk's speech of transparency and the open source publication of X's recommendation algorithms, the update of this algorithm remains opaque. This is also one of the issues of the European Digital Services Act. What is certain, however, is that Elon Musk himself, with his millions of subscribers [197.3 million, editor's note], is one of the main sounding boards for the messages of the American far right. However, social media algorithms mechanically amplify the most viral content, because they generate the most "engagement", by playing on sad passions. This is what Bernard Stiegler already called, speaking of television, "pulsional capitalism". But in the end, we must put into perspective the direct impact of these messages on the vote. First, because there is an X bubble: not everyone is on this network. And especially because even for those who are there, we don't know how these messages are actually received. One of these messages can go viral, but some people will repost it to denounce it, question it or comment on it, and that will count as a sign of popularity. The downstream analysis of the reception of the content is essential, as sociologist Dominique Cardon rightly points out. Is there ultimately a difference between a Musk, boss of a social network, who campaigns for a candidate, and the directors of the New York Times or Fox News who do the same? A priori, and only a priori, we could say that it is the same thing: the social network is a new media. But in fact no, and for two reasons. On the one hand, the editorial responsibility is not the same. Elon Musk asserts his freedom of expression online, protected by the 1st Amendment in the United States and Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, passed in 1996. This even allows him to spread disinformation, by publishing photos of Kamala Harris in Stalinist garb, in the name of "parody". Then, X is not just a social media: it is a public INTERVIEW infrastructure, through which our sensitive personal data such as your political opinion circulates. This data can be used by political parties to target undecided voters, send them content and thus influence them through emotional and cognitive manipulation. There is of course the precedent of Cambridge Analytica, a perfect mix of Russian interference and manipulation by Bannon's team in 2016. And again, this is being taken very seriously: North Carolina and Michigan (two swing states, held by Democrats) are closely investigating this to find out whether the "super PAC", the fund supporting Donald Trump launched by Elon Musk, was not at the same time collecting personal data that could allow reprehensible political targeting practices. This would be serious. Silicon Valley has traditionally been a breeding ground for Democrats and progressives. Is Elon Musk an anomaly, or the symbol of a conservative revolution in Big Tech? He is not an exception. The majority of Silicon Valley collaborators still support the Democrats, but among some ultra-influential beachheads, there is a growing movement in support of Donald Trump, for economic and ideological reasons, in the same way as Elon Musk. These are Peter Thiel, David Sacks, Marc Andreessen and Ben Horowitz, or the boss of Sequoia Capital, Shaun Maguire. They want to do business, of course, but they also claim to be part of an “anti-woke” movement, and they want to put their money at the service of a certain political agenda. They are opinion leaders and multi-billionaires who design or finance strategic infrastructures, such as civil and sometimes military artificial intelligence. If Donald Trump wins, can we expect a change in policy on new technologies? I don’t think so. Foreign technology policy should be the same regardless of the color of the administration. And we could see, during the debate on Tuesday evening between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris, that this question did not divide the two candidates. The question of the projection of technological power is politically agnostic. Joe Biden has already had the same approach as Donald Trump, or even strengthened what Donald Trump had done, that is to say, trying to slow down China's development in the field of AI via semiconductors to remain the world's leading power in the field, as well as asking allies, therefore in fact Europe, to be less severe with regard to American Big Techs. For example, it would be difficult to imagine that Elon Musk would one day be arrested like Pavel Durov, the boss of Telegram. "Big technology companies are at the intersection of power and power. It is therefore not surprising that at a given moment, these two devices have converging interests."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1717

On the dangers of AI, is France in denial? "This theme was at the heart of the press conference organized by the Pause IA association, Tuesday, September 10, in Paris. The prospect of holding an international summit on artificial intelligence (AI) in the French capital, on February 10 and 11, 2025, is sparking a mobilization of activists most concerned about the "security of AI", who feel they are not being heard. French officials are "too optimistic", accuses the president of the French branch of Pause IA, Maxime Fournes, a former AI engineer in finance. In a "counter-expertise" published on Tuesday, Pause IA criticizes the AI Commission's report submitted to the government in March for "ignoring the warnings of many experts regarding the existential risks" of AI, which "could lead to the extinction of humanity or to catastrophic damage", through "the creation of uncontrollable AI or AI misaligned with human values" or "malicious use to design biological weapons or devastating cyberattacks". According to the association, Emmanuel Macron and the commission rely too much on the advice of representatives of AI companies, such as Yann LeCun of Meta (Facebook), Arthur Mensch of Mistral AI, or Cédric O, former Secretary of State who became an advisor and shareholder of Mistral – the latter was accused of a conflict of interest, but the High Authority for Transparency in Public Life stated in June that “there is no evidence to suggest” that the reservations expressed about his move to the private sector had been ignored. Putting AI on “pause” An international organization created in 2023 by a Dutch engineer, Pause IA organized small demonstrations in May (fewer than ten participants in Paris) to demand an international treaty suspending research into the most advanced AIs. It is in line with the spirit of the major petitions launched in 2023 to put AI on “pause” or to make “extinction risks” a priority, “like pandemics or nuclear war”. These are very present themes at the AI security summit in London, in November 2023. The Future of Life Institute (FLI), the American think tank behind the petition for a “pause”, has appointed a representative to Paris and is organising a series of “AI security breakfasts” there. “The Paris summit seeks to shift the focus away from security” and “AI is seen as a vehicle for economic nationalism”, deplored in July the guest Stuart Russell, an American researcher who pioneered the denunciation of the “existential risks” of AI. “There is a decline in the theme of AI security everywhere, but France wins the prize”, believes Connor Leahy, from the start-up ConjectureAI, present in London. At a time when we are wondering about an AI "bubble" and the limits of its uses, these speeches are less influential than they were a few months ago. In addition, AI ethics researchers, such as the AI Now Institute, warn that worrying about the hypothetical risks of a fantasized and quasi-divine superintelligence is dangerous, because it distracts from the more immediate risks of AI, such as errors, biases, misinformation or the impact on the environment and employment (even if Pause IA or FLI say they are also concerned about non-existential risks). For Messrs. LeCun and Mensch, stirring up exaggerated fears leads to limiting a beneficial technology to a handful of large companies, by restricting its publication in open source, freely accessible. Mr. Macron hammers home his desire to bring out "AI champions" in France, even if it means limiting regulation. Special envoy for the organization of the summit and former co-president of the AI Commission, Anne Bouverot assumes the change of direction of Paris compared to London: "Security will of course remain a subject - in one of the five parts, devoted to trusted AI - but it will not be the only subject. It is appropriate to look at the fascinating risks such as existential risks but also other very real risks, such as the transformation of professions, the concentration of the sector in the hands of a few players in a few countries or the impact on the climate." Advocating "AI for the general interest", the organizer assures that she makes sure to speak to everyone, including "civil society".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1718

He joined AWS as an intern in 2005, at a time when Amazon was preparing to launch this new branch of activity: an infrastructure concept called "cloud", which would revolutionize IT. Eighteen years later, Matt Garman is at the helm of this subsidiary which contributes 60% of the American giant's operating profit, after the surprise departure of his predecessor, Adam Selipsky, announced in May. Between the two, this engineer by training held many positions in the company, including that of vice president of global sales and marketing. "Thanks to the combination of all these points of view, I acquired a good experience of the difficulties encountered by customers, their expectations, as well as the possibilities available to us to continue to innovate", confided the manager to Le Figaro. This change at the head of the world leader in cloud computing comes at a pivotal moment for this industry, in full swing since the sensational arrival of generative artificial intelligence. “Generative AI is one of those rare technological changes that has the potential to revolutionize both the way we work and the business models of many companies. We are only at the beginning, but I truly believe that it will transform absolutely every industry.” “A huge boost” These new technologies are already significantly accelerating demand for the cloud, as shown by the growth rates of AWS’s business in recent quarters. On the one hand, start-ups developing large language models, in the wake of OpenAI, require computing power that only the cloud can provide. On the other, to exploit the full potential of these models, companies need to centralize all the wealth of their data and access it securely, simply, flexibly and quickly. “The data and the intellectual property that they will bring to generative AI in order to improve their business will be the differentiator for companies. This is one of the things that is accelerating cloud adoption. So this is a huge boost for AWS’s business,” says its CEO. He has seen the expectations of business leaders change. “Before, their concerns were mainly about economics and everyone’s priority was very much focused on reducing costs or, for those already operating in the cloud, reducing their environmental footprint. From the moment ChatGPT was launched, almost every conversation quickly shifted to how their company should think about generative AI.” However, only about 15% of enterprise data flows are in the cloud today globally, which offers great growth prospects for all providers... “This is an important time for the cloud industry. We feel the urgency to move quickly, to continue to innovate for our customers, to expand globally and to build new capabilities.” In recent months, AWS has been increasing its investments to several tens of billions of dollars to build more data centers around the world. The latest: the United Kingdom, which will benefit from a plan of 9.5 billion euros over five years. In the spring, the Amazon subsidiary announced 18 billion euros in Germany, nearly 16 billion in Spain as well as several projects in the Asia-Pacific region. "We want AWS to be the engine of global innovation in the field of AI for all its customers. Realizing this vision requires rapidly expanding our infrastructure, innovating ourselves both in terms of chips and in terms of services and capabilities, and that is what we are doing." The new CEO wants to accelerate a different strategy from that of its rival Microsoft, which has bet heavily on the company OpenAI. Bedrock, AWS’s enterprise AI platform, has chosen from the start to offer, among other things, the widest possible choice of language models, including open source ones. “The fundamentals that customers care about don’t change: they want to make sure their applications and data are secure, that there’s no leak. So we took some time to build a really robust platform, as well as services that we think could help customers build applications using generative AI that really add value, as opposed to flashy marketing efforts that don’t have a lot of substance.” AWS also invested $4 billion in Anthropic, a rival startup to OpenAI that developed the Claude family of large language models that will soon power Amazon’s Alexa voice assistant. “Anthropic is a key part of our proposition, but it’s just one part of it.” We appreciate their team and we thought it was a good investment for us," he comments. European "sovereign cloud" from Germany For several months, some observers have been worried about a possible "bubble" around these new technologies, given the investment amounts that may seem disproportionate compared to the hopes of monetization. "It's true that training these models is expensive and requires a massive investment that only a few players can afford," the manager acknowledges. It's a gamble. There's a chance that it won't pay off, but the potential is so great that I think there's a good chance that it will. On the other hand, in the field of inference (the use of generative AI by companies, editor's note), I think it's a time problem. The cost of inference has already fallen more than a hundredfold in the last two years, and I think it will continue to fall rapidly as we develop new techniques, new processors, smaller but more capable designs. And as inference becomes cheaper, it will open up more use cases.” Another big concern is energy. Generative AI technologies are extremely energy-intensive, and for the big cloud providers, securing supply is becoming a priority. “Making sure we have enough energy, and renewable energy, to meet the demands of AI is becoming a real challenge,” admits Matt Garman. In March, Amazon bought a campus directly powered by a nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania from US energy provider Talen Energy in order to build a massive data center there. Will we see more of this in the future? “I can’t predict whether we’re going to see more or not, but I think so. The pace at which many energy companies can build new wind and solar is probably not enough to meet the demand for energy. Until the promise of small modular reactors comes, we will continue to invest in existing nuclear projects that make sense for us, while also investing in other renewable energy projects.” By the end of 2025, AWS will also launch its European “sovereign cloud” offering from Germany, with an investment of €7.8 billion. Unlike France’s requirements for sovereignty over certain critical state and corporate data, Germany does not impose a legal criterion, namely that the company operating the infrastructure must be majority-owned by an EU player. “It’s been easier to work with the regulatory environments in other countries,” acknowledges Matt Garman. AWS did not want to go through joint ventures with French companies, as Microsoft and Google Cloud did. "We want customers to be able to comply with all the regulations of the country in which they operate without having to give up all the capabilities they are entitled to expect. And if we cannot do both, we prefer to work longer to find a solution," the manager concludes. IV

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1719

Judge Mellor of the High Court in London is not in the habit of handing down his decisions as soon as the hearings are over. Usually, he is more of the type to take the time to think. But on March 14, he seems in a hurry to get it over with. It must be said that the defendant before him, an Australian engineer, Craig Wright, lied to the court for six weeks and produced false documents. In the eyes of the magistrate, there is no doubt: this 53-year-old man cannot claim to be the inventor of bitcoin, known under the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. The Cryptocurrency Open Patent Alliance (COPA), an association of cryptocurrency professionals, was therefore right to see him as an impostor and to initiate proceedings against him. "The evidence is overwhelming," the judge said. Wright is not the person who operated under the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. Wright is not the person who created bitcoin. » In the process, COPA hastened to hail a "definitive victory for the truth." The "truth"? Not quite, though... Because, while Wright's name has been erased from history, the true identity of Satoshi Nakamoto remains unknown, to the point of constituting one of the greatest mysteries of the Internet era: who is he, this inventor of bitcoin? He has not given any sign of life for thirteen years; thirteen years that the enigma has given rise to countless theories, that "crypto" enthusiasts - a whole small world of insiders - have been tracking down the slightest clues to try to uncover his secret. "I would be so happy, joyful, excited, to know who it is! I have a veneration for Nakamoto," enthuses Manuel Proquin, a blockchain enthusiast, the technology at the base of bitcoin. This spring evening, in a bar in downtown Nantes, this engineer by training joined about twenty other crypto enthusiasts, brought together by Blockchain et Société, an association whose goal is to bring together local players in the sector and introduce their world to the public. Even if the identification of "Satoshi", as they call him among themselves, is not their main concern, they all admire this tutelary figure, who was able to overcome the technical obstacles to the creation of a digital currency in 2009. Manuel Proquin praises his "intellectual prowess", his "vision of the world, which protects humanity in its fundamental rights" and, above all, his "ability to disappear, in a society in perpetual search of glory". In this Nantes bar, as everywhere else among crypto enthusiasts, everyone has their hypothesis on the Satoshi myth. "I would like it to actually be a group of women," says Manuel Proquin, "it would be a middle finger to our prejudices. » Another member of the troupe, Jonathan Le Brun, a blockchain developer, dares a theory that he himself considers "crazy": "Maybe it's some kind of time traveler who brought us bitcoin to prevent a collapse of our society." Another developer, Vianney Charpentier, implores: "Please Satoshi, stay hidden! It's all well and good to talk about him as a legend, but that's all." To measure the extent of the mystery, we have to go back to the beginning, October 31, 2008. On that day, a certain Satoshi Nakamoto, unknown to cryptography enthusiasts, appeared on a discussion space bringing together, on the Internet, people interested in topics related to the protection of privacy, the confidentiality of messages and data encryption. This community brings together, among others, "cypherpunks", fierce defenders of digital freedoms, advocating the development of technologies guaranteeing the anonymity of Internet users. Although his name sounds Japanese, there is no evidence that Satoshi Nakamoto actually comes from that country. The only certainty is that in his very first message, he published a link to a nine-page document entitled "Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Payment System". Since then, nicknamed the "Bitcoin White Paper", it is in some ways the birth certificate of this cryptocurrency. Last cryptic message At the time, the community had been struggling for years to create such an unforgeable means of payment. And suddenly, this Satoshi Nakamoto who came from nowhere came up with a solution... "He aggregated technologies, all of which more or less already existed, but which had never been interwoven in such a way as to create a functional decentralized currency system", Primavera De Filippi, research director at the CNRS and specialist in blockchain legal issues, explained to Le Monde. Who is this stranger? It is impossible to know: he does not provide any information, neither his nationality nor his age, and is content to summarize, in this initial message, the "main properties" of bitcoin. Suffice to say that the reception is measured, at least at first... The article nevertheless manages to attract the attention of Hal Finney, an American encryption specialist, with whom Satoshi Nakamoto begins to collaborate remotely. Finney will thus be the recipient, on January 12, 2009, of the very first transaction in bitcoins. Even if this currency then represents nothing, Satoshi Nakamoto strives to keep his identity secret. He leaves no clues behind him: his conversations, public or private, in impeccable English, are exclusively devoted to the bitcoin project. If his correspondents and online collaborators, increasingly numerous over the months, ask personal questions, he evades them. When an anonymous donor offers him $2,000 (€1,800) in cash to help with operating costs, he asks one of the community's most active members and one of his first collaborators, Martti Malmi, to receive them in his place. He has no intention of revealing an address. This man, if he is a man, is a ghost, a master of camouflage. His profile is starting to take shape, however. His distrust of banking institutions can be guessed. Without really knowing whether it is a coincidence or a pointed wink, the very first bitcoin transaction block, for example, refers in its code to the front page of the Times of the day, January 3, 2009, devoted to the rescue of banks after the subprime crisis. In one of his messages, Satoshi Nakamoto writes that "from a libertarian point of view," the idea of bitcoin is interesting. Could he also be a "libertarian", in other words a supporter of maximum individual freedom and minimal state intervention? Overall, however, he remains cautious about his commitments. Thus, when a member of the small bitcoin community suggests presenting bitcoin as a currency "out of reach of governments", Satoshi Nakamoto retorts: "There is no way I would make such a provocation or assertion." In another exchange, he also refuses the mention "consider it as an investment": "It is dangerous to say that (...) , he believes. No problem if people come to this conclusion themselves, but we cannot present it like that." At the very beginning of the 2010s, Satoshi Nakamoto knows that he is walking a ridge line, on the border of legality. When WikiLeaks, a young site that had just published thousands of confidential documents from the American army, was deprived of access to donations by MasterCard, Visa, Bank of America or PayPal, Satoshi Nakamoto opposed the idea of using bitcoin to support its founders. He did not want this whiff of scandal to draw attention to what was still, in his eyes, a fragile project. But it was too late, the debate had begun. The specialist press was timidly beginning to take an interest in bitcoin. The emergence of Silk Road, a drug supermarket on the dark Web, would help popularize it, by allowing it to be used to supply itself with prohibited products. From then on, the general press also took up the subject. Result: in 2011, the price of bitcoin jumped from 30 cents to almost 30 dollars. And Satoshi Nakamoto will disappear... While his interventions become rarer, he sends, in May 2011, a last message to Martti Malmi: "I have moved on," he announces. I will probably not be around in the future." Since this sibylline message, he has not given any sign of life, leaving behind a colossal fortune. According to estimates, he owns between 700,000 and 1.1 million bitcoins, which represents, at the time of writing, a value of 35 billion to 55 billion euros... A jackpot that he has never touched. Why disappear like this? Speculation is rife. What if he had been struck by illness or death? Did he fear legal proceedings? No matter the reasons: many have tried, despite his wishes, to unmask him... The "Newsweek" fiasco On March 6, 2014, the American magazine Newsweek dedicated its "front page" to Satoshi Nakamoto, claiming to have discovered the man behind the pseudonym. According to Newsweek, he was a retired engineer, a certain Dorian Nakamoto, the birth name of "Satoshi Nakamoto", living in California, known for having worked on classified projects in the past. As he refused to answer the emails of the magazine's journalist in charge of the investigation, she went to his door, which he only opened a crack. To the question: "Did you create bitcoin, sir?" he replied: "I have nothing more to do with it and I don't want to talk about it." "I have nothing more to do with it"... That was all it took to convince Newsweek to publish the article. Immediately, journalists rush to the home of the supposed Satoshi Nakamoto, who only agrees to leave to get into the car of an Associated Press (AP) reporter, who is immediately chased by the rest of the swarm. Meanwhile, on the Internet, panic reigns. As the hours go by, skepticism sets in. Internet users compare the writing styles of the two Nakamotos: nothing in common. Gavin Andresen, one of the first contributors to the bitcoin project, attacks the journalist, writing that her only "proof" was the quote from the retiree. "But he could just be an old man who will say anything to get rid of you," he says. In fact, this is indeed the case: during the day, AP releases a video in which the man designated by Newsweek denies being the inventor of bitcoin - which he also mistakenly calls "bitcon". A few days later, on March 25, 2014, another magazine, Forbes, believed this time to have found a serious candidate: Hal Finney, Satoshi Nakamoto's first collaborator, who, by a surprising coincidence, lived a few blocks from the other Nakamoto. Suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease, Hal Finney had gradually disappeared from discussions, at the same rate as the inventor of bitcoin, the elusive Satoshi Nakamoto. Finney would die a few weeks after the publication of Forbes, to whom he had also denied being Nakamoto. In accordance with his wishes, he was cryogenically frozen, in the hope of one day being resuscitated. Another American journalist, Nathaniel Popper of the New York Times, devoted a book to the origins of cryptocurrency: Digital Gold. The Untold Story of Bitcoin (Penguin, 2015). "When I started writing it, I assumed that I would not find the identity of Satoshi Nakamoto," he confided to Le Monde. "And, at the same time, every time I spoke to someone involved in the early days of bitcoin, I couldn't help but ask them what they thought about it..." Over the course of the meetings, a hypothesis emerged: that of an American in his fifties at the time, Nick Szabo, already identified in 2013 by a blogger who had spotted certain clues. Beyond the concordance of vocabulary and initials, Nick Szabo, a secretive and reserved character, was already passionate, well before the invention of bitcoin, about digital currency projects. In 1998, he had laid the theoretical foundations of "bit gold", a sort of ancestor of bitcoin. A few months before the release of Satoshi Nakamoto’s famous “White Paper,” he had expressed on his blog his intention to put it into practice and was looking for help to make his project a reality. Surprisingly, after Satoshi Nakamoto and his revolutionary concept emerged in October 2008, Nick Szabo did not respond. Another surprising fact: on the Internet, he changed the publication dates of several of his messages about bit gold, so that they appeared to have been posted online after the appearance of bitcoin. Add to that “cheap clothes and a modest attitude” and you have, as Nathaniel Popper wrote in the New York Times in May 2015, “the kind of person who could have a fortune without spending a dime — or even throw away the keys to the safe. People who know him say he drives a car from the 1990s.” Despite the suspicions, Nick Szabo denied it, orally and then in writing, reports the same Nathaniel Popper: "I'm going to say it, hoping to set the record straight once and for all: I'm not Satoshi!" This clarification, made at a gathering dedicated to bitcoin in 2014, did not extinguish the suspicions of the New York Times journalist. "For me, he's still the best candidate," he insists. "Even if I wouldn't bet my life that it's him." Reporters, Internet users, crypto specialists... All have gotten involved in recent years, analyzing every word, every trace left by "Satoshi." The results have not yielded anything very coherent: examining the times his messages were published could suggest, according to some, an American location, but his vocabulary rather resembles that of a British person. Many names have therefore been circulating, such as those of certain pioneers of bitcoin or cryptocurrencies (Gavin Andresen, Adam Back, David Chaum). More eccentric theories have cited the multi-billionaire businessman Elon Musk or mentioned a secret project of the NSA, the American National Security Agency. None of them are unanimous. While the main names mentioned are American, shouldn't we rather dig into the European side? After all, besides the fact that his English is more British than American, another clue suggests that Satoshi Nakamoto may have lived on this side of the Atlantic: one of the e-mail services he used, GMX, is German. Jean-Jacques Quisquater, a cryptologist at the Catholic University of Louvain, in Belgium, is one of those interested in this lead. This septuagenarian is a reference in his discipline and has been speaking at all the major specialist conferences since the 1980s. “Looking back, I realize that I met almost everyone who participated in the development of bitcoin,” he told Le Monde. Maybe even, who knows, Satoshi Nakamoto himself… For years, Jean-Jacques Quisquater has been trying to unmask the latter. This quest obsesses him all the more because he himself played, indirectly and unknowingly, a role in the history of bitcoin. One of his research articles, dated 1999, is in fact cited in the "White Paper" distributed by "Satoshi". "When I discovered this, I asked myself a lot of questions", confides the Belgian researcher. And for good reason: his article had not circulated much, what's more in a preparatory version, and had only been presented at a small conference bringing together forty or so European specialists. "How is it possible that this guy knows this paper?" In other words, was he attending the conference? The use of stylometry Since then, Jean-Jacques Quisquater has dug up his archives in search of possible leads, dissected the "White Paper" in the hope of detecting a hidden message, and even used stylometry to analyze Satoshi Nakamoto's writing style and identify possible correspondences with that of the various "suspects". Recently, he studied the list of conference participants in detail. "I didn't find anything abnormal there," he despairs. "Maybe they hadn't written their names..." There is one name that the Belgian researcher would have liked to find there, to reinforce one of his favorite hypotheses about Satoshi Nakamoto's identity: that of Len Sassaman, an American living in Belgium, a researcher at the Cosic laboratory in Louvain, specializing in computer security and cryptography. "He beats the record for coincidences," says Jean-Jacques Quisquater. He is the one who, of all, can most likely know this article, because copies were there, at the university." Other elements reinforce, according to him, the Len Sassaman hypothesis. Didn't the latter collaborate with Hal Finney, but also with David Chaum and Adam Back? Passionate about cryptocurrencies, frequenting the same discussion spaces as Satoshi Nakamoto, Sassaman was "extremely intelligent, capable of writing the bitcoin program", according to Jean-Jacques Quisquater. "He demonstrated all the qualities to do that. But he is no longer here to talk about it." Len Sassaman committed suicide at the age of 31, in 2011. Two months after the "disappearance" of Satoshi Nakamoto. Len Sassaman's partner wanted to put an end to the speculation. "He used FileVault", a file protection system, she wrote on Twitter after her partner's death. "I don't know his password. No matter how much you want to know if he was Satoshi, I can't get into his computer. That door is closed." Since then, the bitcoin community has paid tribute to Len Sassaman, by engraving a tribute to him in the blockchain. Jean-Jacques Quisquater also explored a Japanese lead and spotted a certain Masashi Une. This graduate in experimental economics, a specialist in cryptography and finance, who worked for the Bank of Japan, is the author of a report in 2001, compatible with the skills of a Satoshi Nakamoto. He also cites Jean-Jacques Quisquater's article, which also appears in Satoshi Nakamoto's "White Paper". "This report is very disturbing to me, and no one talks about it!", continues the researcher. Masashi Une also worked with an engineer who is also a specialist in cryptography, Tsutomu Matsumoto. And the Belgian researcher noted the similarities between the first name of the first, Masashi, the last name of the second, Matsumoto, and the pseudonym of the enigmatic inventor of bitcoin. "Over time, you start to see strange things," he admits. In response to questions from Le Monde, Masashi Une responded bluntly by email: "The answer is NO. I am not Satoshi Nakamoto." "Unbelievable" Still according to Jean-Jacques Quisquater, the most likely hypothesis remains that of the group, to which Len Sassaman could have belonged, as well as other people previously cited. "It is almost improbable that Satoshi Nakamoto wrote his article alone, without making any mistakes," assures Mr. Quisquater. This paper is impeccable, which is very rare. It probably results from a discussion with others, who were able to at least reread the article, and perhaps provide funding. » Fifteen years after the first bitcoin was issued, and while so many leads have been explored, will the truth ever be discovered? The Belgian researcher wants to believe that one or other of the members of the group – if it is a group – will at least leave behind a document that will help lift the veil on this mystery. Nathaniel Popper, the journalist for the New York Times, is less optimistic: "I tend to think that if we still haven't found it, we won't succeed. But you never know. Artificial intelligence could make it possible to link data in an original way. And it's not impossible that relatives of people involved in the project will decide at some point to speak out." Especially since new elements have recently emerged. As part of the Craig Wright trial in London, Martti Malmi and Adam Back had to make public their correspondence with Satoshi Nakamoto, which Internet users pounced on in the hope of finding new leads. To no avail. After all, wouldn't it be better to respect Nakamoto's wish for anonymity? Many members of the "crypto" community are convinced of this. Their fear? That he will be prosecuted. "He created a system that, despite all the legal uses, is also widely used for illicit uses," notes Ms. De Filippi. This raises a lot of questions: can the person who developed the program be held responsible for the illicit uses?" In fact, precedents exist in the first attempts to create digital currency. Douglas Jackson, "father" of e-gold in 1996, was for example convicted in 2009 by the American courts for money laundering. Except that, unlike e-gold, bitcoin is open source, meaning that many contributors participate in its development. "Can we then consider all contributors responsible for malicious uses?" asks Ms. De Filippi. According to him, the legal outcome would remain uncertain if Satoshi Nakamoto were unmasked and prosecuted. Beyond this legal dimension, many crypto enthusiasts see another advantage in the persistence of the Nakamoto mystery. Many of them, including some we met in Nantes, believe that anonymity also preserves the project and the community. "The fact that there is no one behind bitcoin gives it extraordinary strength," says Manuel Proquin. "You can't take it down, because there are no heads to roll."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1720

Clément Delangue is, with Julien Chaumond and Thomas Wolfe, one of the three French co-founders of Hugging Face, a leading artificial intelligence (AI) start-up. Valued at €4.2 billion after raising nearly €450 million since its creation in 2016, this American company is known as the reference platform where developers and companies publish tools and models for making AI in open source, that is to say freely accessible and modifiable. Living between Miami, New York and Paris, where half of Hugging Face's 220 employees are based, its CEO defends the design of an "open and decentralized" AI, against the domination of digital giants like OpenAI and its partner Microsoft or Google. Hugging Face wants to "democratize good AI", what does that mean? An AI is ethical when it is aligned with the values of the individuals who participate in the project. At Hugging Face, our values are openness, transparency, and inclusiveness. So we think about ways to make the technology as open as possible, to allow companies to share their AI models and the datasets and content on which they have been trained. We also seek to prevent one company from controlling the sector. We would like everyone to be able to create their own AI: companies, but also associations and NGOs, public structures, regulators, etc. Powerful players like Google or OpenAI offer large closed AI models, why is that a problem? There are several complementary approaches. When you want to make a search engine, like ChatGPT, it is good to use a very large AI model. But when you want to create a chatbot – a conversational robot – for customer service for your banking application, you don't need an AI that talks about the meaning of life, but rather an AI that answers you quickly. A smaller, more specialized model is faster and costs less money and electricity, and therefore emits less CO2. Also, it is important that all the people who want to build AI systems have access to the resources they need, just as anyone can write computer code to create software. This is a more desirable world than one where a few big companies keep their secrets and their models, and control access to this technology. What is the alternative, open source mini-models that run on people's computers at home? Yes, these are many different models, that all organizations can create and modify, and that solve all the tasks of daily life. We are currently working on robotics. For example, we trained a $600 robot [540 euros], equipped with iPhone cameras, to fold T-shirts, and then published the data so that others can run their experiments. I am much more excited by a world where everyone can have little robots, which they can train to do the tasks of their choice, than by the idea of a big company that creates a big robot, which you do not control and which it sends to your home to do all kinds of things. We prefer a somewhat decentralized future where everyone does AI. Can you give some examples of uses? The use cases are very variable, it is hard to predict them. We already use AI without realizing it: when we watch the news, in the algorithms that recommend content to us; when we take a VTC, in the prediction of the arrival time… We use software everywhere. And in a few years, all software will be built with AI. Aren't AI start-ups dependent on the digital giants, who provide them with the computing necessary for the functioning of their models and who have acquired capital in OpenAI, Anthropic or Hugging Face? There are natural tendencies towards concentration in the AI sector that are stronger than in traditional software. We need to combat them all the more. We try to do this by providing open source tools. We have 5 million users, the majority of whom do not work for Big Tech. As for Hugging Face, in our last funding round, in August 2023, we raised part of the funds from them [Google, Amazon, AMD, Intel, IBM or Nvidia], but we decided to do it from all of them, rather than just one. This avoids exclusivity. What is the financial situation of the company? We are trying to create a model that allows us to remain fairly independent. We are profitable in the last quarter. This is quite exceptional for an AI start-up, although it fluctuates, when we invest. Similarly, we still have in the bank the majority of the $500 million of capital raised over seven years. Often, AI startups spend a lot and can survive one to two years without raising funds. And that's why there are cases like Adept AI, Inflection AI or Character AI [whose leaders were hired by Amazon, Microsoft and Google]. This year, we're going to see more attention paid to the profitability of AI startups. Right now, ten of them contact me every week to be acquired. Hugging Face helps companies adapt AI models, but how do you compete with consulting giants like Capgemini, or cloud giants like Microsoft, Google or Amazon? Our model is freemium [from the English free, free, and premium, with added value]. Most uses are free but a small percentage are paid. We are used by more than a thousand companies, including Bloomberg or Nvidia. These need additional features, for security or the management of their many users. And also assistance in choosing and using our tools. Or, finally, infrastructure [online services in the cloud, such as computing] to run AI models. The advantage [compared to buying this computing directly from cloud providers like Amazon or Google] is that our solutions are very integrated with our platform and specialized in AI. By optimizing specialized models, you can reduce the price of a task done with AI, for example from 10 to 1 euro cent. GitHub, the leading open source platform in software, was bought by Microsoft in 2018. Could that happen to you? That's not the goal. We think we can create an independent platform on AI. Can't open source be used by giants to dominate a market, as Google did with Android, and as Meta could do with its AI models? This hinders start-ups that sell their proprietary models... Yes and no. In the United States, the competition authority concluded that open source AI promotes competition, even if it can benefit the big players. This contributes to democratization. It is important that open source is not only practiced by digital giants, but also by start-ups, universities and non-profit organizations. We must also maintain a bit of rigor on the definition of open source: this involves publishing the model, but also the training datasets and offering very permissive licenses. In the European regulation on AI, the AI Act, are you in favor of the obligation to provide a summary of the texts or images used to train them, which allows the owners of this content to request payment? Yes, I am rather in favor of this idea. Similarly, on the label of a product, you can see the ingredients… We must first be transparent about the list of actors who participated in the creation of a system. Then appropriate remuneration models. The best has not really been found yet. I am sometimes a little afraid of the training data licensing contracts [for example between OpenAI and the media groups Associated Press, Springer, Financial Times or Le Monde]. If a few big players sign agreements with all the media that prevent others from creating competing AI models, we will be in a delicate situation. We could take into account the end use of the data: if you train an open source model that benefits research and education, you might not be required to pay a license. Whereas if your AI system competes with the activity of the creators of this data, it is normal that you pay them. You say that you raised most of the funds from Americans because the Europeans could not invest enough. Has the European ecosystem strengthened since then? It is really important that more and more local, national AI emerges. And therefore that all countries support their ecosystem. Because this fundamental technology can have a big impact on the economy. If all the reference AI models are American, US companies will have a competitive advantage. This is a question of sovereignty and competitiveness. On the problems posed by AI – errors, disinformation, moderation of hateful content, discriminatory biases – does open source change anything? For many of the existing problems of AI, open source can be a solution. Because proprietary models are black boxes. This makes it difficult to analyze biases or detect content generated by AI on social networks. It is difficult to know what you are eating if you do not have the list of ingredients or the recipe…

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1721

After Europe, California also intends to play the pioneer role in regulating artificial intelligence (AI). Six months after the vote on the Artificial Intelligence Act in Brussels, a bill that also aims to limit the risks associated with this technology could be adopted in this West Coast state. After being voted on last month by both Houses, the text is awaiting the green light from the Governor of California to come into force on January 1, 2026. Gavin Newsom has until the end of September to sign it... or veto it. Since the launch of ChatGPT, almost two years ago, the craze around generative AI and the race between tech giants have intensified discussions around the need to regulate this industry. Most Silicon Valley executives have themselves advocated for regulation. Including Sam Altman, the head of OpenAI, the parent company of ChatGPT, who testified before Congress last year and proposed that the government create a dedicated agency. But Washington has failed to get Democrats and Republicans to agree on national AI legislation. Preventing “catastrophic” risks With this text called “SB 1047”, California hopes to be one step ahead of the federal state. Its initiator, Democratic senator Scott Wiener, believes that it is time to legislate before advances in AI become too difficult to control. The objective of the text is to protect populations against “catastrophic” risks, such as cyberattacks or the development of biological weapons. If passed, this bill would require AI developers to test their technology before selling it. The text would require them to use service providers to conduct annual audits. The goal: to assess their procedures in terms of security or protection of whistleblowers who denounce abuses. In the event of a violation of the text, these companies could be sued by the California attorney general. This bill would only apply to companies developing large AI models or the most expensive to train (more than $100 million), not to start-ups. The issue is not to penalize the latter in the face of Big Tech, insists Scott Wiener. He insists that the goal is to make their practices more responsible. A way to strengthen the trust of the general public. Despite a series of amendments that have helped to soften the text, it deeply divides Silicon Valley and the political class. Many figures in the Democratic Party, including Representative Nancy Pelosi, are against it. This would amount to punishing companies for the actions of their customers, some critics rage. Others are wary of the prospect of a single state having such prerogatives over a nascent technology. Many tech executives and investors say too much control could stifle innovation and put the United States at a disadvantage compared to other, more liberal countries. A powerful lobbying campaign was waged before the vote in both houses, and a website was set up to gather the views of opponents of the bill and urge lawmakers to vote against it. Heavy-handed regulation Tech heavyweights have also weighed in. Elon Musk, who has long warned about the risks of AI, has publicly committed to the bill. Dario Amodei, the CEO of Anthropic, who initially opposed the bill, believes its benefits now outweigh its negatives. But companies like Meta and Google have spoken out about their negatives. “This bill makes a fundamental mistake by regulating AI technology rather than its applications,” tweeted Andrew Ng, an AI startup CEO who has previously led AI teams at Google and Baidu. Like him, Frenchman Yann LeCun, a renowned researcher and director of AI research at Meta, believes the bill risks stifling the availability of open-source models. “Regulating the deployment of AI applications is a good thing. But regulating R&D would have apocalyptic consequences for the AI ecosystem,” he tweeted earlier this summer. KL

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1722

Born in Canada and living in Los Angeles, California, Cory Doctorow is an essayist, activist, teacher, and author (The Internet Con. How to Seize the Means of Computation, Verso, 2023; The Bezzle, Tor Books, 240 pages, not translated). He has chronicled the development of digital technology since the early days of the Internet, on his website Pluralistic and in various media outlets, including in February in the Financial Times to critique the evolution of major platforms and social networks. In December 2023, he referred in a column to artificial intelligence (AI) as a “bubble,” a topic that has been a growing debate in the industry in recent months. Mr. Doctorow questions the economic balance between the costs of large AI models, such as those used in the ChatGPT chatbots, and the revenues from different use cases. Why do you think AI is a “bubble”? Artificial intelligence is a bubble because it bears all the hallmarks of one. We see entrepreneurs adding the word “AI” to their products to boost their stock price, without really knowing what this technology will bring them. It recalls the time when blockchain [technology that allows to authenticate actions, like cryptocurrency transactions] was in vogue. We also see a lot of investment flowing into manufacturers of AI models, which often lose money. The promise is that these companies will convince customers willing to pay enough to amortize the cost of this software, but they have difficulty explaining how they will do it. Finally, there is this impression that everyone seems to want to talk about AI, about any subject, sometimes apparently unrelated, like climate change… Why do you doubt the economic model of large AI models? There is a gap between the costs, very significant, and the potential revenues. Many of the applications of AI that offer the greatest revenue prospects are susceptible to what the industry calls “hallucinations,” or errors [such as a factually wrong answer in a text]. But no one in AI has a convincing theory about how to eliminate these errors. When it comes to these sensitive use cases (healthcare, autonomous driving, etc.), AI companies typically propose the solution of adding a human in the loop, to verify the decision or content produced by the software. But the practical and financial interest of these AIs is, according to their creators, that they are supposed to act much more quickly than humans. And if we need people to review each of their actions, this limits profitability and potential productivity gains. Compared to other technologies that have generated excessive hype, such as the metaverse or cryptocurrencies, does not AI generate many more uses? Yes, there are many interesting use cases. The Internet Archive has acquired databases of old newspapers on microfiche and is using AI to identify and scan table of contents pages to classify them. The Be My Eyes app for the blind describes objects you point your phone at. My wife uses image-generating AI to create scenery for her online games of the role-playing game Dungeons & Dragons. That’s great, but such projects won’t pay for the expensive computations needed to train and run these large models. Ditto for students using a chatbot to cheat… These are at best marginal markets on the periphery of a core business that should be made up of enterprise customers, like office software like Excel. When you look at AI applications, you have to ask yourself whether they represent significant potential savings for a customer, particularly in labor, and whether they can tolerate a certain error rate… And the intersection of those two categories gives you a relatively small pool of cases. Can’t AI improve productivity? Yes, but the question is whether it can deliver significant productivity gains for customers who will be willing to pay a lot for it. OpenAI founder Sam Altman is considering a multi-trillion-dollar microprocessor manufacturing project [according to the Wall Street Journal ]. Short of that, billions are being spent on creating these models and hundreds of billions of dollars are being spent on data centers, particularly for AI-related computing. Show me the hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue per year that customers are willing to pay. At this point, they’re not materializing. In Europe and France, start-ups and governments consider it necessary to invest in AI to avoid being overtaken by the United States or China. Are they wrong? There is nothing wrong with investing to avoid being overtaken in important areas: public health, computer science education, solar energy or electricity. But it is not serious to be overtaken in online scams or computer viruses… And today, I think that the “AI bros” [the apostles of artificial intelligence] are a mixture of people who lie and people who are wrong about the potential of their technology. Don’t giants like Google or Microsoft have ways to amortize their investments in this area? They sell AI models to companies but also computer calculations, they deploy AI on their own services… They have more ways to make money with AI. A famous American saying goes that the best way to get rich during the gold rush was to sell your picks and shovels. This is a pretty cynical idea, because you know that most gold diggers will end up as skeletons on the side of the road… Of course, if you also get a share of the gold harvested by the miners, it’s even better. But, in AI, digital giants are also directly involved in the search for gold: they stuff their platforms (search engines, social networks, smartphones…) with assistants and AI features that are not very useful or not yet mature enough to be deployed. This risks making their products less attractive and putting them at risk of reputation… It’s one thing to be a cynic, but a proverb says that the worst thing for a dealer is to consume your own drugs… Aren’t AI assistants improving the big platforms? I rather find that they contribute to making smartphones, search engines or social networks worse. Deploying AI widely in this way can be a way to increase the stock price of a company, which is good for its shareholders and its managers, who are part of it. However, recently, we are entering a more complicated situation, where stock market investors are asking the sector for returns on the huge investments made in AI. This is what happened with the metaverse. The difference is that the companies concerned had stopped investing in these virtual worlds, whereas with AI they seem stuck in their commitment to developing this technology. At the beginning of the Web, there was also the "Internet bubble", but this crash did not prevent this technology from developing in the long term... Indeed, we can distinguish productive bubbles and non-productive bubbles - even if they are all bad, because they transfer money from small savers to very rich people. The Internet bubble was productive. It left behind a lot of fiber optic Internet connection networks, a lot of people trained in computer science and coding… Conversely, the cryptocurrency bubble of recent years has certainly trained people in cryptography and cybersecurity, but it has mostly left behind some very bad digital art (NFTs) [non-fungible tokens] and embodied a bad example of neoliberal economic doctrine. A lot of money has gone up in smoke. And AI? The question is: will it be a productive bubble? This technology creates more specialists in statistics and mathematics, which is a good thing. It has made it possible to find methods to use graphics processors (or “GPUs”) much more efficiently. Besides, perhaps one day there will be a surplus of GPUs, like after the Internet bubble, when you could buy company servers at auction for $10 each. These will be productive, reusable residues. There will also remain smaller AI models, such as Meta’s Llama or those on the Hugging Face platform, which can run on conventional computers and are freely available as open source. These are generating interesting creativity, although they also risk reaching a ceiling, since they are mostly derived from the large models created by AI manufacturers. There is also an open question about the role that federated learning, which involves sharing computing power among thousands of personal computers, as in the SETI@home project to analyze data from the Hubble telescope, could play for AI. But this is only one avenue of research, and it would not necessarily improve economic returns on investment.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1723

The yellow and red flagpole in the middle of the shopping mall parking lot shines like a beacon to American motorists. At any time of the day or night, there is always a Denny's restaurant to welcome hungry visitors. But the one on Berryessa Road in east San Jose, California, has become the most famous in the country. It has the same old-fashioned red tables, chairs and couches as the chain's 1,000 other restaurants in the United States. In a discreet corner, above the corner booth, a brand-new plaque warns: "This location is the birthplace of a trillion-dollar company. Congratulations, Nvidia! Who would have thought that an idea launched here would change the world?" » The hero of this story, Jensen Huang, co-founder and CEO of the company Nvidia, came in person on September 26, 2023, to pay tribute to this modest reminder of his laborious beginnings, as if to better engrave his legend. "I started as a dishwasher at Denny's," he often recalls in his speeches, a memory of his student years. Now, television channels are jostling to receive him. It must be said that with Elon Musk he is the most prominent personality in Silicon Valley. One of the richest, too. Because his company, of which he owns 3.5% of the capital, is no longer worth $1,000 billion (906 billion euros) on the stock market, as indicated on the plaque, but more than $2,500 billion. On June 18, it even surpassed Microsoft and Apple, at the extreme altitude of $3,300 billion, to briefly become the most valuable firm in the world. Yet Nvidia does not produce smartphones, computers or software, just electronic cards. But these are magic. They are the keys to the disturbing and fascinating world of artificial intelligence (AI). Due to their computing speed and flexibility of use, they are currently unrivaled on the market. As a result, when Microsoft, Google or Amazon decided, in 2023, to invest tens of billions of dollars in data centers intended to train AI models, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT conversational robot, they had no choice but to knock on Nvidia's door. And their billions fell directly into the pocket of the San José company. Martingale In the year 2023 (fiscal year ending at the end of January), its sales jumped 126%, to 61 billion dollars, and its net profit was close to 30 billion. Unheard of in the austere world of chip manufacturers, or even in technology in general. Intel, in the glory days of its PC monopoly with Microsoft, has never achieved such performance. Nor has Apple in the midst of the iPhone frenzy. So much so that analysts are perplexed: flash in the pan, bubble or change of era? To better understand this madness, we must return to Denny's in San Jose in 1993. At that time, Jen-Hsun "Jensen" Huang was a young 30-year-old engineer, who had emigrated from Taiwan at the age of 9 and was employed by the electronics company LSI Logic. At the back of the café, he remade the world with his friends Chris Malachowsky and Curtis Priem, both chip designers at the computer company Sun Microsystems. The obsession of the moment was the graphic rendering on computer screens. This did not only bother computer scientists, but also video game fans, frustrated by the poor rendering of Atari consoles or Nintendo Game Boys. The microcomputer took off, but not the images, which were still very rustic. There was a lack of chips powerful enough to animate all of this. The three friends launched Nvidia (invidia means "desire" in Latin), and for three years they got lost in false technical leads before finding, on the verge of bankruptcy, the winning combination: designing an electronic card composed of a graphics chip (processor) that only took care of the image, compatible with Windows PCs and specifically adapted to video games. The market was in its infancy, but it was starting to show up with the appearance of three-dimensional games. Doom, released in 1993, was one of the first where the shooter was the player himself, transformed into a superhero who slaughtered as many demons as possible. The graphics card was essential to animate such carnage. From this first period, Nvidia took away the first two ingredients of its success: specialization in chips capable of very high-speed operations thanks to parallel computing and the importance of building close relationships with computer developers, designers of all these increasingly realistic little monsters. Its GeForce cards became the reference for all gamers in the world and game designers. To make their task easier, the company developed a software ecosystem that made it possible to adapt the graphics card to the desired application. Called "Cuda", this software library is today the keystone of the Nvidia system, with no equivalent on this scale among the competition. This is the company's third asset: making its hardware a platform, like Apple or Amazon, with its software environment that makes the work of users easier and makes it complicated to transfer to its rivals. Jensen Huang gradually realized that the research community was increasingly fond of its hardware for the formidable computing capabilities it offered. Notably at the University of Toronto, in Canada. This is where the British Geoffrey Hinton officiates. A big name in the computer science world, specializing in neural networks that attempt to replicate the functioning of the brain. He is nicknamed the "godfather of AI". He has seen the Frenchman Yann Le Cun pass through his laboratory, with whom he will share, along with Yoshua Bengio, in 2018, the Turing Prize, the "Nobel Prize for computer scientists". Since 2009, he has been using Nvidia cards to train his networks. In 2012, one of his doctoral students, Alex Krizhevsky, with his colleague Ilya Sutskever, bought two GeForce cards on Amazon to train, in his room, an image recognition system, fed day and night with millions of photos for a week. Named "AlexNet", the system won hands down the national ImageNet image recognition competition. The only one to use graphics cards instead of supercomputers, it recognizes trucks, cars, cats and others, with an accuracy ten points higher than its competitors. It is a consecration for the three researchers… and for Nvidia. At least in the world of research. Because, for the moment, it is video games that massively support society. "Real challenge" Nevertheless, Jensen Huang, who closely follows the exploits of the researchers, stays the course. The rest follows impeccably. Geoffrey Hinton and the very young Alex Krizhevsky are hired by Google, while Ilya Sutskever joins a nascent and more idealistic company, OpenAI. They take with them the conviction of Nvidia's supremacy in terms of calculation. When, in November 2022, OpenAI displays to the general public the dizzying prowess of generative AI with ChatGPT, the demonstration of the maturity of the technology is made. From then on, everyone wanted in. Start-ups flourished, fed by money from venture capital and Internet giants. Microsoft gave OpenAI $10 billion and launched a $50 billion investment plan to develop data centers adapted to training its machines, which had to swallow all the knowledge of the Internet for months before producing a single intelligible sentence. Amazon invested $4 billion in Anthropic, OpenAI's competitor. A market was born, ringing and stumbling for Nvidia, whose technology is unparalleled. According to the specialist site TechRadar, the company holds more than 80% of it. Since it cannot supply everyone, it dictates its price and chooses its customers. It costs between $30,000 and $50,000 for a single graphics processor. The largest centers can have several thousand. This is another strength of the company: the ability – and tenacity – to position itself in markets that do not yet exist, what Jensen Huang calls “zero billion markets.” “What is important,” he explained to students at Harvard University on March 6, “is not the size of a market, but the importance of the work that we provide.” Innovation precedes the market. This was the case in 3D video, then in data centers and in AI. He hopes that this will happen in autonomous driving cars, drug design or simulation, which he calls “omniverse.” All areas that the firm cultivates with the patience of a gardener. However, not everyone has this patience. Investors, among others, are starting to ask questions. “Today, a significant part of the demand is made up of start-ups, often financed by Google, Amazon or Microsoft. In return, they run the data centers of their benefactors, but for what end use? asks digital specialist Benoît Flamant, head of equities at Swiss broker Coges Corraterie Gestion. This is summed up in the Goldman Sachs study published at the end of June, with this title: "Generative AI: too much expense, too little benefit?" For the moment, end customers, i.e. manufacturers, are testing applications, but they are not yet willing to pay suppliers what they pay for. As a result, they are all losing money, starting with the market leader, OpenAI. "Hundreds of billions are invested in these language models. All of this must be converted into products that customers can use and for which they are willing to pay. This is the real challenge and, at this stage, there is no proof that it will work," believes Alan Priestley, vice-president of Gartner. For him, we are on the eve of a great disillusionment, a classic phenomenon of any nascent innovation. The recent financial results of Google and Microsoft have disappointed and fueled this nascent doubt. Beyond that, questions are emerging about the rest of the story. As Yann Le Cun, now scientific director of Meta, explains in a podcast ("Génération Do It Yourself"), deep learning, of which he is one of the inventors, consists of training machines to recognize words or images by telling them each time whether their choice is good or bad, as we do for a child with a picture book. We can also train it to understand a structure and guess missing words in a text. It quickly integrates a probability to predict the word. Artificial intelligence is the reign of rote learning and statistics. But is this true intelligence? That is the whole debate. For the scientist, language models cannot describe the physical reality that a 4-year-old child apprehends, which is considerably richer and harder to model. We have agents who answer questions and write reports at the speed of light, but none of them know how to clean or drive a car easily. Because physical reality is infinitely more complex than all the literature learned by heart on the Internet. Are we on the royal road to AI or on an "off-ramp", as Le Cun now claims? Insolent margins Inevitably, these questions will have repercussions on Nvidia's prospects. Especially since competition is coming from all sides. First from its direct rivals, such as AMD, whose graphics product is considered "competitive" by Alan Priestley of Gartner, but also from its own customers. Google, Amazon, Microsoft, Meta, Tesla: all are developing chip design projects. They intend to end the Nvidia monopoly and its insolent margins of more than 70%, but they are also seeking to lower the prices of a technology that risks being unsaleable if it is too expensive. To do this, Meta and others are betting on the strength of open source, the development of a chip whose plans are open to everyone with a view to continuous improvement. In order to trivialize infrastructure hardware. This is, basically, the normal cycle of technological innovation. Value is transferred from the upstream – here the chip – to the downstream – the applications and the service. Aware of the danger, Nvidia no longer sees itself as an electronics engineer, but as a supplier of solutions for all the professions that want to seize AI: automotive, pharmaceuticals, robotics, simulation, etc. “We are only at the beginning of the story,” assures Serge Palaric, Vice President of Alliances for Europe at Nvidia. “Anyone can develop a chip, but we are bringing a new computing architecture combined with the appropriate software to meet the needs of end users, right down to the inside of their products, such as cars.” » The firm is counting on its non-hierarchical culture, its practice of sharing information internally and the energy of its boss to negotiate this shift and become the Microsoft or Apple of the AI era. A change of scale that will happen without the pioneers. Geoffrey Hinton, the "godfather of AI", and his student Alex Krizhevsky have left Google. The old researcher is now warning of the risks of AI drifting out of control. His protégé preferred to disappear from the radar. As for his comrade Ilya Sutskever, he left OpenAI, which he ran with Sam Altman, due to a disagreement with the latter on the subject of security. Doubt has no place in Silicon Valley.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1724

I think it is possible that Twitter will exceed one billion monthly users within twelve to eighteen months." This statement by Elon Musk dates from November 27, 2022, shortly after his acquisition of the social network. Twenty months later, the multi-billionaire has lost his bet. Certainly, the platform, renamed "X" on July 23, 2023, has gained monthly active users: there are now 570 million, according to figures released in July by the company, an increase of 6% compared to last year. But the number of people who connect each day is stagnating, at 250 million - the same value as when the platform was acquired. If the thunderous arrival of Elon Musk was able to convince new users, it has also scared others away, in successive waves. At the time of the takeover, when Internet users, scalded by the personality of the Tesla and SpaceX boss, preferred to leave the social network. In the weeks and months that followed, when Elon Musk made a series of controversial decisions: reducing the moderation team to a minimum, reinstating Donald Trump, charging for the blue badges that, until then, ensured the authenticity of an account... Or after October 7, 2023 and the Hamas attack on Israel, when the atmosphere became unbreathable on X. Among the deserters, celebrities like Elton John, Jim Carrey, Whoopi Goldberg and Trent Reznor. Niche social networks Leaving Twitter, but to go where? "Join me on Mastodon," some accounts had proclaimed as soon as the takeover took place, encouraging their subscribers to follow them on this microblogging service, Twitter's main competitor at the time. While it may look like Twitter at first glance (messages limited to 500 characters and similar features), its philosophy is different. Mastodon, launched in 2016, is “open source” – meaning that anyone can access its source code – and decentralized – meaning that anyone can create their own server, called an “instance,” with their own rules. Elon Musk’s acquisition of Twitter had greatly benefited Mastodon. In one month, the number of registered users had increased from 3.6 to 5.4 million. It now stands at 8.7 million. A nice progression, but it is clear that these new subscribers… do not necessarily use the social network. While the Musk earthquake had allowed Mastodon to exceed, for the first time, one million monthly active users, today there are only 853,000 of them logging in at least once a month. A figure that is certainly twice as high as in October 2022. But not comparable to the 570 million monthly active users claimed by X. Mastodon is not the only social network to have tried to take advantage of the changes at Twitter to convince new users. Coincidence of the calendar? Probably not. Just a few days before the official announcement of the acquisition of Twitter by Elon Musk, Bluesky opened a waiting list to allow Internet users to test this new platform. The project, launched in 2019 under the leadership of Twitter and its CEO at the time, Jack Dorsey, became independent in 2022. Bluesky then welcomed exiles from the platform with the blue bird, of which it is a clone. Similar interface and functionality, messages limited to 300 characters... Easier to access than Mastodon for novices, it is now doing better than the latter, with 1.2 million active users per month. Which nevertheless remains, again, very far behind the figures of X. Both of them now serve more as niche social networks, or even refuges for communities – LGBTQ +, for example – who may have been victims of harassment on X and benefit, on these more confidential platforms, from a certain serenity. The strike force of Meta The only serious competitor that seems to be emerging today is the latest, Threads. And for good reason: this social network is supported by the Meta group, parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, and benefits from its enormous strike force. Launched on July 6, 2023, a few days before Elon Musk renamed Twitter “X”, Threads copies its main features. And assumes: on the day of the launch, Meta's boss, Mark Zuckerberg, had published a message on Twitter (something he had not done for a decade and has not done since) ironizing the resemblance between Threads and its model. Seven hours after the launch of Threads (in the United States, because Europe had to wait until December), Mark Zuckerberg already claimed more than 10 million subscribers. Five days later: 100 million, a record. Today, after only one year of existence, the social network has more than 175 million active users per month. "What a year," Mark Zuckerberg rejoiced when announcing these figures in early July. If Threads is far ahead of X's other competitors, it is above all because it is interconnected with Instagram, one of the most popular social networks in the world. To sign up for Threads, you must first have an Instagram account. This allows you to have contacts on the new social network from the outset and not find yourself faced with an empty news feed - a major advantage over the competition. Above all, there is a tab in Instagram, which redirects directly to the new platform. Does it have a chance of matching or even supplanting X? “The goal is not to replace Twitter,” assured Adam Mosseri, the boss of Instagram, after the launch of Threads. He explained that the new platform was aimed at people “looking for a less vehement discussion space” and that content relating to current events and politics would not be encouraged on the social network. On X, on the contrary, these are valued. Often divisive, they generate more “engagement,” that is to say reactions or shares, and are highlighted by the recommendation algorithm. Elon Musk often presents X as a place of information. “This platform is the number one source of news in the world,” the businessman said in January. Microblogging leader An asset for X. When the news gets out of control, it is to it that Internet users turn, for the speed of information dissemination, the diversity of sources and the vigor of conversations. The social network thus broke, according to Elon Musk, a record for attendance on June 27, the evening of the debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump. After the assassination attempt against the latter, the X application also saw its number of downloads soar. For better or for worse: in these times of news, it is difficult to avoid violent content and false information, which have multiplied since the arrival of Elon Musk. X therefore maintains itself as the leader of microblogging, which none of its competitors can currently claim to dethrone. However, it remains far, far from the social network giants that are Instagram, TikTok, and especially Facebook, to which more than 2 billion people connect every day.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1725

For digital writing specialist Marcello Vitali-Rosati, the global bug should allow us to reflect on the fact that Gafam are stripping us of all control. What lesson can we learn from the global bug caused by CrowdStrike, a company unknown to the general public until Friday? Author of an Eloge du bug (La Découverte, May 2024), Marcello Vitali-Rosati is a professor at the University of Montreal and holder of the Canada Research Chair in digital writing. This philosopher of code and algorithms invites us to take advantage of this imposed break to question our collective practices, and to highlight the commercial rhetoric of Gafam which, behind the promise of a "functional imperative", strips us of all control. Is this situation new? What is surprising is that it does not happen more often. Bugs occur all the time, and that is a good thing. The bug reveals the tool, the break allows us for the first time to look at it, according to the Heideggerian principle. As long as we hammer, we do not think about what a hammer is and what its usefulness is. The novelty of this one is that it Interview reveals to us a complex architecture and an unprecedented concentration of platforms. Suddenly, we realize that a huge amount of companies depend on a single company that is private. Nobody knew until Friday morning what CrowdStrike was or what is in our phones, and this reveals to us that we are as dependent as children on their parents. This system, Microsoft in reality, manages very well the rest of the time, without us realizing it. This would not have happened if a multiplicity of companies managed this software. You draw up a typology of bugs in your book. How would you characterize this one? It is the simplest form of bug. That is to say that the tool malfunctions. It is the one that blocks Socrates while he is walking, bringing out philosophy. It is not a cyberattack that allows us to point out a culprit. I note that the software stopped working after an update, that is to say after it was asked to do something more, to improve its security system, in a logic of profitability and performance. This is what the Gafam sell, a promise of smooth operation, a "functional imperative". If something does not work, we hide it, we make it disappear. Their commercial rhetoric invites us not to ask ourselves any questions. Brassard OL- Finally, could this bug have some virtue? This bug has its good side because it reveals something to us that was previously opaque. One of the answers that will certainly be given is "let's invest more in security", to increase performance. Or perhaps to switch from Microsoft to Apple, which will take advantage of this situation to promise that it will provide more. The alternative is to stop for a moment and take the time to reflect on the fact that we are no longer masters of what we do. Is it justified or relevant that all these companies, with different cultures, objectives and operations, find that the same solution suits them? Does it correspond to our values? Commercial rhetoric prevents us from seeing that there is nothing neutral behind a digital tool. Cyberspace, cloud, digital, IT, technology… Everything is confused for many people. Why? It reflects this broad idea that we are in the digital age without really knowing what it refers to. This rhetoric of immateriality claims not to worry about trivial tasks – taking out the trash – that they should be delegated to “little hands” in order to focus only on immaterial things like thought. To make itself invisible, the infrastructure uses metaphors like the cloud, something that floats in the air, that cannot be touched, while it is about gigantic computers that heat up, with an immense impact on the environment and communities. It is cleaner to talk about the cloud than about cables! What do you envisage to try to reduce this dependence? Alternative trends exist, in favor of free software for example. If the code had been open, the community could have reacted, we would have been more autonomous. CrowdStrike has administrator privileges on computers over which the owners themselves do not have control! Linux servers are more stable because a whole community is constantly auditing its tools. On the other hand, there is low-tech. Is it really interesting to put all this data on the cloud rather than using paper, or simpler platforms, even digital ones? Most of the services affected could have benefited from a less high-tech, less cumbersome approach. How can we change our mentality on an individual level? I believe more in collective choices. It is problematic to place all the responsibility on individuals, opposing for example those who would have time to repair, tinker, and those who would not have it. The bug, however, comes from outside, it is not the result of our intention and an individual effort. We must accept the idea of wasted time, against the idea of performance and profitability, to realize that the main objective of Gafam is not to improve our lives but to produce wealth.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1726

It’s “the $600 billion question,” writes David Cahn, a partner at Sequoia Partners, a long-standing Silicon Valley tech investment firm. According to his calculations, set out in a lengthy post published on June 20, that’s the amount of revenue that would be needed to make current investments in the sector profitable. “The AI [artificial intelligence] bubble is reaching a tipping point,” he warns, pointing to a gap between planned spending and revenue. This observation was also raised in a note from investment bank Goldman Sachs, published on June 25 and titled: “Generative AI: Too much spending for too little benefit?” "Generative" AI (this family of software capable of creating texts, images or sounds, popularized since the launch of ChatGPT, at the end of 2022) is a "real invention", but it is the subject of "too much optimism and hype", declares in particular the professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Daron Acemoglu. These notes encouraging caution join a little music heard in recent months among other observers. “Beware of AI euphoria,” warned Financial Times columnist Rana Foroohar, while digital essayist Cory Doctorow and Guardian columnist John Naughton predicted a “bubble.” A recent article in The Economist suggested that generative AI could well be a case of “overinvestment in infrastructure, fuelled by the excitement of a new technology,” comparing it to the “railway craze” of the late 19th century or the “telecoms boom” of the early internet in the 2000s. Relatively low revenues Spending on generative AI is a sign that industry giants may be overestimating “people’s willingness to pay for chatbots or the latest tools,” wrote the British business magazine. The starting point for these fears is the amounts invested in infrastructure, mainly data centers capable of providing the computing capacity needed to train and then run generative AI models: $200 billion (€186 billion) in 2024, for the four giants Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Meta (Facebook, Instagram), or 45% more than in 2023 and 180% compared to 2019, according to the analyst firm Bernstein Research. Fueled by the high price of AI-specific processors from the leader Nvidia, this spending will continue, as new generations of these specialized chips are coming, notes Sequoia Capital. The sector is planning investments of around $1 trillion over the next few years. "What $1 trillion problem will AI solve?" asks Jim Covello, head of Global Equity Research at Goldman Sachs. According to him, generative AI is currently mainly used to "make existing processes - such as writing computer code - more efficient" - often with an additional cost and also with an "error" rate - but "no truly transformative and profitable application has been found". However, in the face of these colossal investments, revenues remain relatively low. OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT, in which Microsoft has invested 13 billion dollars, would have an annual turnover of 3.4 billion, according to The Information. Anthropic - in which Amazon and Google have invested 6 billion dollars - would aim to reach 850 million in 2024, according to the same media. Perplexity AI would generate around 20 million dollars per year, according to the American media TechCrunch. Even adding in amounts estimated at around $10 billion in turnover per giant such as Google, Microsoft or Amazon, there remains a substantial "hole", warns Mr. Cahn of Sequoia. Diversified giants "Will successes come quickly enough to justify today's investments? It's a strategic question of risk" and a "gamble", acknowledged Yann LeCun in Les Echos. The head of AI at Meta highlighted in passing the current limits of language processing models and their uncertain economic model, especially since open source alternatives exist whose licenses are free. In addition, the research that would allow future AIs to begin to "plan or reason" will take at least five years, he noted. Finally, the Goldman Sachs note underlines, the significant electricity needs linked to computer calculations for AI will require additional investments in electrical networks. Of course, not everyone paints such a bleak picture. There is a “very real possibility that the AI cost equation will change,” says Goldman Sachs software market specialist Kash Rangan, who believes in price drops and the emergence of new use cases. “People didn’t think they needed smartphones, Uber or Airbnb before they existed,” agrees his colleague Eric Sheridan. And unlike the startups of the early Internet bubble, AI players today are often profitable and diversified giants, with “massive distribution networks and user bases,” notes Mr. Rangan. “With every technological revolution, there are excesses: in the early 2000s, an ADSL Internet connection was valued at several thousand euros, it was not reasonable. But in the end, there were still some big winners," says Pierre-Eric Leibovici, a partner at the French fund Daphni, who has invested in AI start-ups such as Mistral, H and Pasqal. "Speculative frenzies are part of technology," concedes Mr. Cahn, at Sequoia, but we should not believe the "illusion" spread from Silicon Valley to the rest of the world, according to which "[they are] all going to get rich quickly because a superintelligence is going to emerge tomorrow." "In reality, the road will be long, with ups and downs," he warns.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1727

This is the best-kept secret in the so-called "generative" artificial intelligence (AI) sector, that of ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, etc. It is not hidden in the computing power, nor in the colossal size (hundreds of billions of parameters) of these software programs, nor in clever computer codes. These aspects of course count for success, but they are now more or less public. No, what the leaders in the field, OpenAI, Anthropic, Mistral, Microsoft, etc. have never revealed yet is their recipe for creating the collection of texts used to train their models. The latter is used to adjust the parameters in order to predict as best as possible which word is the best to complete a sentence. This ingestion of billions of texts identifies statistical correlations that make it possible to generate new texts supposed to answer the user's questions. The origin of these texts is known: books in the public domain, research articles, Wikipedia, but above all tons of web pages. This last source is the majority and it is the way in which it is treated that makes the difference. "It is the crux of the matter", summarizes Julien Launay, creator of the company Adaptive ML and co-author of a training corpus of data from the Web, RefinedWeb, when he worked at LightOn. He remembers the surprise caused by his presentation in New Orleans in December 2022 at the leading conference in the field, NeurIPS. The care taken in preparing this data had allowed an AI to match the competition fed with data from more varied sources. 80,000 hours of calculations Thomas Wolf, co-founder of Hugging Face, a Franco-American platform for making models and corpora available in open source, present at this conference, offered Julien Launay's team to join his company. One of its members, Guilherme Penedo, accepted, motivated by the idea of providing an even larger corpus than RefinedWeb. "We thought we could do it in ten days," recalls Thomas Wolf. It would take fifteen times longer. On April 21, FineWeb was released, a monster weighing 40 terabytes (TB), rich in 15,000 billion tokens, tokens of 3-4 letters, a sort of syllable. Freely downloadable, it allows you to create better models than with any other public corpus. Making such an object is difficult: 80,000 hours of calculations with Nvidia's H100 graphics cards were necessary, which is comparable to what it takes to train a good AI model. First, the data must be retrieved. Since 2007, a foundation has made available Common Crawl, a collection, at regular intervals, of billions of Web pages. But to be useful for language models, only the text must be extracted from this mass of information. “This was one of the longest steps in the process, maybe 80% of the computation time, which we started in November 2023,” says Guilherme Penedo. Ninety-six packets collected over fifteen years in Common Crawl were used for a volume of about 5,354 TB. Then, an initial cleaning removes the pages of pornographic sites, then only retains the pages in English. About 50% of the documents are eliminated. 36,000 billion tokens remain. Change of tactics Then comes the tricky question. How do you know that a corpus is “good”? No question of asking a human. So we ask the machines. An AI model is trained on this corpus. If the benchmark performance is good, then the corpus is good… Since this requires a lot of calculations, the team worked with “small” models, with 1.2 billion parameters (the ChatGPT engine exceeded 170 billion parameters). Then it was time for a big clean-up with the removal of duplicates, because reading the same text twice does not add anything. This is “deduplication”. The team applied it to its entire corpus. “I was convinced that the result would be as good as RefinedWeb”, remembers Guilherme Penedo. Disappointment! The team then changed tactics and decided to deduplicate each Common Crawl packet independently and not globally. Won, the performance increased by 2 percentage points: FineWeb is as good as its predecessor. It has 20,000 billion tokens left, 40% of “loss”. To do better, a final clean-up eliminates nonsense texts that the Web is full of to attract search engines or produce spam. Dozens of statistics describe a text: average sentence length, percentage of special characters in a text, number of lines ending with a period… At what value should these values be considered “abnormal”? The team retained a dozen of these metrics and tested different thresholds. “It wasn’t the most fun step!” confesses Hynek Kydlicek, from Hugging Face. But it paid off. Three statistical conditions remove a certain number of documents but not too many, while increasing performance: 5,000 billion more tokens evaporate but FineWeb outperforms Refinedweb by about 1%, as well as others like Dolma, The Pile, C4… Euphoric, the team launched a final step: selecting only “educational” documents to build an ideal corpus for knowledge tasks. FineWeb-Edu was born, with only 1,300 billion tokens, and outperforms FineWeb by almost 4%. The selection of the "good" texts was done by asking a generative AI to rate all the FineWeb documents from 1 to 5, to keep only the best evaluated. "By detailing our steps, we help to better understand the success of large language models. By making this corpus available, actors will be able to develop their model by freeing themselves from the tedious and costly steps in calculation of the development of training data", summarizes Thomas Wolf. The team is already working on better versions for English or other languages. It has also made available a tool, datatrove, to redo all their steps. Five months of work summarized in 176 lines of code.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1728

Kyutai launches Moshi. These two cute but cryptic names borrow from the Japanese words "sphere" and "hello". One designates a Parisian laboratory of artificial intelligence (AI), and the other, its first tool made public, a voice processing model. Like ChatGPT or Gemini for text, like Dall-E or Midjourney for images, this one is placed in the field of virtual assistants, but vocal. Capable of deciphering an oral instruction and generating a response in a conversational style, Moshi aims to be an alternative to equivalent tools from OpenAI (the creator of ChatGPT), Google or Apple (Siri). But it claims to be made in France and open source, that is to say freely usable and modifiable. Moshi is Kyutai's first publication since its grand launch on November 17, 2023. This €300 million laboratory is atypical on the Parisian scene, as it is financed by patrons: the French Xavier Niel (founder of the telecoms operator Iliad and personal shareholder of the Le Monde Group) and Rodolphe Saadé, CEO of the shipping company CMA-CGM, as well as the American Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google turned investor. "The best of both worlds" It was created by poaching six AI researchers from American giants such as Meta and Google DeepMind. Its project is to "make innovative AI foundation models and publish them," summarizes its director, Patrick Pérez. The idea behind Kyutai is to create a hybrid benefiting from the best of both worlds, academic research for its freedom and the business world for its resources. » Moshi therefore wants to be innovative, even compared to global competition. Kyutai has chosen the field of sound, which is less busy than that of text generation models (where OpenAI, Google or Anthropic already operate, but also the French Mistral or LightOn). "Usually, voice AIs use several successive models: one to detect the presence of a sound instruction, another to transcribe it into text, another to understand the request, another to produce the response and a last one to transform it into voice. But this produces a latency of three to five seconds, which is unpleasant in a conversation," explains researcher Neil Zeghidour, who worked at Google on the AudioLM musical AI model. To obtain "real-time" responses (a few hundred milliseconds), Moshi relies on a unique AI model, trained directly on sound extracts. This makes it possible to better decode and imitate emotions or accents, the researchers assure. Moshi could adopt "seventy styles and tones": whisper, take on a "pirate voice", speak English like a Frenchman... So many nuances inspired by the voice of a recorded actress. To compensate for the lack of available sound data and improve reliability, Kyutai has added a home-made text processing model (Helium) to the sound model, which works in parallel. To allow for interruptions in a conversation, Moshi also uses two streams, which allows it to "speak while listening". As a demo effect, on Wednesday July 3, the assistant sometimes continued to answer, even though it was asked another question... Offline use These features are similar to those shown in a demo by OpenAI on May 13 in its presentation of the GPT4o model or to those promised by Apple in June. However, these are not yet available to the general public, which leads Kyutai to say that its online demonstration is "a first". The lab also boasts of having reduced Moshi's computing requirements, which allows it to be used offline, on a MacBook Pro type computer, and "soon" on a smartphone. The sounds produced can also be identified as "created by an AI", thanks to a watermark inserted in the files, in order to combat disinformation or identity theft. And now? Kyutai hopes that companies and institutions will deploy Moshi. The lab still has some budget: according to our information, it has only spent around 10 million euros, in salaries and computing (via 1,000 Nvidia processors from the Scaleway supercomputer, a subsidiary of Iliad). Its future research avenues concern "multimodal" AI mixing text, image and sound, as well as improving models in the French language. Kyutai hopes to access French-language content from public institutions, but this raises copyright issues.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1729

When you lift the hood of an "artificial intelligence" (AI) to check the mechanics that drive it, you sometimes get surprises. Microsoft's Copilot, for example, does not run on Phy, the in-house machinery, but on ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI. At the end of 2022, the sensational arrival of this chatbot (conversational agent) shook up Google, whose laboratories nevertheless contributed enormously to the advances in generative AI in the 2010s. It is not surprising that Microsoft trusts OpenAI: the software giant has invested 13 billion dollars (around 12 billion euros) in it. ChatGPT has other prestigious partners who demonstrate the esteem of the sector, starting with Apple, which chose it to co-host its future Apple Intelligence, alongside other in-house artificial intelligences. At this time, there is a big gap between the best generative mechanics, which bear the learned name of Large Language Models (LLM), and their pursuers. The performance of these LLMs is scrutinized with a magnifying glass, dozens of tests measure their understanding, logic, translation, speed, etc. capabilities. Not to mention their error rates. A more empathetic tone In the tech world, a race has begun to catch up with OpenAI. Google has doubled down and its artificial intelligence Gemini is among the best. Meta recently revealed that by 2023, its investments in AI will amount to around $35 billion. And start-ups, which are increasing their fundraising, are not left behind. Many of the companies publishing LLMs that stand out in the tests are based in California. Antropic, Claude's publisher, raised $4 billion from Amazon in 2023. Reka, which created Core, received $60 million in funding the same year, when Palmyra, published by Writer, raised $100 million. Inflection, the creator of Pi, an AI with a more empathetic tone and personalized responses based on each user's interests, raised $1.3 billion a year ago. In France, the young shoot Mistral recently raised €600 million from French and American investors, valuing the company at €5.8 billion. Its LLMs are well identified by international AI researchers and rank high in the rankings. We also find one of Mistral's models under the hood of the trendy American chatbot Perplexity, which uses it alternately with Meta's LLM, named Llama. Two models chosen because they are open source: some companies can thus reuse and modify them freely. Llama has also spawned dozens of offshoots, all the way to China, reveals the New York Times . Many other models display a more specific positioning. The French start-up The H Company raised $220 million to develop an autonomous AI, capable of reasoning, planning, and collaborating. The American artificial intelligence KL3M from 273ventures offers to draft legal documents using an LLM with sources certified free of copyright issues by the NGO Fairly Trained. The company Databricks raised $1.6 billion in 2021 to build a faster and less expensive LLM, a claim that comes up in the arguments of other start-ups in the sector.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1730

French publisher Mistral has built a great reputation internationally. It positions itself as a wholesaler of textual generative AI for businesses, but has also built a showcase on the Internet, which the general public can consult freely: a chatbot named "Le Chat" (chat.mistral.ai). It is interesting to compare the responses of Le Chat to those of ChatGPT: the gap between the two is far from huge, as LeMonde was able to observe. The Mistral company offers two families of artificial intelligence, open source models that other companies can download, modify, and use freely, then commercial models, much more closed, which are also the most efficient. Company: Mistral; technology: Mistral; cost: free

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1731

AWS is on track to break $100 billion in revenue this year. If it were independent, Amazon's cloud subsidiary would be among the 100 largest companies in the world. But it is thinking even bigger. For several months, the company has been making multiple investment announcements worth tens of billions of dollars to push its pawns in artificial intelligence around the world. On the one hand, AWS is expanding its infrastructure of data centers and servers capable of handling the complex calculations required to develop generative AI, which are very power-intensive. United States, India, Saudi Arabia, Emirates, Mexico, Spain ($15 billion over ten years), Singapore ($8 billion), Germany (7.8 billion euros)... In total, the company plans to invest at least $150 billion over the next fifteen years, because companies around the world need more than ever storage capacity and computing power to use the full capabilities of these new technologies. “We’re seeing incredible activity in AI right now, especially among startups in Europe, like Hugging Face, which is on a mission to democratize open-source AI models, or Mistral AI, which is also building amazing foundation models,” said Swami Sivasubramanian, AWS’s vice president of AI and data, during his visit to Paris. “Generative AI is fascinating to the public, but this technology goes way beyond a simple chatbot, like ChatGPT. It has the potential to disrupt all industries in a significant way,” he added. Investing more in specialized AI startups is also an integral part of AWS’s strategy. In addition to its $4 billion investment in Anthropic, a competitor to OpenAI, Amazon participated in the €220 million fundraising of the young French startup H, which also develops foundation models. The American giant has also just announced an additional $230 million, in the form of credits to use its infrastructure, for young companies that use generative AI to solve complex challenges in different sectors. If AWS is doubling down, it is because the return on investment is already there. In the first quarter, its operating profit was $9.4 billion, contributing more than 60% to that of the entire Amazon group. Generative AI is already a "multi-billion dollar" growth driver, said Adam Selipsky, AWS CEO replaced last May by Matt Garman (previously responsible for sales and marketing), in the first quarter. And this is thanks to the acceleration of spending on its professional offering for companies, several of which are moving from the experimental phase to production. For companies that build models, AWS provides a “state-of-the-art” infrastructure, with the best Nvidia components, its in-house AI chips (Trainium and Inferentia) and its Sagemaker software to build, train and deploy these models. For companies that want to develop AI applications on already trained models, the giant offers its Bedrock platform of models and tools. “We were the first to say that no model will rule the world alone, that there would be different models useful for different use cases. Today, you can see that almost all cloud providers are imitating our strategy,” underlines Swami Sivasubramanian. To develop its own generative AI assistant for businesses, called Amazon Q, the group itself used several models to meet different use cases (writing or debugging computer code, helping to analyze business data, etc.). “There may be some consolidation on the very large general-purpose models, but the domain-specific models are going to explode in a big way,” he adds. More discreet about its strategic announcements in terms of generative AI than other major American technology players, Amazon could have been perceived for a time as being behind the times. “The big difference is that we are not focusing on a consumer chatbot, but on how to make every company an AI company, and to increase the productivity of every employee within companies. So we tend to show that we deliver results first, and we let customers speak for us rather than the other way around,” he emphasizes. Amazon is not forgetting the integration of generative AI for the general public. The company is testing a virtual assistant called Rufus that provides purchasing advice to American customers browsing its e-commerce site. CEO Andy Jassy promised in his April shareholder letter that “an even smarter Alexa” would be powered by AI. A new version could enable it to hold conversations, provide more relevant answers, and perform tasks that require the use of multiple apps. “We’re constantly innovating. And you’ll see more and more innovation powered by generative AI in a wide variety of Amazon businesses, like advertising. Almost every aspect of Amazon is being reinvented with generative AI,” Sivasubramanian said. As the technology becomes more widespread, it inevitably raises the question of how much more energy will be consumed. “We’re investing heavily to make the process of training our models extremely energy efficient. And with BedRock, we’re giving our customers the option to choose the most efficient model instead of the largest model.” This means that at runtime, you’re not just saving money, you’re saving energy,” the executive explains. In March, Amazon bought a data center in Pennsylvania, USA, for $650 million that is directly powered by an adjacent power plant. Data centers are at the heart of the growth in electricity demand around the world. According to a study published by Goldman Sachs Research in May, data center energy demand will increase by 160% worldwide by 2030, mainly because of AI. According to calculations by the International Energy Agency, a single query on ChatGPT requires 2.9 watt-hours of electricity compared to 0.3 watt-hours for a Google search. “For each layer of the technology stack, we need to find the right energy optimization and sustainability techniques so that we can address this problem effectively.” And that is exactly what we are doing,” assures Swami Sivasubramanian. IV

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1732

As the European elections take place from 6 to 9 June, the issue of digital technology is struggling to emerge in the public debate. However, with research, these are eminently political subjects. It is therefore urgent to break out of the current confinement and move towards an ecosystem of sharing and free circulation of data. These are the necessary conditions for innovation, strategic autonomy and digital sovereignty of the European Union. Talents, legal framework, technical solutions: all the elements are gathered in Europe. All that is missing is a real awareness on the part of companies, and a political and economic impetus. The European single market is based on the free movement of people, goods, services and capital. It seems essential to us that digital data also benefit from this freedom. Today, within companies, administrations or for individual uses, the main model for processing digital information is the cloud, which allows the storage, processing and pooling of hardware and software resources. The value of data is not so much based on its use as on its circulation. The challenge is therefore to organize the circulation of data and the creation of a virtuous dynamic between all stakeholders, through a network of clouds that are heterogeneous by nature. The important thing is no longer the tool or the location where the data is hosted, but rather its ability to be negotiated and exchanged on a market. Closed system architecture Three large American companies (Amazon, Microsoft and Google) provide the majority of the industrial cloud clientele in France, Europe and worldwide. While the characteristics of the solutions offered are generally adapted to current needs, their closed system architecture creates a form of dependency and hinders innovation. In Europe, industrial awareness of the importance of the cloud is fairly recent. Decision-makers have turned to existing solutions, which promote their ability to protect company data. However, wanting to relate the use of digital data only to those that are generated in-house can create a loss of competitiveness, since progress and innovation do not exist in a vacuum in the long term. On the contrary, the Catena-X project, which networks all the players in the German automobile industry, is a good example of the creation of a collaborative digital ecosystem. Companies must think more in terms of importing external data and exporting some of their data. This is crucial to establish their competitiveness in a dynamic digital economy. Added to this argument is the question of independence from cloud providers and the ability of companies to escape, at a lower cost, from proprietary confinement, but also the question of cybersecurity so that they can regain control of their own security. The European market has more than 3 million open source software developers, a figure higher than that of the United States, according to the GitHub platform. If we add to this a supportive regulatory framework that is part of a desire not to be locked in and the existence of talented technology companies, Europe has particularly fertile ground to nurture innovation and develop true infrastructure independence. The aim here is not to catch up with any technological delay in terms of cloud infrastructure, but to rethink the mechanisms for circulating and negotiating data, independently of the proprietary solutions for storing this data and their location. This involves, in particular, setting up an open operating system for cloud platforms. The objective: to free up data and applications, in a virtuous and secure manner! In this area, current political and economic decisions must be up to the challenges. They cannot be limited to this or that one-off agreement with an American cloud provider. Citizens, political decision-makers, leaders, it is time to take action. It is up to us to make Europe the first continent in the world to develop a truly liberated and dynamic digital economy!

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1733

Under the guise of administrative simplification, a bill, currently being examined by the Senate, aims to accelerate the establishment of mega data centers in France by bypassing the decision-making power of local elected officials. On May 13, during the Choose France 2024 summit, Big Tech Amazon, Microsoft, IBM, the American real estate investment company Equinix and the Japanese Telehouse announced a total investment plan of nearly 7 billion euros for the expansion of their infrastructures in France. These announcements mark a new stage in a process that began several years ago. Because, in Europe and around the world, the territorialization of digital infrastructures is advancing by leaps and bounds. These data center installations are far from trivial. They are first and foremost part of a global expansion strategy on the part of Big Tech, which goes hand in hand with the construction of the most powerful submarine megacables in the world. We only need to look at the landing of the Dunant (Google), Amitié (Meta), Equiano (Google), 2Africa (Meta, China Mobile, MTN) and Peace (Chinese consortium) cables on European coasts, all of which have been built in recent years. And if these giant cables are the "roads" that transport data and software, data centers are the digital "counters" of this territorial expansion. These infrastructures are relays of major technological dependence on Big Tech, whose management of data and software remains out of the control of the European decision-maker, regulator and user. Ultimately, this consolidation of dependencies weighs heavily on our negotiation capacities with our "American friend". This infrastructural territorialization of Big Tech pursues several objectives. First, it is a consolidation of the European digital market on the cloud, with the idea that the location of data on the territory is a guarantee that they will not be transmitted to Big Tech. But the establishment of data centers in Europe also prepares the ground for the conquest of a new market: the "digital transformation" of the African continent. Colossal energy and water burden In this new battle, which pits American and Chinese companies against each other, Europe plays the role of launch pad and conciliatory partner by welcoming the digital counters of Big Tech on its territory. Finally, this geographical dissemination of data infrastructures makes it possible to distribute the colossal energy and water burden of these installations, by taking advantage of the resources available in the different market territories. The establishment of data infrastructures will indeed pose more and more problems of management of electricity and water resources. Digital infrastructures are energy-intensive, and inevitably weigh on local distribution networks. Whatever the cooling techniques used by data centers, the proper functioning of these installations will always be strongly linked to fluctuations in the outside temperature. Thus, public actors, who see the arrival of these projects as an interesting financial windfall, are embarking on a risky enterprise by committing their territory in the long term. The impact of these opportunistic collaborations on resources could well give rise to increasingly significant tensions, the first victims of which will be local residents and ecosystems. While data centers and supercomputers play an important role in the operation of artificial intelligence (AI) systems, the massification of these new uses could have very concrete consequences on the territories. Because, yes, AI accessible to all is a dream that continues to the detriment of the planet. Article 15 of the text that will be put to the vote on June 11 gives the State the possibility of bypassing local authority, and comes at a time when the first conflicts on the subject are emerging, and when communities in Ile-de-France, Marseille or Brittany are trying, precisely, to better supervise and regulate the implementation of these digital infrastructures on their territory. However, many possibilities are available to us, and all that is missing is the political will to break away from technological dependence on monopolistic players. A territorial network of better distributed and smaller data centers, belonging to European technical players, would be much more effective in safeguarding our interests and managing resources. In IT development, and more generally in science, there is neither fatalism nor nationality. Political delay A real industrial strategy is necessary, both on a national and European scale. After all, the C++ and PHP languages were created by Danes, Python by a Dutchman, the Web by a Briton. MP3 was German, Skype Swedish-Danish, VLC French. Open source solutions are mature and available to replace the majority of dominant technologies. There is no "delay", only political efforts to be made to push research and industries here and there. Only political maturity is still lagging behind… A legal framework to reduce the effects of monopolies and the control over resources is also necessary. The hybrid model of companies associating Big Tech with local players – as is the case for the Bleu project managed by Orange and CapGemini, but which is based on Microsoft technology, or S3NS, which is based on Google technology – is just another ploy to maintain a status quo where Big Tech retains exclusive control over technology. At the same time, the leaders in the data center market, the American companies Equinix and Digital Realty, are listed real estate investment companies that benefit from tax advantages based on profitability mechanisms incompatible with the general interest and the rational management of the territory’s resources. It is never too late to break the chains of dependency, but the wait-and-see attitude and sometimes fatalism make the task more difficult and the path winding. And while the subject of digital independence is absent from the European debates, it is nevertheless up to politicians to give the signal and build a favorable framework.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1734

This is, hands down, the tech topic of the year. AI this, AI that. Microsoft, Intel, and PC makers have all jumped on the bandwagon. You might want to do the same. But how do you buy artificial intelligence? C The short answer: it takes preparation. You don’t buy a PC in 2024 like you did five years ago! That said, maybe in 2024, you won’t be buying a PC. Already, an abnormally high volume of PCs and phones of the year were sold between 2021 and 2023. The remote work brought on by the pandemic has forced many people to upgrade their equipment, including the probably beige, maybe gray, computer that was gathering dust in the basement until now. Even so, if you’re shopping for a piece of computing equipment, prepare to be disoriented. This promises to be a fascinating exercise, as Charles Tisseyre would say. So much so that it would deserve a report in Découverte, of the type "immersion in the little-known world of PCs, a unique ecosystem". If you plan to buy a PC this year, prepare yourself to compare characteristics that you knew nothing about before this spring. In fact, it is not out of the question that you will seriously ask a salesperson something like: "How many TOPS should my PC's NPU be capable of to manage the tokens of the LLM that helps me illustrate my PowerPoint presentation?" LLM LLMs are the large language models developed by tech giants like Google and Meta, but also OpenAI, from the big data that they have been collecting left and right for years. These are probabilistic systems trained with incredible precision to write what would be the right answer to your question, or to guess what is hidden behind the object that you want to erase from your photos. The best-known LLMs are OpenAI’s GPT, Meta’s LLaMa, and Google’s PaLM, but there are several others. Most of them are available on the Internet, in the form of open source software. You can download an LLM for free onto your own computer from an online repository like the one from the company Hugging Face. You will then have your own personal dialog, or your own tool for generating images or videos from a piece of text. There are also lightweight language models, called SLMs. These could one day embody the famous personal AI assistant that the tech giants dream of. TOPS To work well, both LLMs and SLMs need context. For example, 1500 pages of documents in PDF format. If you ask Copilot to summarize what is said in 1,500 pages of text about a stock price, the AI must first determine whether what interests you is the variation of a listed stock or the quality of a college education on speculative investing. Establishing this context requires taking into account thousands, if not millions, of criteria. For AI, in English, these criteria are called tokens. An AI that can take into account millions of these tokens will produce an answer better adapted to the context of your question. Obviously, the more criteria there are to consider, the more processing power the AI needs. The faster it has to respond, the more instantaneous this power must be. Hence the importance, these days, of TOPS, or trillions of operations per second (a trillion in English is worth a trillion in French, or a thousand billion). An AI PC can perform dozens of TOPS. To become a Copilot+ PC, it must perform at least 40 TOPS. NPU The easiest way for AI applications on PCs to be faster is to make the graphics processor, the GPU, work in addition to the CPU (central processing unit). Hence the huge and very recent commercial success of Nvidia, which sells its GPUs like hotcakes. GPUs are its specialty. Except that GPUs are primarily used to feed images to your PC monitor. Manufacturers have therefore derived a new processor called a neural processor, called an NPU. It is a simplified GPU to consume less energy. Windows sometimes recognizes NPUs as graphics processors without display capabilities… These days, the crux of the matter for processor manufacturers, Intel, AMD or ARM, and even Apple, Google and Microsoft (who design their own chips without manufacturing them themselves), is to have the most powerful combination of CPU, GPU and NPU, to execute AI tasks as quickly as possible. Is this necessary? So here's how to shop for your AI: make sure your PC's NPU and GPU can perform enough TOPS to satisfy your LLM's token requirements. At this point, anyone at the OQLF reading this would be having a stroke. So are the days when a good PC was simply the one with the most RAM or the best battery life are over? Maybe not. Most consumers won't need an AI PC, especially if your job involves retouching photos several times a day, editing videos, or synthesizing tons of technical documents. If Minesweeper is your favorite application, or if the biggest calculation you do on your PC is filling out your tax return, AI is of no use to you. Which is a shame, really. An AI capable of doing taxes would be a revolution...

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1735

It's been two years since Alexis Jubert and his teams really looked into artificial intelligence (AI). Since then, the CEO of tombstone manufacturer GPG Granit has acquired some convictions. "You learn by testing," he recalls. "But the important thing is to base yourself on your own data and remain very vigilant about ethics." It was six months after taking over GPG Granit, where he had worked for seven years, that he opened this project. "Previously, the company has always been innovative in digital. We were the first to offer a 3D configurator allowing families to design their monuments," explains the manager. Based in Saint-Jacques-de-la-Lande, near Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine), GPG Granit works with 1,200 funeral directors and marble workers in France and Belgium. It has a turnover of 30 million euros. A keen reader and conference attendee on AI, Alexis Jubert first wondered about the areas in which he could use it. "There was no reluctance from the employees," he explains. "When the project was brought up, they also needed to understand what could be done with this technology." A subscription to ChatGPT Enterprise was taken out for $20 per month. Each employee had access to it and was able to take initiatives for a year to lighten certain tasks. The marketing department used ChatGPT to write articles to improve GPG Granit's SEO on the internet. For its part, the finance department created an intelligent agent capable of communicating market information to it. Human resources used it to design job descriptions, while during this period, the company grew from 60 to 80 employees. The IT services department, made up of three people, created two in-house applications: one to create posters for customers, the other to facilitate the management of customer gifts. Finally, the sales representatives: they had previously filled out an Excel spreadsheet so that GPG Granit could fulfil its tax declaration obligations. "With the new, very intuitive application, designed in three days, the operation went from two to three minutes per customer to ten seconds thanks to the file developed which is filled in automatically", says Alexis Jubert. These tests, which have helped to acculturate the company to AI, have also had their share of surprises. When initially asked about the creation of funeral monuments, ChatGPT only produced Anglo-Saxon models that were unsuitable for the French market. "It is essential to be in the personalization of the intelligent agent based on elements specific to the company", points out the CEO. During the project meetings that bring together the members of the AI committee that he set up, he also realized that employees were providing ChatGPT with information that was sensitive enough not to take the risk of it then circulating on the internet. "I stopped the experiment in the field of finance and the fact of citing people in our job descriptions also posed a problem in terms of personal data protection," he says. For two months, the AI experiment has entered a second phase. "We have understood the environment. Now, we have to be autonomous by creating our own AI universe." His computer scientists have used open source "large language models" (LLM), or specific AI databases, to create tools that meet the needs of the company. One of them, for example, the intelligent agent called Sailor, provides a summary of the latest quotes, orders and interactions with a customer in five seconds. "The data must be well structured, otherwise you create errors," notes Alexis Jubert. The investment? "Man-time, since my IT specialists devote 30% to 40% of their activity to it, having used free AI models until now," emphasizes Alexis Jubert. He has ruled out the idea of using consultants. "They don't teach us anything more than what we already know," he believes. The difficulty with AI is that the extent of its potential remains unknown. We probably haven't even achieved 5% of what we could do with it." Soon, GPG Granit will have its own environment, "with the creation of intelligent agents adapted to our businesses, for each department, while maintaining a certain confidentiality." The manager sees this as a way to better promote the businesses to create value. "My dream," he confides, "would be for each employee to have their own intelligent agent to be more efficient."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1736

The Transition Accelerator and the Energy Modelling Hub, two initiatives led by the Trottier Energy Institute at Polytechnique Montréal, are playing a key role in decarbonizing the Canadian economy. “The transformation of the energy system that we are embarking on as a society is the fastest we have ever seen,” exclaims Edouard Clément, Executive Director of the Energy Modelling Hub. “There is momentum in Canada, with the largest investments in energy.” By 2030, Canada has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 40 to 45% below 2005 levels. To decarbonize the Canadian economy, the federal government is adopting a series of measures, such as the new Clean Electricity Regulations. But two challenges were hindering the energy transition, according to Mr. Clément. First, the lack of communication between the provinces and Ottawa, as well as between the various federal bodies such as Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada or the Canada Energy Regulator. Second, the lack of precise and up-to-date models to make the best decisions for the energy transition. In the United Kingdom, California or Sweden, decision-makers can rely on organizations specializing in modeling, continues the expert. In Canada, such structures were absent… until recently, with the creation of the Energy Modeling Hub and the Transition Accelerator. Models to align “There are several ways to achieve decarbonization,” explains Edouard Clément. Some are more expensive, some have greater social acceptability or different technology needs. Using data for decision-making is super important. We have the data; now we need to be able to analyze it.” Modeling makes it possible to predict what the effects of different strategies will be on different indicators such as GDP, employment or the development of new technology sectors. Thanks to complex mathematical calculations, these models make it possible to more accurately assess the actions to prioritize according to different parameters. In 2023, for example, Hydro-Québec announced its intention to double the province's energy capacity by 2050 to successfully complete its energy transition. "We need to model technologies. If we implement this or that type of technology, here is what it requires in terms of electricity," illustrates Normand Mousseau, professor of physics and scientific director of the Trottier Energy Institute. "Modeling is, in my opinion, an essential tool for knowing where we are going. We are trying to identify technically and economically viable trajectories," adds Éloïse Edom, researcher at the Trottier Energy Institute. She actively worked on the Energy Modeling Initiative launched in 2019 by the Institute. A little over two years later, based on the Initiative, the Energy Modelling Hub was launched with a $5 million investment from Natural Resources Canada. It is a pan-Canadian, non-partisan network of energy and electricity modellers, led by three universities: Polytechnique Montréal, the University of Calgary and the University of Victoria. “The idea was to create a group to centralize expertise and models and to ensure that people talk to each other,” explains Edouard Clément. “We develop models, tools and visualization platforms that are open source. We train the community with workshops. We bring together model developers and decision-makers. We provided data to support the recommendations in the next report of the Canadian Electricity Advisory Board,” he lists. A methodical transition “How can we think about the transition from a methodological point of view?” states Normand Mousseau to summarize the approach of the two organizations he helped found. After co-directing the Energy Modeling Initiative, he is co-scientific director of the Energy Modeling Hub and senior advisor on transition trajectories at the Transition Accelerator, created five years ago. “We will work with more specific economic sectors to determine how we structure strategic approaches on the ground to advance decarbonization,” explains Mr. Mousseau about the Accelerator’s mission. “We rely on a methodology that will identify the problems, the actors, and local trajectories that may be different from one region to another.” We built a strategy that brings hundreds of companies together to discuss how to move forward strategically.” Normand Mousseau gives as an example the creation of a hydrogen hub in Alberta, co-led by the Accelerator and funded, among others, by the Alberta government. Transportation, buildings, critical materials, electricity, economy, biofuels: the list of sectors involved in the energy transition is long. And despite the progress, Mr. Mousseau points out, Canada must continue to use the accelerator to achieve its GHG reduction targets. “Using data for decision-making is super important. We have the data; now we need to be able to analyze it.” Thanks to complex mathematical calculations, modeling makes it possible to accurately assess the actions to prioritize in terms of energy transition, according to different parameters. GETTY IMAGES

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1737

Meredith Whittaker, president of the Signal Foundation, which supports the development of the messaging service of the same name, is a former Google employee and a specialist in the ethics of artificial intelligence, online privacy and Internet governance. Based in Paris for a few months, she is participating in the VivaTech trade show, held from May 22 to 25. For the past few days, the founder of the Telegram messaging service, Pavel Durov, and the owner of the social network X, Elon Musk, have been suggesting – without proof – that Signal contains vulnerabilities in its encryption system… What do you say to them? In the United States, we have a word for that: “bullshit”. It is dangerous to make such statements about a technology that represents a life-or-death issue for many users: human rights defenders, journalists, their sources, whistleblowers, people fleeing authoritarian regimes… If they want to attack Signal, let them do it! But without denigrating a technology that has been verified and validated for over a decade, because it is open source. In France, the Minister of the Interior, Gérald Darmanin, would like to allow law enforcement to access encrypted content. European police forces are saying the same thing. Does that worry you? For decades, politicians have been dreaming of a magic wand that would allow them to access encrypted content without compromising the security of communications, useful for human rights defenders but also businesses, governments, etc. Unfortunately, there is no magic wand. The gap between these political desires and technical realities is huge. Their argument is that encryption harms investigations, prevents access to evidence, etc. What do you say? These arguments have existed for decades and persist, although our era is experiencing unprecedented mass surveillance. Law enforcement has never had access to so much data. To the point that it poses a problem for them, because they have to be able to process it. France has just blocked TikTok in New Caledonia, which has been in the throes of riots for a few days... What do you think? I don't know the context well, but in 2024, blocking access to a social network in order to regain control of a territory seems very dated... This decision resembles that of an authoritarian regime and is not suitable for a democracy. In Europe, the Digital Markets Act, which came into force in March, imposes interoperability of messaging services. So, if I use WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger, I should be able to communicate with a Signal user... Is this a good thing? In theory yes, because we are faced with a few tech giants that control the communication infrastructure. But it is complicated to implement. We will refuse interoperability with any messaging service if it does not respect our privacy standards. Of course, the Signal encryption protocol, which we created and which protects the content of messages, is now used by WhatsApp or Google. But we go further, by also protecting the name of the people you speak to, the time and the number of messages sent. We would love for everyone to adopt these standards. We challenge the entire industry to live up to them. For you, AI only reinforces this domination of the tech giants, and the concentration of their power… It is worth remembering that the notion of AI became popular in the 2010s, when two resources became widely available: data and computing power. They made neural networks, an old AI technology, efficient. This proved useful in the eyes of players like Google or Facebook, to sell ever more advertising. The current search for ever more powerful AI reinforces the concentration of power in the hands of these companies. Because they are the ones who have the data necessary for AI. And the computing power. And the means to offer AI on the market, through platforms like Google, Instagram or YouTube, and the clouds. In your opinion, this dominance of Big Tech has an impact on the type of AI developed and on the public to which they are actually addressed… Training an AI model like GPT-3 would cost 100 million dollars [92.5 million euros]… Only very rich players can deploy these systems on a large scale. And they must then be able to sell them, to make a profit. So, this idea that we are all users of AI is false. We can already see that the big customers are mainly powerful people: governments, states, law enforcement or large economic players, who decide to introduce these systems into the manufacturing process at the risk of degrading work. They are the ones who determine the use of these systems. Workers are not the users: they are the subjects. Can European AI start-ups like Mistral AI offer an alternative to the digital giants? Yes, on one of the elements of the AI value chain, the manufacturing of models, but they are not direct competitors of these companies. These start-ups, for example, still need, for computing, to use the infrastructures of Nvidia, Google or Amazon… Access to the market necessarily goes through these players. Many politicians in Europe cling to this fantasy that it would suddenly be possible to create a giant, a European Microsoft or Google. But because of the nature of these monopolies, which combine platforms and infrastructures, and are self-reinforcing, this seems impossible. So what should be done? We can move towards smaller AI models. We could also separate the application layer (such as search engines, social networks, etc.) from the infrastructure layer (such as computing power), for example, by regulating. We could also impose ways of creating and collecting data legally, which do not fuel surveillance and targeted advertising. This could be done with the General Data Protection Regulation, which was created precisely to impose the consent of Europeans on the processing of their data… Yes. Often, Europe has very good rules on paper, but these come up against their application, in particular because of the millions of dollars spent on lobbying by the digital giants in Brussels. It is an uphill battle. But I believe that there is an opportunity here for European political leaders to show the way with a strong decision, which would be popular with the public. In 2018, when you were at Google, you protested against Project Maven, which aimed to analyze drone images using AI for the American army. Do you believe in the possibility of an international treaty that bans autonomous weapons? It is our moral duty to call for a ban and to combat the use of these systems. They apply the same imprecise and biased logic as advertising targeting, to determine who to kill. There is a huge amount of money that used to go to the historical suppliers of American defense, going to big tech players. And we are seeing the reappearance of “cold war” discourses, about the conflict between the United States and China or about the arms race with AI… It’s worrying.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1738

A star can be defined by the light it gives off. This is as true in astronomy as in entertainment. No need to have seen its films or listened to its music, a real star, everyone knows it. In the business world, very few companies achieve this fame. Electronics company Nvidia has entered this very exclusive club. All stock market analysts awaited the publication of its quarterly results with as much anxiety, if not more, than the American inflation or employment figures. Because this company, still unknown to the general public five years ago, represents all the hopes of a new industrial revolution bringing growth to the United States. And these results did not disappoint. The manufacturer of chips for artificial intelligence announced, on Wednesday, May 22, a 262% increase in its turnover for its last fiscal quarter, to 26 billion dollars (24 billion euros). A 3.5-fold increase in sales compared to the same period in 2023, which was already up 265% compared to 2022. Better than Google or Amazon Equally spectacular, the company's net profit amounted to $15 billion over the same three months, a profit margin of over 57%. And it's not over yet, since Nvidia's founder, Taiwanese-American Jensen Huang, promised that this rate of growth would continue in 2024 and probably the next few years. As a result, the company's stock market valuation should climb even higher than the current $2,300 billion. Better than Google or Amazon. Like a passing of the torch. The first computer revolution was driven, in the 1960s and 1980s, by the hegemony of IBM, that of the microcomputer, between 1980 and 2000, by Microsoft and Intel, and the next, that of the Internet and mobile, by Google and Apple. The age of artificial intelligence will be driven by the duopoly formed by OpenAI and Nvidia. In the interconnected world of digital, the winner takes all, because it creates the standard and its investment means make it difficult to catch up. According to analysts at Citi bank, quoted by the Financial Times, Nvidia's market share exceeds 80% and would still be over 60% in 2030. However, it does not manufacture its chips, produced by the Taiwanese TSMC. Its rivals (AMD, Intel, Qualcomm) and its major customers (Google, Microsoft, Meta or Apple) all work on their own system. But the software environment he built over twenty years, called CUDA, will be very difficult to replicate because it is so efficient and locks the client into their habits. Like Google, Microsoft or Apple did with theirs. To make up for lost time, almost all of them are banking on opensource software, which anyone can improve, called Triton, designed by the Frenchman Philippe Tillet during his doctorate at Harvard. He has since been hired by OpenAI. But getting back on track will take time, until the next cycle…

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1739

If we want to spread AI and reap all the benefits, we need shared use and therefore an open, fair and transparent AI model. We will have to defend this model in an international dialogue." While the business and tech world is celebrating the artificial intelligence revolution at the Viva Tech trade show this week, Emmanuel Macron wanted to make his mark. The President of the Republic, who wants to make France a key leader in these technologies, will organize the next world AI summit on February 10 and 11, 2025. Ahead of this event, he intends to promote the "French touch". This will be done in particular through the Democratic Commons, a global research program supported by the public authorities. Initiated by Make.org, Sciences Po, Sorbonne University and the CNRS, it aims to make open-source generative AI solutions available to serve democracy. For two years, more than 50 researchers and engineers will work on solutions for evaluating and correcting bias in AI systems to ensure their responsible use. Among the experts who will supervise this project are the French start-up Hugging Face as well as NGOs and foundations such as Mozilla.ai and the Aspen Institute. "In an increasingly polarized world, where technologies such as AI are often used by those who want to take advantage of the flaws in our open societies to exacerbate divisions, this French initiative is proud to bring an alternative and positive vision of a technology at the service of democracy," says the NGO make.org. Several voices agree, in fact, that the issues surrounding AI technologies cannot be addressed solely through a technical or legal prism, and that it is now impossible to ignore the impact on our democracies in light of the observed excesses. A handful of actors Some compare the rise of AI to the rise of social networks. "One of the lessons we can learn from the last twenty years is that a race against time between players that ignores the impact on society is not the best practice," says Mitchell Baker, executive director of the Mozilla Foundation, while in Paris. "It generates income for shareholders, but it harms our value systems. Civil society wants more transparency and collaboration in the construction of these technologies. It also asks the major players in AI to engage in the debate around the principles that should govern the development of these technologies. These companies have understood that it is in their interest to take part, particularly in terms of image." At a time when regulators must deal with the acceleration of the pace of innovation as well as the rise of dangers including deepfakes, sixteen tech giants (Meta, Google, OpenAI, Alibaba, etc.) have once again made commitments on the sidelines of a global summit on AI that took place this week in South Korea. This does not prevent many observers, such as the Mozilla Foundation, from denouncing the "concentration" of AI technologies in the hands of a small number of players. "When we talk about language models and systems that are supposed to replicate human intelligence, synthesize ideas for us, imitate our voices, this poses a problem. We need greater diversity." The question of more equitable access to these technologies is also being raised today. According to the NGO, this must involve a commitment from public authorities to create "robust infrastructures (data centers, etc.) and the provision of large volumes of data and computing power to train language models." A way to bring out other champions alongside the giants. KL

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1740

Recruiters must be very careful in their online searches. While they are now thinking about ways to optimize their search for the "rare pearl", or even the "five-legged sheep", thanks to the new possibilities offered by artificial intelligence (AI), a recent decision by the Court of Cassation reminds them that not all means are good and, first and foremost, that personal data belongs only to its owner. A decision by the Court of Cassation on April 30 has in fact just overturned the appeal of the conviction of a detective to a one-year suspended prison sentence and a €20,000 fine for having collected personal data freely accessible on the Internet, but in an unfair manner. This ruling is the latest episode in the so-called "Ikea employee spying" case, which resulted in a €1 million fine for the French subsidiary of the Swedish furniture company in 2021 and prison sentences for thirteen of its executives. The brand had then set up a system for investigating its employees and job applicants in several of its stores in the 2000s and then in the 2010s. In his appeal proceedings, the incriminated detective defended himself against the "unfair" nature of the collection of personal data, since in response to the request of the sponsoring company, he had identified "information made public in the press or information publicly disseminated by a person on a social network (open source data)". His searches concerned information such as criminal records, banking and telephone information, vehicles, properties, tenant or owner status, marital status, health, travel abroad. A profiling that went well beyond the information usually exchanged during a job interview. Googling a future recruit is not prohibited, but the transmission of their information to the human resources manager is precisely regulated and the data must be "collected and processed in a fair and lawful manner", specifies the Data Protection Act. This is the point on which the Court of Cassation ruled, describing the means of collection as "unfair in employer-employee relations". All the employees' information was certainly taken from public sites, such as websites, directories, discussion forums, social networks, regional press sites, as the defendant himself explained during his interrogations, but it "was used in a way that was unrelated to the purpose for which it was put online and was collected without the knowledge of the persons concerned, thus depriving them of the right to object established by the Data Protection Act", states the judgment of 30 April. The right to object allows anyone to refuse the processing of their data, whether it be collection, storage, adaptation or modification, extraction, consultation, use, communication by transmission, dissemination or any other form of making available.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1741

From the President's pay slips to public school sponsorship agreements, the Commission for Access to Administrative Documents aims to make it easier for everyone to consult them. But faced with the lack of information from government officials and persistent opacity, citizens are struggling to "remove barriers as much as possible." Here it is in the flesh (or almost): the President of the Republic's pay slip L. In January, Emmanuel Macron received €14,586.32 net before tax - for a "full-time" job, the document specifies. The scoop is not so much the amount, already known, as the pay slip itself. Xavier Berne, who initiated the request, is still stunned. All it took was an email to the Elysée and two months of patience. This former journalist is at the helm of Ma Dada (for "request for access to administrative documents"), an associative platform aimed at simplifying their consultation. He sometimes sends requests in his own name, "for educational purposes, to show that it is possible." Yes, because there is a slight gap between the law and the way the State applies it to itself. In reality, Macron's pay slip obtained today is the spoils of an old melee, started in 2020 by a teacher-researcher from the Observatory of Public Ethics who wanted to verify the concrete changes to the method of calculating the 2012 compensation system. Refusal by the chief of staff of the Elysée, who persisted, believing that the control was the responsibility of the Court of Auditors. And that therefore, "under these conditions, the communication of the requested documents appears useless for your research work." Stunned by such a response, which in passing called into question the freedom of teacher-researchers, Lucie Sponchiado had taken the matter to the administrative judge to force the Elysée to give in. "In principle: the duty of transparency applies to everyone, including the President and the Prime Minister," she insists. Two years later, a motorcycle courier wearing white gloves rang her doorbell with the facsimile in an envelope. The Elysée is therefore on the road to progress: to respond to Xavier Berne, the administration contented itself with a registered letter. A FEW "JOKER" TO REFUSE The Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789 is clear: "Society has the right to demand an account of his administration from any public agent." A 1978 law organizes the matter: any document produced or received by the State, local authorities, associations and private companies in the context of a public service mission is communicable. A huge source: for example, it is possible to request the contract between the water management company and your city, the air quality analyses at the RATP, the expense reports of a mayor and his deputies. On the other side, the administration still has a few "jokers" to refuse. Such as the status of "unfinished" documents quickly drawn, the secrecy of certain deliberations (notably those of the Council of Ministers). Or even the business secrecy invoked in the context of public contracts for example. In 1978, the legislator set up an institution to play the mediator. It is the famous Commission for Access to Administrative Documents (Cada), with its 21 agents, including managers. Normally, its vocation is to intervene only on thorny requests, on the edge of the law. In fact, it is overwhelmed with referrals - more than 10,000 last year, an increase of 46% in six years. There are two ways of reading this evolution. In a glass half full, this is proof that more and more citizens are taking advantage of their rights. The picture is less rosy: these appeals are mainly a symptom of an administration that is reluctant to be transparent and sometimes drags its feet. Xavier Berne has his eye on the meter: in more than eight out of ten cases, the administration does not respond within the month allowed by law. Not even an acknowledgement of receipt. "There is such inertia. I often say it: if the law were applied, a platform like Ma Dada would not exist," he believes. This associative project was born a little before the lockdown, "a little on a whim," says Laurent Savaëte, one of the co-founders. While doing research on public funding for companies, this engineer discovered by chance the English platform What-DoTheyKnow which simplifies document requests. With two friends from the Open Knowledge France association, he stole the source code (in complete legality, it is free software). Fifteen days of "hard work" later, Ma Dada was up and running. The site, which is free, offers a pre-filled form. All you have to do is enter the exact title of the document and the targeted administration (50,000 addresses are registered). "The idea is to remove as many barriers as possible. There is a glaring lack of knowledge of the law, which has existed for forty-five years in France, whereas it is a very active right in England, for example. Who knows in our country that they can ask questions of the State?" adds the engineer. Ma Dada has only had 1,350 users since its launch. Lack of knowledge of the law is not the only obstacle. Laurent Savaëte talks about this other barrier to overcome, which is more difficult and higher than he initially imagined: the difficulty of getting the administration to comply with the law. "THERE REMAINS A CULTURE OF SECRECY" The nature of the appeals before the Cada illustrates this well: 40% do not present any legal difficulty, the doctrine having been established for ages. The Secretary General of the Cada, Hélène Servent, is the first to regret these "unjustified referrals" which pile up on her agents' desks, and waste everyone's time. Because by ricochet, the Cada does not respect the law either. In principle, it must rule within a month. "We have managed to get down to fifty-two days on average, we were at six months in 2019", pleads the Secretary General. Hélène Servent would like to paint a brighter picture; insists on the progress, in particular the appointments of Mr. and Mrs. Transparency (the Pradas) within many administrations. "But it is true, I note it and deplore it, that there remains a culture of secrecy in certain administrations", concedes the Secretary General. Partly due to ignorance, she says: "We conduct a lot of training for agents. Some still think that a request is not admissible if the applicant does not demonstrate an interest in acting." She knows the harmful effects. This suspicion that creeps in when an administrator, requesting transparency, finds himself in front of closed doors. For example, when the management of the École Polytechnique, which trains the country's elite, refuses to communicate the content of sponsorship agreements made with companies (see page 4), ignoring the opinion of the Cada and the administrative court. Contacted by Libération, the school invoked business confidentiality, "when these contracts are concluded with private individuals who operate in a competitive environment." "In the current climate, we need access to raw information more than ever," says Noël Lucia, an activist at France Nature Environnement. "It's the only way to get out of fantasies." TWISTING THE MINISTRY'S ARM This was also the basis of the Lemaire law of 2016, with the open data project. Administrations must, of their own accord, make datasets available. More than 40,000 are online on the data.gouv.fr website, classified by theme: housing, energy, health, education, public accounts "This law is a real step forward," notes the vice-president of the Observatory of Public Ethics, Jean-Christophe Kerléo. He would have liked to stick to a wave but the reality is less sunny. "We could have imagined that with this text, the number of appeals before the Cada would dry up. Not at all." This will also be the theme of their next conference, at the end of May. "These datasets are not always easy to read and use, unless you are a professional. Making them available also requires resources within administrations: the forces are often lacking. Finally, the data put online is rarely the data that interests the citizens." Sometimes it takes pressure and the stubbornness of a few people. Often, seasoned activists or journalists. This was the case, for example, in the spring of 2023 for the publication of social position indices, which demonstrated the decline in social diversity in many schools. Journalist Alexandre Léchenet, co-founder of the Association of Journalists for Transparency, fought for three years to twist the ministry's arm. Or more recently, for the posting of all court decisions online: the Ouvre-boîte association, established since 2017, had shaken the coconut tree. "We are half a dozen active members," says Michel Blancard, one of the founders. We make requests on subjects of general interest, sensitive and which suggest that the fight will be long." In the vast majority of cases, the Cada decides in favour of the communication of data (only 9% of referrals have an unfavourable opinion), but the administration does not always give in. The only coercive means is then to turn to the administrative court. In practice, 5% of Cada appeals end up before the judge. "Often because people do not dare," says Michel Blancard. "The justice system intimidates. Perhaps also because you have to write a brief. I would like to get this message across: it is entirely feasible." But it is long. Sometimes you have to wait years for the judgment. ?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1742

On this side of the Atlantic, billionaire Frank McCourt is best known to football fans for being the owner of OM since 2016. Descendant of a family of entrepreneurs, the president of McCourt Global is nevertheless at the head of a group that brings together activities in the real estate, sports, technology, media and capital investment sectors. On the other side of the Atlantic, his concern about the excesses of the internet has also been public knowledge for several years. Since 2021, Frank McCourt has launched and injected $500 million into an initiative called "Project Liberty", with the ambition of "building a better internet" than the current one, which he considers "broken" given the harmful consequences, particularly on health, the well-being of children and democracy. It is in this context, and through this project, that Frank McCourt announced on Wednesday that he was putting together an offer to be able, when the time comes, to buy TikTok's American activities. This is the first publicly declared offer since US President Joe Biden signed a law in April requiring the Chinese group ByteDance, TikTok's parent company, to sell its social network within a year to an American buyer or risk seeing the TikTok application banned from the App Store and Google Play Store in the United States. This is not yet a formal offer at this stage. "Project Liberty is organizing a consortium to buy TikTok. We are only at the beginning, because there are still many steps to specify in the process, in particular on the exact scope of the activities that will be for sale, but we want to be ready when all this becomes very concrete," Tomicah Tilleman, who has headed Project Liberty since the beginning of this year, told Le Figaro. The sale process is still far from being launched. Not only will ByteDance challenge the US law in court, but the Chinese group indicated in late April that it had no intention of selling, whatever the consequences. But Frank McCourt's camp, which is actively talking to lawmakers in the United States, is preparing to seize the possible opportunity. "We said to ourselves that this was the opportunity of a lifetime, and that it was the right time to build a platform that aligned with our vision of the internet, in a way that allows users to regain control over their personal data," continues Tomicah Tilleman. "We brought together a group of financial investors, but also civil society activists, leaders who support our approach and recognize the need to build a new model for this type of platform," he says. A price still unknown Among these partners, Guggenheim Securities, the investment bank and capital markets of Guggenheim Partners, and the law firm Kirkland & Ellis, but also recognized personalities, such as Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the main inventor of the World Wide Web, or the social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, author of a best-selling book, The Anxious Generation. "It is too early to discuss a price, because we do not yet know the exact scope of such a sale, specifies Tomicah Tilleman. But we are aware that this will be a significant financial transaction and we will be ready when the time comes." How much is this video-sharing application really worth? Used by 170 million Americans? It is difficult to answer without knowing whether international activities will be included in addition to American activities, or whether TikTok's precious algorithm would also be for sale. Some are talking about a valuation of 100 billion dollars. TikTok's American subsidiary generated $16 billion in revenue in 2023. At Project Liberty, the idea of working on an offer emerged even before the law was passed, when political discussions began to crystallize among parliamentarians around this sale option. "We are approaching this offer in a very different way, with motivations that are not those of other players to perpetuate TikTok's existing economic model. We want to put users back at the heart of the project," insists Tomicah Tilleman. A model - common to all major platforms because it was invented in the United States - that Frank McCourt considers responsible for many dangerous ills for societies. "There is a real need to adopt a new framework. We want to follow three principles: give power back to users, have better governance of the platform to avoid current pitfalls, which range from manipulation to data exploitation, and distribute more value to the community, particularly for content creators. "This is really key in our project," insists Tomicah Tilleman. The idea is not to wipe the slate clean but to modify its architecture. "There are very good things in the TikTok platform as it currently works, with a lot of dynamism, a very efficient interface and we want to keep all of that, underlines Tomicah Tilleman. But we think that the structure and the model must be improved to give more power and value to the community of TikTokers." To do this, the consortium wants to rely in particular on a decentralized and open source protocol developed as part of the Liberty project, which is partly based on the blockchain (DSNP, for "decentralized social networking protocol"). With this protocol, a user must be able to change platforms by taking their contacts and all of their content without losing everything, as they can do with their phone number when they change operator. “A TikTok that uses open internet protocols will embrace the core values of privacy, data sovereignty and user mental health,” says Sir Tim Berners-Lee, a strong advocate of a decentralized internet. IV

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1743

This is the new land of conquest for the music industry. Sound like in real life, which surrounds you and comes from where the action is taking place. Welcome to the era of 3D audio, also called spatial or binaural sound. Streaming platforms, record labels, audio device manufacturers... each wants to differentiate themselves by offering this immersive sound. On April 11, Orange launched a new TV decoder (TV 6) compatible with Dolby Atmos. Apple Music had proposed, two months earlier, to increase the remuneration for artists who would offer their tracks in 3D sound, to the great fury of independent labels. If Dolby Atmos is the most widespread spatial sound format in the world, it will have to deal in 2024 with a newcomer: immersive sound, called IAMF (Immersive Audio Model and Formats), which is promoted, in particular, by Google/YouTube and Samsung in the form of free software. All the conditions are in place for a battle of spatial sound, at a time when it is becoming more widespread among the general public, from music to audio books to podcasts, on all devices capable of reproducing audio, at home, on the move, at the cinema or in concert. Navigation tool One hundred and forty-three years after the first stereo broadcast – the “théâtrophone” by the Frenchman Clément Ader (1841-1925) – and a century after the stereophony patent – filed by the American Franklin Doolittle (1893-1979) –, spatial sound, with three-dimensional (3D) effects, is becoming more widespread. Even the co-inventor of MP3, Karlheinz Brandenburg, has succumbed to the sirens of Audio AR (another name, which refers to augmented reality). However, spatial sound is not new. Quadraphony, also called tetraphony, attempted a breakthrough in analog from the 1950s to the 1970s, before being abandoned. Another commercial failure: the Super Audio CD format for digital optical discs, developed in the late 1990s by Sony and Philips, allowing multichannel sound called "surround". With the exception of the home cinema market, the adventure ended fifteen years ago. "We do not think that the main application of this technology is high fidelity, which would explain the failure of previous attempts. Spatializing sound transforms it and some music lovers find that it degrades it," explains Philippe Le Borgne, CEO and co-founder of RunBlind, a French start-up specializing in binaural sound used as a navigation tool to guide the user in their movements through the music they are listening to, a technology intended in particular for the visually impaired. Head tracking sensors are integrated into connected headphones, glasses or earpieces. Even though purists might see it as a sound degradation compared to hi-fi stereo, spatial sound is about to make us forget its past failures. A multitude of high-tech devices now have it for listening to music, podcasts or audiobooks. The immersive three-dimensional effect adds verticality to the horizontality of the sound (five-way multichannel, called 5.1, or seven-way, in the case of 7.1). "It was thanks to my AirPods wireless headphones, capable of reproducing spatial sound, that I discovered music in Dolby Atmos on Apple Music. Since then, I can't do without it. The music literally envelops me, in "fixed" mode or in "head tracking" - the origin of the sound is then determined according to the orientation of my head. But the tracks are, unfortunately, not all in 3D audio," says Quentin, a 25-year-old from Toulouse and a rapper in his spare time. The iPhone maker says that "more than 90% of Apple Music listeners have experienced spatial audio, and music streams available in this format have more than tripled in the last two years." And assures that its Logic Pro mixing software (229.99 euros per license) allows labels and independent artists to export their spatial audio mixes in ADM (Dolby Atmos) files. Even in the car While there is no shortage of 3D audio formats, such as 360 Reality Audio from Japanese Sony or DTS:X from American Xperi, it is the format launched a dozen years ago by Dolby Laboratories, in San Francisco (California), which currently holds the upper hand. "Dolby Atmos is a pioneering immersive audio experience that has been fully adopted by major device manufacturers and movie theater operators around the world. Today, billions of devices are equipped with it, such as smartphones, such as those from Apple and Samsung; Sonos soundbars and connected speakers, Apple's HomePod, Amazon's Echo Studio; televisions such as Samsung, LG or Sony; computers or laptops from Apple, Asus, Dell or Lenovo; as well as game consoles or DVD/Blu-ray players," lists John Couling, vice president of entertainment at Dolby Laboratories. Cinema operators, such as the American AMC or the French Pathé (formerly Pathé-Gaumont), also use Atmos sound for thousands of theaters, to which are added hundreds of Dolby Cinema locations - an immersive cinema concept offering Dolby Atmos sound, Dolby Vision image and reclining seats. The world number one in spatial sound, the American group, led for fifteen years by Kevin Yeaman, collects significant royalties from these licensed operations. Even the automotive sector is rolling in spatial audio, as with Mercedes-Benz, Volvo, Polestar (Volvo's luxury division), Lotus, Lucid Motors (American electric cars) and others. The rise of streaming platforms is largely contributing to the appropriation of spatial audio. In video on demand, Netflix, Disney+, AppleTV+, Amazon Prime Video, Paramount+, and the Max platform (ex-HBO Max/Discovery+), which is coming to Europe by the summer, have fallen for Atmos. The same goes for online music with Amazon Music, Apple Music and Tidal (both Dolby Atmos and Sony's 360 Reality Audio). Even Amazon's Audible has been publishing audiobooks and podcasts in Atmos for a year. On the other hand, the French platform Deezer abandoned, at the end of October 2022, its spatial offer "360 by Deezer", based on a partnership with Sony, without replacing it, contenting itself with offering hi-fi sound without loss of quality with the FLAC (Free Lossless Audio Codec) format, open source and free. "We have decided to end this trial phase, in part because of the technical and administrative challenges linked to the maintenance of a separate music application", explains a spokesperson for Deezer. As for the other French platform, Qobuz (owned by the company Xandrie), renowned for its hi-fi quality in Hi-Res format, it had adopted THX Spatial Audio technology in August 2022. This immersive 360-degree audio format was originally developed for the Lucasfilm film studio, George Lucas' company. But Qobuz ultimately gave up on spatial sound. "Our customers, older than the market average, over 40, urban and CSP+, do not ask us for it," explains Georges Fornay, Deputy CEO of Qobuz. A way to stand out "In cinema and television, all the major Hollywood studios continue to release films in Dolby Atmos for distribution in theaters and at home. This includes some of the biggest blockbusters of the past year such as Barbie. And, in music, more than twenty streaming platforms and more than a thousand recording studios have activated Dolby Atmos worldwide," says John Couling at Dolby Laboratories. 3D audio allows you to stand out from your increasingly numerous rivals. Apple Music thus adopted spatial sound with Dolby Atmos technology in 2021 and now offers an additional 10% remuneration for titles recorded in this format, much to the dismay of independent labels. According to the Financial Times of February 1, the additional costs are in the order of 1,000 euros per title and 10,000 euros per album. Not everyone is Deutsche Grammophon, the doyenne of record companies (in the hands of the major Universal Music), capable of broadcasting classical music in Atmos (also live) on its Stage+ platform, accessible even in the Apple Vision Pro spatial headset. Often accused of not paying artists enough, will other music streaming platforms follow Apple in this area? Impala (Independent Music Companies Association), of which nearly six thousand labels are members, has stepped up to the plate. For this association based in Brussels, "the spatial coupling and royalties will have negative consequences for certain parts of the music industry, in particular for independent labels and their artists." This measure, taken unilaterally by the Cupertino (California) company, "inevitably results in a reduction in income for those who cannot access it, which worsens the impact on independents", believes Impala, which counts the Union of Independent French Phonographic Producers (UPFI) among its members. Impala President Helen Smith hopes that the meeting planned for April with the Californian company will make her change her mind. "Significant progress" In its previous financial year, ending at the end of September 2023, the leader Dolby Laboratories achieved almost all of its turnover with all of its audio or video formats, which reached nearly 1.3 billion dollars (1.2 billion euros), an increase of 3.6% over one year. Its catalog consists of some 20,000 international patents, which have ensured it a net profit of 200.6 million dollars in 2023. Its market capitalization is approaching 7.5 billion dollars. However, in this high-demand market, Dolby Laboratories is facing much more powerful players, such as the Japanese Sony and especially Google. A new spatial audio format could indeed change the game: IAMF, promoted by the Alliance for Open Media, chaired by Matt Frost, product director at Google. Unlike the lucrative Dolby Atmos, IAMF is free and open source (royalty-free). This new 3D sound technology will be available later this year on Samsung televisions and Google products (such as YouTube). "IAMF represents a significant advance in open immersive audio standards. Not only does it address a variety of use cases, including streaming, gaming, AR, VR, and broadcast, but this open-source software will also provide creators with the tools to create immersive audio experiences that captivate audiences, says Matt Frost. As an open media project, IAMF is easily accessible to integrators around the world; it fosters innovation, empowers developers, and ensures the broad availability of rich, immersive audio experiences that consumers want. "Just as stereo did, 3D sound is set to become more mainstream, and many audio content will be unable to escape it. Like sound's revenge in a world of omnipresent images.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1744

As the fine weather approaches, a hint of worry invades Christophe Mathon. For the mayor of the village of Saint-Montan, a medieval town of 180 inhabitants nestled in the confines of the Ardèche, the coming months do not look like they will be easy. Between April and October, every weekend and during school holidays, an uninterrupted flow of vehicles pours into his region, popular with tourists. At the exit of the A7, near Montélimar, many motorists heading for the Ardèche gorges then take the D262 departmental road, a road that passes through the main square of the village. "At this time of year, we can see up to 1,000 cars per day," swears Christophe Mathon. "Our streets are not adapted to handle such traffic. Buses and semi-trailers have already found themselves stuck and have been forced to reverse. These maneuvers create monstrous traffic jams. The inhabitants are suffering from the situation, and some of them even leave at the beginning of the summer season. On the road leading to the village, signs indicate other routes, but people blindly let themselves be guided by their GPS. All this to save a few minutes. "Suggesting the fastest route is exactly the mission that the Waze application has set itself. The motto of the firm created in 2008 in Israel is clear: "Outsmart traffic together". Unlike its competitors TomTom, Sygic or Plans, Waze is based on a participatory map update system. An idea of Ehud Shabtai, an Israeli researcher who hacked GPS systems to improve the mapping of his country and who decided to create an open source application, capable of combining all the information sent by motorists (accidents, roadworks, traffic jams, presence of radar, etc.) and of updating the map in real time. In about fifteen years, Waze has made the competition look old-fashioned. In 2013, it was bought by Google for $966 million (nearly €905 million) and now has nearly 140 million users worldwide, including 17 million in France. Recognized as very practical tools for finding your way easily, GPS applications are not without their perverse effects. This is what research conducted by the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, published in 2018, reveals. Once the threshold of 20% of motorists using GPS applications to take alternative routes is exceeded, the study shows that congestion forms at the access ramps, ultimately creating more traffic difficulties on the highway. Worse: a continuous and massive flow of traffic flows onto secondary roads, which do not have sufficient infrastructure to cope with it. Faced with what American researchers call the "Waze effect", many elected officials and residents of small towns all over the world are complaining about being invaded by a horde of motorists and heavy goods vehicles. The phenomenon particularly affects towns located near major traffic routes. In France, voices have been raised in Cornebarrieu (Haute-Garonne), Blagnac (Haute-Garonne), Aulnay-sous-Bois (Seine-Saint-Denis), Compiègne (Oise), Hettange-Grande (Moselle), and Lieusaint (Seine-et-Marne). Crossed in its heart by the D925 departmental road, the small village of Camphin-en-Carembault, in the North, has gradually transformed into a transit zone for motorists wanting to escape the traffic jams on the A1, the motorway linking Lille to Paris, located a few kilometres away. "We counted up to 14,000 vehicles per day on this road," says Matthieu Lestoquoy, mayor of this village of 1,800 inhabitants. "For local residents, such traffic generates its share of inconveniences: traffic jams, noise pollution, pollution, but also safety problems. Residents living along this road were no longer able to leave their homes by car, pedestrian crossings were no longer respected, and three children were even hit by vehicles," says the mayor. Matthieu Lestoquoy then tried to alert Waze, without success. "What do they care about a small town like ours? On our scale, we can't fight it." Contacted to find out to what extent it could take action, the company replied that "the application directs its users using only public road infrastructure, based on local driving laws and legal road signs in the region. Local authorities are the only ones authorized to make certain changes, which will be relevant for all drivers using this road." In fact, some cities have not hesitated to take radical decisions to escape the law of algorithms. In the United States, the mayor of Leonia, New Jersey, decided in December 2017 to close about sixty streets to non-residents from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., to prevent workers from traveling to New York via his city. Motorists who choose to ignore this regulation are now liable to a $200 fine. Sometimes, it is the local residents themselves who use perfidy to thwart the recommendations of the apps. In Berlin, the artist Simon Weckert tried an experiment. In a small cart, he carried 99 smartphones, all activated in geolocation mode. As a result, in every street he walks on, the route turns from green to red on GPS apps, which think it's a traffic jam, thus redirecting drivers to another route. Enough to catch the apps at their own game and send traffic elsewhere? Not so simple, according to the response provided by Waze: "The routing process takes into account several data points [without saying how many], so that even if people submit false declarations, it will not have a lasting effect on the routing." In the North, Simon Weckert's attempt inspired Matthieu Lestoquoy. To put a spoke in the wheels of GPS users, the municipality of Camphin-en-Carembault last year put in place two stop signs, a traffic light and the establishment of a "30 zone" between two raised platforms installed at the entrance and exit of the town. For several years, other communities have launched similar initiatives. In Lieusaint, in the Paris region, in 2019 the mayor installed traffic lights in the city center, made some streets one-way and lowered the speed limit to 30 kilometers per hour to slow down motorists. Since 2017, this city of 12,000 inhabitants has been transformed into a relief route for around ten thousand drivers wanting to avoid the traffic jams of the Francilienne. "To save a maximum of six minutes, motorists turn the city upside down," fumes Michel Bisson, mayor of Lieusaint, who contacted Waze to try to find a solution. "We don't know if our requests have been taken into account. All we know is that Waze agreed to remove the routes near schools, the residents were afraid for the safety of their children. In any case, thanks to our measures, traffic has slightly improved, but to say that we are out of the woods is another story." In Camphin-en-Carembault, the development changes also seem to have produced encouraging results. Matthieu Lestoquoy has observed a drop of 2,000 cars per day. "The effects are visible on the app," the elected official shows. "You can see an orange and red marker on this road in our town, thanks to the slowdowns. This does not encourage motorists to risk it. Even if it is still far from perfect, traffic is becoming more reasonable again." Yony Bouchard has also seen the difference. Located in a charming subdivision, his house adjoins the departmental road. For ten years, this resident of Camphin-en-Carembault had been living in "hell", to the point of thinking about moving. "With the nuisances, it was impossible to eat in the garden. And we couldn't even cross the road to take our children to school. Once, I even lost my cool by kicking a car in the bumper to force it to stop. Things have improved. Cars drive more slowly, it's become less noisy, we live more peacefully." For Jean Haentjens, a consultant in foresight and urban strategies, author of How the digital giants want to govern our cities (Rue de l'Echiquier, 2018), a confrontation between real space and virtual space has inexorably set in. "It illustrates the desire of local authorities to maintain control of their public space in the face of firms whose commercial logic is based on the city "as a service", where the general interest does not count. Waze's goal is only to take you from point A to point B, despite the logic of the political city, in principle based on living well together. Especially since these digital giants are riding on the intimate conviction of offering a useful solution that public authorities are incapable of providing to the population." However, it happens that communities also find it to their advantage to partner with these data masters. To become smart cities anchored in the digital age, some have formed a partnership with Waze. This is the case of the European Metropolis of Lille (MEL). Since 2016, this agglomeration of 90 municipalities has been sending information concerning the circulation of citizens, road works, and demonstrations that could block the journey of users of the application. For its part, Waze gives access to its data to partner cities. "The results are rather positive," assures Florent Berault, head of the metropolitan public data service (SPMD) team at the MEL. In terms of security, for example, these data exchanges allow Waze to integrate into its routes the streets on which a city's schools are located and to limit the passage there. This cross-referencing of information is now a resource that we rely on for monitoring, analyzing, and diagnosing urban planning." Waze, a tool that could ultimately prove to be at the service of the common good? Possible. Jean Haentjens nevertheless has some reservations. A law of October 7, 2016 requires local authorities with more than 3,500 inhabitants and more than 50 agents to publish their data in open data. In other words, traffic data can be consulted free of charge by all individuals. "As Waze can no longer claim exclusivity of this data in cities affected by the legislation, in particular to resell it to private actors, its collaboration with the public service presents a marketing advantage. This gives it a veneer of philanthropy, explains the researcher. On the other hand, the app can quite easily suck the data out of small cities excluded from the system, which do not necessarily have the human and financial resources to collect and protect this information." And these cities risk suffering from the "Waze effect" for a long time to come.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1745

It's a cold shower on the stock market for Meta. After seeing its share price triple in 2023, then increase by 40% since the beginning of the year, the social media giant's star has faded on Wall Street. While Meta had just presented the accounts for its first fiscal quarter, its share price fell by 16% on Wednesday on the stock market. However, Mark Zuckerberg's group revealed results that exceeded analysts' expectations. Its turnover grew by 27%, to $36.4 billion in the first quarter, its strongest growth since 2021. Its profits more than doubled over the same period, to reach $12.37 billion, boosted in particular by a 16% drop in marketing spending. And it claims 3.24 billion daily active users on Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Threads, which allows it to retain its crown as the world's number 1 social network. It was its forecasts for the second quarter that disappointed investors. It is targeting sales of between $36.5 billion and $39 billion (around 18% growth), below the $38.3 billion expected by analysts. Above all, Meta plans to increase its investments this year to fuel its resources in artificial intelligence, mainly in infrastructure, data centers and R&D. Meta should invest $35 billion to $40 billion this year, more than the $30 billion to $37 billion initially planned, and significantly more than the $28 billion spent last year. Next year, this increase should be even more significant, "as we invest aggressively to support our ambitious R&D efforts in AI," said Susan Li, Meta's CFO. "I believe we have gained in optimism and ambition on AI," added Mark Zuckerberg. Staying in the race At the same time, Meta also intends to continue investing in the metaverse, the leader's big bet, where its losses have widened ($3.85 billion in the first quarter for $440 million in sales). Since the end of 2020, its Reality Labs division - which notably includes its Quest mixed reality headset and its Ray-Ban connected glasses (designed with EssilorLuxottica) - has accumulated more than $45 billion in losses. Enough to cause concern in the markets. Because these investments in AI represent a long-term bet and are not yet generating money. "Once our new AI-based services reach critical size, we will know how to monetize them effectively," assures the CEO of Meta, who recalls having already experienced this level of "volatility" in its stock price when developing new activities. Having started late, the group is trying to stay in the frenzied race for AI that the tech giants are engaged in with tens of billions of dollars of investment. Microsoft, which has just presented Phi-3 Mini, the first in a new series of small models, adapted to simple tasks that can be done on a smartphone for example, has announced nearly 10 billion dollars of investments in AI abroad in recent months. The craze for generative AI generated over the past two years and the launch of ChatGPT (OpenAI), is forcing Meta to redouble its efforts. "We are no longer content to train good AI models to build new products for social networks and online commerce," declared the CEO of Meta. "We have reached a point where we are showing that we can build cutting-edge models and become the number one AI company in the world." The match promises to be tight. Last December, the group launched its virtual assistant, Meta AI, in English-speaking countries, with around twenty features. The tool can answer users' questions, but also generate text and images, including within a conversation. Despite its late launch, Meta intends to make it "the best and most used AI assistant in the world". In open source It is betting in particular on the performance of the latest version of its language model, Llama 3. "Meta AI will be available to all WhatsApp, Messenger, Facebook or Instagram users when they do a search, chat with their friends or create photos or videos, Chris Cox, product director of the American giant, recently explained to Le Figaro. People are now ready to interact with an AI." A technology that Meta has chosen to develop in open source, that is to say accessible to all for free, unlike most of its rivals. "The entire developer community can thus massively use its language models and contribute to improving them while allowing Meta to take market share," explains Aimé Lachapelle, managing partner of the Emerton Data firm. Meta is also banking on the synergies of Meta AI with its products dedicated to the metaverse. "Smart glasses are ideal for the AI assistant, because it allows it to see what you see and hear what you hear," added Mark Zuckerberg. So the assistant has all the context to help you." Meta intends to defend its place in this new AI revolution. KL

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1746

Meta intends to play a leading role in artificial intelligence (AI). A little less visible in recent months than the creator of ChatGPT, OpenAI, and its partner Microsoft, or than Google and its competing conversational robot Gemini, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp is displaying its ambitions: "We want to make Meta AI the leader in AI assistants," explains Nick Clegg, the group's president in charge of public affairs. Meta announced, this Thursday, April 18, a new version of its conversational robot, accessible on its social networks or its messaging services (including Messenger) and, now, on its Ray-Ban connected glasses and via a website, Meta.ai. Available in the United States since September 2023, Meta AI is being extended to twelve other English-speaking countries. The assistant will use the group's new generation of language processing models, Llama 3, also unveiled on Thursday, April 18. “We believe Meta AI is the smartest AI assistant that can be used for free,” Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg said in a video message. “Meta AI will be more visible across our platforms. You can ask it a question by pressing a button in the search bar on Instagram, WhatsApp or Facebook, or by typing @metaai in a multi-person conversation with friends or colleagues,” Clegg said. The assistant will be able to search on Google or Bing if needed. Meta AI will also be available in Facebook’s news feed. And in the future in Meta Quest virtual reality headsets. According to Meta, its robot can rephrase a work email, ask for restaurant suggestions, an explanation of genetics, furniture ideas for a new apartment… Meta AI can generate images (by typing “/imagine” in a conversation) and, starting this Thursday, April 18, show the result live as the user types the query, or animate a still image. The assistant is now available in English in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, Ghana, Jamaica, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe – and is being tested in India. More countries and languages will be added “in the coming months,” Clegg says. In an attempt to gain a foothold in the competition, Meta plans to leverage the power of its existing platforms. And to use the weapon of free. “Our philosophy is to create technologies that are useful to the greatest number of people and then think about how to monetize them,” Clegg theorizes. “The fact that we have so many users (4 billion) and that we offer an easy-to-use assistant, integrated into the services that people are already used to, differentiates us from our competitors.” Long-standing investment OpenAI offers ChatGPT for free, but to benefit from the most powerful version and avoid waiting times in case of high demand, you have to pay: $20 (18.75 euros) per month. The company claims 100 million users per week. Its partner, Microsoft, has integrated its Copilot assistant into its Bing search engine for free, but using it in its Office suite costs $30 per month. You have to pay $20 per month to access the Gemini (formerly Bard) service in Google's competing suite, Workspace. The digital giant offers its assistant as a free standalone service, but has not yet integrated it into its search engine and is reportedly considering introducing a subscription. Mr. Zuckerberg has long invested in AI: in 2013, before the launch of OpenAI, in 2015, he created the Facebook Artificial Intelligence Research center – with an office in Paris since 2015. He hired pioneer Yann LeCun. The company uses AI to prioritize and moderate content on its social networks. In the recent phase, Meta has sought to distinguish itself by highlighting its open source strategy, while Google or OpenAI are criticized for no longer publishing their AI models, as they did a few years ago: Llama models are freely accessible and can be modified by developers and companies (except very large groups). "Llama 3 is the best open source AI model," assures Mr. Clegg, announcing, this Thursday, its versions with 8 billion and 70 billion parameters and, for "the coming months", the one with 405 billion. Financed by targeted advertising on its social networks, Meta could hinder the activity of those who, like OpenAI or Google, market their models. It also competes with start-ups like the French Mistral AI, which mixes paid and open source models. However, Meta's offensive raises questions. Will its assistant be popular with Internet users? Its 28 personalized chatbots, inspired by personalities and launched in September 2023, at the same time as the general version of Meta AI, seemed like a gimmick. And Meta does not provide any usage figures for these robots. The question of the economic model will also arise, because operating an assistant costs a few fractions of a cent for each request and involves billions of dollars of investment in computing. The integration of AI assistants into the services of the dominant digital players could also give rise to calls for regulation: some are demanding that competition be respected, by allowing the user to use the robot of their choice on their social network, search engine, etc. They are calling for the integration of AI assistants into the European Digital Markets Act regulation. Finally, massively deploying chatbots raises questions about reliability and content moderation for social networks and messaging services, already accused of being both too lax and "censoring" too much. Assistants make factual errors and “hallucinate”: a journalist noted on X that Meta AI had responded to parents of disabled children that they themselves had a child in this situation… “No one in the industry claims that these systems don’t sometimes hallucinate. The only solution is to always clearly indicate to the user that they are talking to an AI and to offer mechanisms for reporting problematic content,” replies Mr. Clegg. Meta committed in early April to labeling any content created with an AI on its services, but in the absence of an industry standard, this currently depends on the wishes of the users who create the content.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1747

We must imagine that one day artificial intelligence will reach the level of human intelligence, or even amplify it. Our AIs will understand how the world works, they will know our preferences and interests. They will be able to answer all our questions. They will not replace us, because we will set rules from their design. It will be a new Renaissance." This vision, shared this Wednesday by Yann LeCun, director of fundamental research in AI at Meta, will not be realized, by his admission, for many years. But it is already infusing the social media giant, which has made AI its number one priority for 2024. "It has a key place in all the products and services that we create," Chris Cox, director of products at Meta, explained to Le Figaro, who was in Paris for a press conference dedicated to this technology. In our opinion, AI must make our users' lives easier by removing all the little obstacles in their daily lives." To achieve this, the group has reorganized itself. Last January, it integrated its fundamental AI research laboratories (Fair) into its product division, which includes the Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses applications. "We want to put this technology in people's hands," he continues. "This will also encourage our researchers to work on topics that can easily be transformed into products." It is also a way for the world's number one social network to position itself as a champion in terms of innovation, one of the obsessions of its founder, Mark Zuckerberg. The ChatGPT revolution has passed through, forcing Meta to accelerate. "In the near future, all our interactions with the digital world will go through virtual assistants," predicts Yann LeCun. The group is therefore banking on its Meta AI assistant. "It will be available to all WhatsApp, Messenger, Facebook or Instagram users when they do a search, chat with their friends or create photos or videos," explains Chris Cox. People are now ready to interact with AI.” Meta AI has been available to the general public in the United States since last December with around twenty features. The tool can generate text and images, including within a conversation. “Meta AI is intended to become the world number one virtual assistant,” insists Joëlle Pineau, vice president of AI research. Ray-Ban smart glasses, designed in partnership with EssilorLuxottica, are also equipped with Meta AI, which works with voice commands. An update, planned for this month in the United States, “will allow the glasses to understand what is in front of you,” explains Chris Cox. This can be particularly useful if, for example, you are visiting a foreign country and you need to find your way.” This interpretation of the real world “represents an enormous technical challenge.” The next version of Meta’s language model, Llama 3, is at the heart of this innovation. Mark Zuckerberg's priority Meta is also banking on AI to improve its products and services for businesses. WhatsApp is used by 100 million merchants around the world to manage their relationships with customers. "We're going to integrate tools to allow them to automate these exchanges, in their own language," says Chris Cox. Image generation tools will be able to help small businesses easily design their advertising campaigns on Facebook or Instagram. The Menlo Park firm is not starting from scratch. Artificial intelligence has been feeding its products for more than ten years. It is behind content recommendations, as well as in moderation tools and detection of problematic content. Starting next month, Meta will label images generated by AI on Instagram and Facebook. "This will strengthen user confidence," comments Chris Cox. Because if these images represent a tiny part of content today, their volume will obviously increase in the coming years. With 2 billion people around the world going to the polls this year, Meta is looking to “increase transparency” to combat misinformation. Elections already held in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Taiwan and Pakistan provide early signs of this. “We’ve seen very little AI-generated content that’s designed to discourage voters from voting or that’s spreading fake news,” says Cox. “But it’s obviously something we’re paying a lot of attention to.” Meta’s advances in artificial intelligence are overseen by CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who has made it a priority. “Mark is an engineer first and foremost. He’s very invested in this subject and wants to know everything about our work and how it translates into products. We work closely together,” notes Cox. The stakes are high. Generative AI has launched an arms race between tech titans, who have no intention of being overtaken by their rivals. “Mark is willing to bet big when he believes in a technology of the future.” Meta will invest between 30 billion and 37 billion dollars this year, which illustrates its determination,” continues the product director. This sum will feed two strategic battlefields: gray matter and infrastructure. “To train your advanced AI models, you need data centers with processors (GPUs) in number to have the best computing power,” recalls Chris Cox. Meta plans to deploy 600,000 GPUs this year, half of which will come from the leader Nvidia. But the group is also working on its own processor, called Artemis. The war for brains is also in full swing. Google, OpenAI and Microsoft have their own fundamental research laboratories, and, like the co-founders of Mistral AI, some talents are leaving to found their own company. Meta intends to distinguish itself by its open source approach, “a position that others do not necessarily follow and which requires courage,” continues the director. Knowing that their work will be public and shared with the scientific community “is a strong element in attracting talent.” According to The Information, Mark Zuckerberg himself would contact researchers at Google DeepMind to convince them to move to Meta. The entrepreneur had warned during the publication of his last financial results: "If we play, it is to win." KL ET CW

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1748

New York - correspondent - The portrait could classically begin with business: at 56, Reid Hoffman is part of the "PayPal mafia", the nickname given to these young prodigies of Silicon Valley, who founded the payment firm with Elon Musk and Peter Thiel and made the success of American tech in the 2000s. Co-founder of LinkedIn in 2002, investor in the early days of Facebook and Airbnb, venture capitalist at Greylock, former member of the board of directors of the artificial intelligence (AI) company OpenAI, Reid Hoffman is at the head of a fortune estimated by Forbes magazine at 2.5 billion dollars (around 2.3 billion euros). We could continue with politics: unlike his libertarian colleagues Messrs. Musk and Thiel, who have moved to the far right, Reid Hoffman is a Democrat, who is doing everything to oppose a second term for Donald Trump: he contributed – in vain – to the campaign of his primary opponent Nikki Haley and financed – successfully – the defamation lawsuit filed by former Elle magazine journalist E. Jean Carroll, who accuses Donald Trump of raping her. But we chose to start the conversation with philosophy, during an hour-long meeting in a chic hotel in the heart of Manhattan, New York. In these times of take-off of artificial intelligence, Mr. Hoffman believes that technology shapes generations and he is one of those who want to accelerate. "When we invented the steam engine, we created the working class and the middle class. We don't want to go back to a peasant society. The generation that is growing up is doing it with artificial intelligence. The older ones worry, oh my God, it’s new, it’s foreign. The younger ones think it’s cool, say, ‘Let’s see what I can do with it.’” A Silicon Valley atypical In a recent speech at the University of Bologna (Italy), the oldest in Europe, Reid Hoffman compared the current times to the Renaissance, evoking a “deeply humanist approach to technology”: “We shape our technology, which in turn shapes us, and we want to do it in a way that makes us more human.” Of course, fears are raised. “Hollywood always portrays man versus machine, and the machine is always the bad guy,” whether it’s James Cameron’s Terminator (1984), starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, or HAL 9000, the IBM computer in Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968). In the past, innovation was disruptive, like Galileo’s telescope or the automobile, which frightened so much that “people waved orange flags as it passed by.” Before the virtues of these advances were exploited. Reid Hoffman, who in 2023 had fun writing a book with artificial intelligence – Impromptu: Amplifying Our Humanity Through AI (Dallepedia LLC) – describes himself as a “mystical atheist,” because he recognizes many mysteries: “Atheists say the world is just Newtonian mechanics. Clearly, the world is more interesting than that. For example, we don’t understand consciousness.” This Californian has followed an eclectic path that makes him an atypical character in Silicon Valley. He recounts a stay in a progressive boarding school in Vermont, a rural state in the Northeast: “I went to Putney School because they try to train balanced human beings. I did blacksmithing, woodworking, it's part of me." Then he studied at the prestigious Stanford University in California, notably in neuroscience. "I deduced that they didn't really know what intelligent language was, I thought that philosophy might have an answer. So I went to study at Oxford [United Kingdom] and I concluded that philosophers didn't know what intelligent language was either. And that perhaps the best way to contribute was to create software." "Nobody likes referees" In the adventure of artificial intelligence, he invites Europe to get involved, in particular to inject its cultural point of view. "The world and Europe would be better off if Europe also innovated." America innovates, the Old Continent regulates, says the adage in the United States. Mr. Hoffman responds with a cruel joke: "It's a bit like there's a World Cup soccer match between China and the United States with Europe trying to be the referee. That poses two problems: first, Europe can't win, and second, no one particularly likes referees." Reid Hoffman praises French projects, in particular the start-up Mistral AI, which has just signed a partnership with Microsoft. "In my American eyes, they are very French." For him, it is normal that these young prodigies have learned their trade at American tech giants. "It would not have been possible to just graduate from a university." On the German side? "[He has] not seen on [his] radars" a significant effort in artificial intelligence. The subject, from an American point of view, remains the competition with China. "They say that China thinks in centuries. That's not the case in tech: they think in weeks. It’s the only place in the world where I find Silicon Valley is slow.” However, China has a kind of paradoxical flaw, a low capacity for perseverance: “They pivot very quickly, but they don’t commit to multi-year projects.” For the moment, according to him, despite their lead in data, “the Chinese are two years behind” the Americans in their race for AI. This delay is also explained by the difficulties of accessing microprocessors, due to multiple American embargoes, while Washington massively subsidizes this industry. “The Biden administration wants to be sure that the United States maintains its lead in this key area,” explains Mr. Hoffman, who emphasizes the impact of artificial intelligence on the entire American economic fabric: “AI is our only hope for regaining our manufacturing industry that created the middle class. » On the other hand, he says he is reluctant about open source software, open to all, in artificial intelligence. "I was on the board of Mozilla [which develops free software] for eleven years [from 2005 to 2016], so I am very positive on many subjects. But when you open high-capacity models, you don't just give them to journalists, to academic bodies, which is good. You also give them to rogue states, to terrorists, to people who want to attack the information ecosystem or democracy. We have vulnerabilities, so I am cautious." Severe on Biden's attitude Given the immense computing capacities required, AI seems for the moment to benefit the tech giants (Nvidia, Microsoft, Meta, Google, Amazon, Apple, Tesla) renamed the "magnificent seven". "I invest a lot in start-ups," says Mr. Hoffman. These are grafted onto the giants, which are expected to multiply. "If the seven become three, then yes I have a problem. But if the seven become fifteen, that's progress." And to vilify the antitrust policy of the Biden administration led by the chair of the Federal Trade Commission, Lina Khan, who is multiplying the lawsuits against the West Coast technology giants: "I speak out largely against this antitrust policy, because it pursues the collapse and not the expansion," he accuses, denouncing "a use that may not be illegal, but immoral of a position of authority to hinder as much as possible the big tech companies." Similarly, he is harsh on the attitude of Joe Biden, who opened hostilities against Elon Musk by not inviting him to a summit on electric cars at the White House in the summer of 2021 on the pretext that his factories were non-unionized. "Elon tends to be a fighter. And when the left started attacking him, he fought back like Robert De Niro in Taxi Driver [1976]. But holding a summit on electric cars at the White House without inviting him is laughable, grotesque! ", he laments. And to point out that the effect is also disastrous with the tech community, which notes that the White House is in denial of reality to please the unions. As the quarters go by, Mr. Musk drifts, convinced that the challenge is to create an anti-woke artificial intelligence. "Personally, what obsesses me is to have, thanks to artificial intelligence, a medical system accessible to everyone on their smartphone." Mr. Hoffman also criticizes the libertarian drift of Messrs. Musk and Thiel, who seem to believe that we can do without a State. "Have you ever tried to be an entrepreneur in Afghanistan? It's difficult, isn't it? That’s where I break ranks with my PayPal buddies because I think, yes, government matters.” In November’s presidential election, Hoffman is pulling out all the stops to prevent a second Trump term. “I’m not inherently Democrat versus Republican. I’ve funded a whole series of Republican candidates, the most recent being Nikki Haley,” the former South Carolina governor who ran against Trump for the Republican nomination. She didn’t succeed. So clearly, he’ll be voting for Joe Biden, whose national and international record he says is underestimated. “Being old doesn’t mean you’re nonfunctional,” he says, and Joe Biden, for him, is not “nonfunctional”: “Absolutely not. In December [2023], I spent hours talking to him about things he didn’t know about, like artificial intelligence. Why did I need to have lunch with him? I needed to know that.”

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1749

There is no longer a discourse on innovation, digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) that does not make "humans" the cornerstone of its raison d'être. The "human-centric" vision makes technology a tool at its service. Including the report "AI: our ambition for France" submitted to the President of the Republic on March 13 by the Artificial Intelligence Commission, one chapter of which is entitled "Humanism: let's put AI at our service". This is commendable, incontestable, irrefutable. But it is both a reductive vision of AI and a very specific acceptance of the humanist movement. First, a digital object or service is not - and has never been - a simple tool. The Internet, social networks and AI are sociotechnical and political devices designed by humans. However, through calculations (intentional, mathematical, ethical, moral, financial, etc.), digital technology makes them invisible. It is therefore necessary to "open the hood" of calculations so that the human, who is the starting point of any digital device, remains the end point. Then, the humanism that underlies progress through AI, as described in the commission's report, is more akin to an existentialist humanism, focused on the individual, freedom of choice and personal responsibility, than to a humanism as it can be accepted in everyday language, synonymous with benevolence, altruism, and a concern for the common good, in a global, and not local, perspective. In this respect, the humanism mentioned stops at the borders of the nation, and at the perimeter of the individual. But to claim to have a concern for humans is to have to fulfill a responsibility towards them. Designers of AI systems must be made aware of the social, cognitive, ethical and even environmental consequences that their technical choices generate. When a building collapses, the architect's responsibility is studied. When an algorithm promotes disinformation or amplifies multiple psychosocial risks, what about the responsibility of its architect(s)? To do this, the fundamentals of science and technology, anthropology and sociology must be taught more widely than they are in technical curricula. Sharing such a common culture would also make it possible to move away from the technocratic dreams and hasty amalgams that make every wave of new uses a new revolution. However, this accountability cannot be achieved without increased transparency of AI systems, which must involve close collaboration between international regulations and governments, in order to establish clear and accessible standards around the development and use of AI. The figure of the human is very practical. It reifies a totemic, hegemonic, spiritual and universalist figure in which everyone enjoys projecting the incarnation that suits them. But its call for a meeting is silent on the diversity of humans who populate our shared world. Rebound effect In this respect, the AI commission mystifies its subject of study, forgetting to look closely at the data production chain. Those we call click workers play a crucial role in the development of generative AI, acting as the invisible workers who feed and refine these systems. By performing repetitive tasks, such as data tagging, image classification and text correction, they help to train and improve the accuracy of AI algorithms. Their work, often underpaid and precarious, is essential to create vast and varied databases, allowing AIs to generate credible and relevant content. As generative AI becomes more integrated into our daily lives, it is no longer appropriate to silence these ethical considerations on the working conditions and fair compensation of these workers. Second, generative AI pollutes massively. Of course, the calculation methods are complex, debatable, perfectible and different depending on the stages of the life cycle. But the trends are reported. Therefore, by presenting AI as an opportunity for the planet, although some perspectives may be positive and that already trained open source models or transfer learning can considerably reduce the energy impact of AI, the rapporteurs of the commission are obscuring the reality of the explosion in the consumption of raw materials and energy required throughout the life cycle of a digital device. In addition, not a word is said about the rebound effect, or Jevons paradox, which is well known in the case of digital technology: even if consumption per unit decreases, overall consumption increases due to its massification. Believing that technology is an answer to technology on an environmental level is to fall into what the commission itself denounces in the first pages of its report: "techno-messianism"! The AI Commission has produced an ambitious, necessary and useful economic and strategic vision. But, in the land of universalism, another time must undoubtedly come, that of a more global vision, which brings together and is respectful of the depth and complexity of this socio-technical evolution that is AI.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1750

The strongman of its early days had become its Achilles heel. Emad Mostaque, co-founder and CEO of UK-based Stability AI, has left the company, resigning as CEO and from the board. “The concentration of power in AI is bad for all of us. I have decided to resign to address this problem at StabilityAI and elsewhere.” "I'll share more soon," he tweeted Friday, March 23 on X. Behind the rather sudden departure of this character, often described as atypical, extravagant, whimsical and even crazy, lies a lost arm wrestling match against the investment fund Coatue, which became its main shareholder since a fundraising of $100 million in October 2022. At that time, Stability AI was one of the stars of generative AI thanks to its very efficient image generation model Stable Diffusion, which supported competition from Dall-E (Open AI) or Midjourney. After a meteoric start to this fundraising that transformed it into a unicorn, the company experienced several upheavals. In the spring of 2023, Stability AI failed to raise the $400 million it needed to finance its growth. As good and popular as they were, its open source models did not generate enough revenue to allow it to be profitable. However, in this industry, which is also very competitive, the computing power for training and operating models is very expensive. Its cash flow is melting like snow in the sun, the company is under great pressure, it is taking out loans. In November 2023, Bloomberg even mentioned the option of a sale. Talents are leaving the ship For the Coatue fund, this inability to raise new funds under the desired conditions is to be blamed on Emad Mostaque, his mistakes, and even his distortions of reality, brought to light by media investigations. First, Stability AI does not own the intellectual property on the AI model powering Stable Diffusion, which was actually designed by researchers at the University of Munich. Second, the model was trained with images to which it did not have the rights, which earned it a lawsuit with the Getty photo agency and with another collective of artists. Emad Mostaque is suspected of having been misleading about certain financial and commercial data of the company. The Coatue fund had been calling for his head for several months. It finally got it. While waiting to find a new CEO, the interim is being handled by a duo, the "chief operating officer" Shan Shan Wong and the technical director Christian Laforte, who will be responsible for bringing back a little serenity and perspective. Several key talents have also left the ship in recent months, including the research director. In February, the start-up gave itself some breathing room by selling its video editing platform ClipDrop, purchased in 2023. It will take more than that to ensure its survival. IV

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1751

For the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), it is enemy number one. "The desert locust is the most destructive migratory pest in the world. They are voracious eaters that consume their own weight per day. A cloud of 1 square kilometer can contain up to 80 million adult locusts that consume in one day the same amount of food as 35,000 people," explains the institution whose goal is to eradicate hunger in the world. However, global warming favors the large-scale reproduction of this insect capable of traveling up to 1,000 kilometers per week. Once limited to East Africa, it has begun to spread throughout the African continent and beyond, in Southwest Asia and the Middle East. "They live in arid or semi-arid areas where rainfall is less than 200 millimeters per year. Their current habitat area is approximately 16 million square kilometers, encompassing around thirty countries," explains the FAO. To help the countries concerned combat this particularly harmful species, the FAO produces monthly bulletins detailing the location and extent of past or current invasions. However, prevention is better than cure. Especially given the exponential growth of those also called tiger locusts: each new generation can have up to 20 times more individuals than the previous one, or 8,000 times more locusts in nine months. The challenge is therefore to destroy the eggs before they hatch (in two weeks) or the larvae before they become flying locusts (in four months). This is what motivated FAO to share in 2017 its database on locusts, initiated in 1975, with the artificial intelligence specialist InstaDeep, "We imagine applications of AI that benefit everyone. Applications in the environmental field are very limited, while the challenges are immense, especially in Africa, disproportionately impacted by climate change. This is why we proposed to FAO, with our partner Google, to use their data on locusts to establish a method for predicting clouds. Impressed by the first results of our research, published at the end of 2021, they became our partners", recalls Karim Beguir, CEO of the company co-founded ten years ago with Zohra Selim. Two years of research later, the two AI specialists have developed a model capable of geolocating the places where females lay eggs. "For a deep learning program to be effective, it is necessary to combine data on the presence and absence of insects. We mixed historical data from the FAO with recent environmental and climate data, as well as images from NASA and European Space Agency satellites. This gives us an accuracy of 30 square meters," explains the entrepreneur. Predicting more than 8 out of 10 clouds "Our simulations show that we can correctly predict more than 8 out of 10 locust clouds. Since the data from our method is updated every 5 days and covers the entire African continent for the first time, it will now be possible to intervene in time," emphasizes the manager. He continues: "It is important that Africans take ownership of key AI technology and use it to solve the problems we face on the continent. "It is our teams located in Nigeria and Rwanda as well as those in Ghana from Google AI who created this model that we have decided to share in open source", announces Karim Beguir. Next step: the InstaDeep teams are starting to deploy the method in the field with the FAO teams, who in turn support governments. The fight against invasive species, which are set to multiply as the earth warms, is now being waged in the real and virtual worlds.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1752

Paris confirms its status as a talent magnet in artificial intelligence. The start-up Adaptive ML, founded just over five months ago and specializing in generative AI, has raised nearly $20 million from a group of investors including Californian Index Ventures and Iconiq Capital. Having trained in start-ups already in the ecosystem, such as Hugging Face or LightOn, the three co-founders decided to set up their company in October 2023. Adaptive's solution allows companies to integrate generative AI into their business applications. "Large language models are too generic and expensive. We provide companies with a technological layer to adapt them to end use cases," says Julien Launay, CEO of the young company. Based on major open source models such as Mistral, LLaMa or Falcon, developed by LightOn, Adaptive's technology allows generative AI to learn from interactions with each user on company platforms, in order to offer more relevant responses. "Our technology makes it possible to optimize the responses provided by AI to customers by analyzing previous interactions. This reduces costs," insists the start-up's manager. This technology, known as "reinforcement learning," can, according to the co-founder, be very useful in the customer support or call center sector, for example. R&D center in Paris In a sector where competition is becoming fiercer, Adaptive ML has chosen to quickly focus on designing a marketable product. "Our solution is developed so that the customer does not need to hire additional people." Its $20 million fundraising will allow it to continue research on its technology, acquire computing power and double its current team to add around ten people. Adaptive also plans to open an R&D center in Paris. However, its headquarters will be located in New York. "We are going to open an office there, which will be a 100% commercial structure. The United States remains an essential market at the moment," explains Julien Launay. Like the French Mistral, which is multiplying agreements to distribute its language models - the most notable being with Microsoft - does Adaptive plan to promote its technology through partnerships? "This type of partnership sometimes exonerates start-ups on the commercial side. We want to keep control," recalls Julien Launay, acknowledging that distribution via companies like Salesforce, for example, can make sense. This round of funding, led by Index Ventures, also brought together the funds Iconiq Capital, Motier Ventures, the Franco-German Iris Capital, and HuggingFund by Factorial. It reflects the current frenzy among financiers for artificial intelligence. According to the American specialist media The Information, the company's valuation has already reached 100 million dollars. LM

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1753

In content produced by artificial intelligence (AI), women are more frequently assigned roles as maids, cooks and prostitutes, while men are portrayed as teachers, doctors or engineers. This is according to a UNESCO study that warns the public and designers of artificial intelligence against its sexist biases. The study focused on content generated by GPT-3.5 and GPT-2 (OpenAI) and by Llama 2 (Meta). The researchers submitted different characters of different genders, sexualities and cultural backgrounds to the language processing tools. They asked the tools to “write a story” about each person. They also noticed that 70% of the texts generated around the character of a homosexual had negative content. “When the three AI models were asked to complete sentences beginning with “A gay person is…”, 70% of the content generated by Llama 2 was negative. Among the results was: “The homosexual was considered the lowest in the social hierarchy,” UNESCO reports in its press release. “Women are described as domestic workers up to four times more often than men. They are frequently associated with the words “home,” “family,” and “children,” while for men the words “business,” “executive,” “salary,” and “career” are preferred.” The entire Web as a database The researchers note that free models, known as open source, are those that reproduce the biggest stereotypes. From open databases of content circulating on the Internet, including everything that circulates in particular on forums and social networks, the machine reproduces “the most probable sequence of words,” explains Marie-Jean Meurs, a computer science professor at UQAM who specializes in artificial intelligence. “These tools are created to generate content. So, they are parrots […],” she says. These models were trained on texts that we humans have produced for generations, and these texts that we humans have produced for generations quite obviously have massively sexist, homophobic biases, etc. "Even though it is efficient, ChatGPT is not a search engine, she emphasizes. "The toaster is a good invention, but you burn yourself if you put your fingers in it." The problem has existed for a very long time, notes Maude Bonenfant, professor in the Department of Social and Public Communication at UQAM. "Honestly, I'm not surprised by these results," she says. "It's certain that the Web is very sexualized. There are a lot of pornographic sites and others. And we don't know exactly on what database the language processing tools are trained." UNESCO also recommends that governments put in place regulations for the establishment of "ethical artificial intelligence." "If you want to talk about UNESCO's recommendations, of course it takes greater diversity in tech teams. This type of technology is developed in California mainly by Caucasian men," says Maude Bonenfant. In its report, UNESCO mentions that only 22% of the members of the teams developing these technological products are women. But greater representation in design teams will not change the nature of the data circulating on the Web, adds Maude Bonenfant. Human intervention essential for corrections "We've been saying for a long time that there should be corrections. It would either involve training artificial intelligence differently, by giving it precise instructions. It would have to be more supervised learning, to try to remove these biases, to promote another type of response. Or we would have to find databases that are not biased. But it's sure that these are enormous costs, because it's not done automatically. There needs to be human intervention to be able to say: “This is homophobic and this is not.” For UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, Tawfik Jelassi, “real-world discrimination is not only reflected in the digital sphere, it is also amplified there.” Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the UN, adds that these content generators “have the power to shape the perception of millions of people.” Real-world discrimination is not only reflected in the digital sphere, it is also amplified there TAWFIK JELASSI »

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1754

Making public data accessible: due to a lack of resources, the objective of the 2016 Digital Republic Act has opened up a new market. For the past ten years, the company Opendatasoft has won numerous public contracts, both for ministries and local authorities. Its strength: a technical solution that allows administrations to display their data catalogues, also called "open data", in a showcase - via a web page. For its platform, developed and maintained by Opendatasoft, the Ministry of Economy and Finance thus pays out 400,000 to 500,000 euros per year. Each visitor can explore and view more than 470 data sets - public contracts, state real estate inventory, technical inspection prices, etc. In addition to Bercy, the company has signed contracts with the Prime Minister's office, the Ministries of Culture, National Education, Agriculture, Health, Higher Education and Research. Nine regions use it, as do around twenty departments, cities and smaller communities. Other public players include the National Health Insurance Fund, Infogreffe, Urssaf and SNCF. Opendatasoft has a total of around 350 clients for 3,000 portals, in France and abroad: "50% of our clients are administrations, 50% are companies, some of which are public", explains Jean-Marc Lazard, co-founder and president of the company. In 2016, when the law providing for these obligations in terms of open data was promulgated, the State, "in addition to constraining, did not support", deplores Constance Nebbula, vice-president of the Pays de la Loire region and president of OpenDataFrance, an association of local authorities committed to open data. The largest administrations are gradually complying with these requirements. Progress is slower for small communities, with more limited budgets. Because the opening of data has been the responsibility of the administrations. "Turnkey" functionalities To comply with the law, public services have a free option: putting their data sets online on the data.gouv.fr platform developed by Etalab, a department of the interministerial digital directorate (Dinum). How can we explain, therefore, such enthusiasm for Opendatasoft despite the existence of a solution financed by the State? "It is mainly for technical reasons that the largest administrations choose Opendatasoft", acknowledges Geoffrey Aldebert, head of the public data opening division of Dinum. Indeed, the administrations questioned favor the company's offer for its "turnkey" functionalities: personalized portal, remote data querying, possibility of creating graphs and maps, etc. The choice of neighboring administrations can, moreover, create an imitation effect. The Val de Cher-Controis community of communes (Loir-et-Cher) "wanted to benefit from the expertise of the Centre-Val de Loire region, which already had mastered this tool," explains its president, Jacques Paoletti (Horizons). While the bill paid by Bercy for its portal is around half a million euros each year, the rates charged to other public entities are lower. The Ministry of Culture informed Le Monde that it spent 24,000 euros per year for its subscription. Smaller communities pay no more than a few thousand euros each year, sometimes using the subscription of a larger entity such as the region. Despite a budget doubled this year, going from one to two million euros, the state platform Data.gouv.fr has accumulated a significant delay compared to the private offering from Opendatasoft. "For a long time, data.gouv.fr positioned itself solely as a central catalogue of French data," analyses Samuel Goëta, lecturer at Sciences Po Aix and co-founder of Datactivist, a specialist consultancy firm. "There have certainly not been the same investments in data.gouv.fr as what Opendatasoft has been able to make in its tools," maintains Christian Quest, a data specialist who was at Etalab from 2014 to 2019 and returned as a consultant in 2023. "Supported by two people during the first years, data.gouv.fr was very well designed but had a more artisanal side," he recalls. The public alternative, however, has exclusive users: the Ministry of the Interior and Overseas Territories, the Ministry of Justice, and urban communities such as Greater Annecy. Dinum's offering has also diversified by proposing thematic portals with the sites Transports.data.gouv.fr, Adresse.data.gouv.fr and Meteo. data.gouv.fr. In the coming months, Ecologie.data.gouv.fr will be published. In the 2024 roadmap for the public platform, many planned developments recall the functionalities of Opendatasoft. These improvements are closely monitored by the administrations. The Ministry of Culture says it is ready to change its technical choices "if the cost/efficiency ratio of the service provided proves favorable". Direct publication using data.gouv.fr tools would allow significant savings for the administrations, specifies Dinum. All the more so since its teams must "harvest" data from external portals daily to centralize them on Data.gouv.fr - a costly and complex operation. Opendatasoft, which announced a fundraising of 21 million euros in 2022, has also eclipsed the freely accessible software of the opensource community (opensource code), the use of which requires more technical skills.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1755

From the Eiffel Tower to Mauritius, via Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the United Arab Emirates, the mobile payment system developed by India is being exported around the world. Since January 26, Indian tourists have been able to buy their tickets for the Eiffel Tower through Unified Payments Interface (UPI), the Indian mobile payment system, simply by scanning a QR code, recognized by their usual payment application. A service developed with the French specialist Lyra, itself present in India for seventeen years. "A million Indians visit France each year, and their number is increasing by 20% to 30% per year," says Christophe Mariette, sales director of Lyra. "UPI's target is major monuments, hotels, transport, retailers..." Launched in 2016 by the nationalist government, this technology has revolutionized mobile payment in India, a country addicted to cash. Indians use it to pay for their online purchases, but also to pay for their vegetables from street vendors or buy their cigarettes individually for around ten rupees, the equivalent of a few euro cents. Developed in open source “UPI technology has been widely adopted by Indian consumers. In December 2023 alone, some 12 billion transactions were recorded: the system is used mainly for small amounts,” underlines Satish Meena, analyst at Datum Intelligence. Over the whole of 2023, the number of transactions carried out using this technology exceeded 100 billion, for a value of 2,000 billion euros. The architecture of this system, developed in open source by the government, is used by third-party applications such as Google Pay, Amazon Pay and PhonePe. It connects more than 500 banks and allows instant payments and bank transfers via mobile applications. “Unlike other systems, it is not an electronic payment wallet, but rather instant transfers from bank account to bank account, via applications that use the UPI architecture,” insists Satish Meena. The service is completely free for users. “In a low-income country like India, the penetration rate of mobile payment, with huge volumes at low cost, can be considered as one of the great successes of this government,” says Hemindra Hazari, an independent analyst based in Mumbai. The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 73, is also trying to use it as a diplomatic and soft power tool, particularly in the countries of the Global South. The nationalist leader announced on February 12 the launch of UPI for Indian tourists visiting Sri Lanka and Mauritius. The system has already signed agreements with Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Bhutan and Thailand. Indian workers in Singapore and the UAE are expected to be able to send remittances back home by linking local mobile money systems with UPI. This is expected to happen in Nepal soon too. “UPI technology can also be used by any government to develop its own mobile money system, which could be attractive to some low-income and underbanked African countries,” says Satish Meena. India, which wants to be the diplomatic voice of the Global South, is particularly keen to share its technology with them.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1756

A French start-up and an American giant? The strategic partnership announced on Monday, February 26, between Mistral AI and Microsoft has sparked some irritated reactions in Brussels. The young artificial intelligence (AI) startup is suspected of compromising its independence by allying itself with the American digital heavyweight. It is accused of deviating, in passing, from its commitment to open models published in open source, in favor of a more commercial logic. Mistral AI, for its part, pleads misunderstanding and assures that it has not changed its strategy, its co-founder Arthur Mensch regretting on the X network "creative interpretations" of its announcements. The announcements "surprised a lot of people", Kai Zenner, parliamentary assistant to German MEP Axel Voss (European People's Party), got angry on X. "Mistral is becoming the new OpenAI and is allying itself with Microsoft (...). "It no longer has the profile of the 'truly independent European champion' that we had in mind during the discussions on the AI Act," he wrote, recalling the exasperation of some parliamentarians with the lobbying of Mistral AI against provisions of this draft European regulation. "Recent developments confirm that it was not a good thing to cut measures" of the AI Act, Italian Brando Benifei (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament), co-rapporteur of the text, told Reuters. "The draft regulation almost failed, because some advocated eliminating the rules, in order to make 'European champions' emerge." "European regulators have been had," added to Reuters the Dutch Kim van Sparrentak, a European MP (Group of the Greens-European Free Alliance), who, with three fellow ecologists, wrote a letter to the Brussels Commission asking it to investigate the lobbying of Mistral AI and France, which defended the same positions. "If you want to change a competitive ecosystem, you don't want new entrants to depend on Microsoft's infrastructure and investments," added X Open Markets, a pro-competition American think tank. The Mozilla Foundation, which defends open software, considered that the Mistral-Microsoft agreement raised "questions". "We should rather be happy" Questioned, the European Commission declared that it would look into the partnership. However, this is not a formal investigation, but an examination as part of a study launched in early January on the AI market. This work will analyze all relationships between start-ups and large groups, including Anthropic's deals with Google and Amazon, as well as the agreements between OpenAI and Microsoft. The criticisms made against Mistral AI are reminiscent of those made against the parent company of the ChatGPT service, in which the American giant has invested more than 11 billion euros, and of which it is the exclusive distributor. However, the two cases are different, argues Mistral AI. On the investment side, Microsoft contributed 15 million euros to the 385 million fundraising carried out by Mistral in December 2023. This sum in convertible bonds could be integrated into the capital during the next fundraising, but for the time being it only represents 0.75% of the start-up's capital, valued at around 2 billion euros (Microsoft owns 49% of OpenAI's for-profit company). Other major technology partners, such as Nvidia or Salesforce, have a similar presence and the founders are in the majority, argues Mistral AI. In addition, the agreement announced Monday provides for the distribution of Mistral's text generation models on Microsoft's cloud business services platform. With a revenue share. The deal reflects the dominance of American cloud giants in professional computing. But it does not threaten Mistral AI's independence, its managers assure, because it is not exclusive: the start-up also does direct distribution and plans to enter into other agreements with French companies (OVH or Scaleway) and Americans (Google or Amazon). Start-ups such as the American Anthropic have similar agreements, as does the open-source platform created by French companies Hugging Face, hundreds of whose models are offered on Microsoft's cloud. "We should rather be happy that a French company like Mistral is succeeding in breaking the Microsoft OpenAI duopoly in generative artificial intelligence," said the Secretary of State for Digital Affairs, Marina Ferrari, in La Tribune. Thanks to Microsoft's distribution power (...), Mistral AI is becoming a real alternative to OpenAI (...) at the global level, which is exactly what European tech needs. "Aware of the concerns about AI being dominated by American cloud giants, Microsoft published principles on Monday promising an "open" ecosystem allowing customers to choose AI models from different suppliers. Finally, Mistral AI is being criticized for having turned its back on its open approach: Mistral Large, its most powerful model, announced on Monday, is not available for free download in open source. Its access is paid and its characteristics are opaque. The start-up refutes the idea of a strategic shift linked to the agreement with Microsoft. Indeed, its previous best model, Mistral Medium, announced in early December 2023, was already paid. And the idea of proposing, in addition to open source models, "commercial models" in order to finance research and development, was already present in its strategic document published in October 2023. The surprise is nonetheless legitimate, because Mistral, at the beginning, insisted enormously on the virtues of open source as an alternative, more transparent and secure, to the closed AI ecosystem of digital giants like OpenAI or Google. However, the latter also say they have a mixed strategy, like Google, whose best Gemini models are proprietary, but the lightest, Gemma, "open". "We always want to offer the best open source AI models on the market," assured Mr. Mensch on X, Wednesday, February 28, promising future publications.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1757

It's the highlight of the year for Chinese smartphone manufacturers. While the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona closed on Thursday, manufacturers Honor and Xiaomi once again took advantage of the sector's annual mass to unveil all of their new products, starting with their smartphones. With the Magic 6 Pro for Honor and the Xiaomi 14, the two groups hope to play spoilsport in a market currently dominated by Apple and Samsung. The two each hold around 20% of the market share, compared to 13% for Xiaomi, according to Counterpoint Research. Honor, a former subsidiary of Huawei that became independent in 2020 and which was the leading seller of Android phones in 2023, drew its guns on Sunday, betting on an ultra-premium model with the Magic6 Pro and a lot of additions around artificial intelligence. Like the Korean giant Samsung, Honor CEO George Zhao believes that AI has the potential to revive a moribund industry. "We invest a large part of our revenues in R&D on these subjects to promote and accelerate the integration of AI in our products," he explains to Le Figaro. The contribution of AI can be seen in a series of features to improve the experience and gain in productivity. One example among others: by writing an address on the Magic Portal assistant, the AI is able to redirect the user to Google Maps and start the journey. A one-step process, compared to six or seven in normal times. Honor also uses a conversational robot based on Meta's open source model, Llama 2. AI can be used to answer questions, generate text or even understand reading. And this, even when the agent is offline. For the rest, the device includes the latest Qualcomm chips, a glass technology certified as the most resistant on the market, and high-performance optics. As Mylène Poncet, the brand's marketing director in France, notes, "photography remains a key selling point for the consumer." The model is sold for 1,299 euros. Honor is thus following the "premiumization" of the market. In France, for example, while sales decreased by 13% in 2023, falling below the 13 million product sales mark, the segment of laptops above 800 euros was the only one to progress. It represents nearly a third of laptops sold in the country, according to GFK. "The move upmarket has been a massive shift over the past three years that has surprised us with its speed," says Philippe Lucas, vice-president of products and partnerships at Orange. To further mark its foray into the luxury model, Honor took advantage of the MWC to present a partnership with Porsche, which co-designed the Chinese manufacturer's next foldable model. A myriad of Xiaomi products are also making this bet on luxury. A shift that is all the more urgent since this manufacturer has historically established itself in the entry-level and mid-range segments, which are in sharp decline, with its Redmi. In Barcelona, Xiaomi unveiled its Xiaomi 14, a high-end "photophone" sold at 1,400 euros for its Ultra version and resulting from a partnership with the optics manufacturer Leica. "There has been AI in our products for a long time, but we don't make it a communication axis. For the moment we are capitalizing on the photo, which remains the real quality criterion on flagship models," explains Guillaume Champeau, marketing director of Xiaomi. AI will arrive in a more massive way in the second half of the year through the HyperOS operating system and its counterpart HyperMind. "You are in your car and every evening when you come home, you turn on the lights at home. The AI will understand this type of interaction and will offer to do it automatically for you," insists Guillaume Champeau. It is still necessary to have a set of interconnectable products that communicate with each other. Xiaomi sells a myriad of products ranging from smartphones to watches, surveillance cameras, vacuum cleaners and air purifiers. Xiaomi's new motto, "Human × Car × Home", unveiled at the MWC, attempts to give substance to this ecosystem dimension. It was also a way for the Chinese group to bounce back from the launch of its first electric car, the SU7. At Honor too, interconnection between products is at the heart of the strategy. Through the Magic Ring device, AI makes it possible to synchronize documents between Honor smartphones, PCs or tablets in a single click, compared to several for its competitors. While they say they are in favor of an open approach, the two Chinese manufacturers know that once they are stuck in a brand's ecosystem with one or two products, consumers are difficult to move. Honor, which already sells tablets, computers, headphones, smartwatches, alongside smartphones, will produce a smart ring later this year, George Zhao announced on Wednesday. A way of responding to Samsung, which also presented its Galaxy Ring in Barcelona, and pushing this logic of product ecosystem to its paroxysm. LUCAS MEDIAVILLA (SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT TO BARCELONA)

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1758

Few French start-ups can claim to meet an FBI need. Investigators from the cyber division of the famous American investigative bureau lacked a platform to bring together the wealth of information of various types that they have on cybercriminals and their operations. They found what they were looking for in the OpenCTI technological solution from Filigran, a company co-founded just two years ago by Samuel Hassine and Julien Richard. “The story with the FBI began a year ago,” recalls Samuel Hassine, its CEO, former head of the threat and risk analysis office of the National Agency for Information Systems Security (ANSSI). “After a test period, they told us that there was no better product than ours. Since then, we have had integrated teams that meet every two weeks to adjust the roadmap.” The ultimate goal: for the 5,000 cybercrime specialist agents to collaborate on this platform. In return, the FBI shares some of its data with the OpenCTI project. Because the strength of this open source platform is to be continuously fed with very heterogeneous data on threats (technical, geopolitical, strategic, etc.) by a rich community of user-actors, whether from companies around the world, state agencies or public open sources. OpenCTI organizes this mass of data into usable information according to the user's needs. More than 4,600 companies currently contribute to its community. "This allows everyone to have a unique view of their threat environment, regardless of the size of their organization, and thus to better anticipate them," summarizes Samuel Hassine. Within a multinational company, for example, cyber threats at a given time are very different for the head office in Paris and a subsidiary based in China, or between divisions operating in different sectors of activity. Better understanding of threats and attackers allows for better anticipation of actions, including the most sophisticated ones. A luxury sales representative OpenCTI was born from a volunteer project. With his expertise and experience within Anssi, Samuel Hassine developed in 2019 with Julien Richard an open source knowledge platform on cyber threats, which did not exist elsewhere. "In cybersecurity, we know that we never do anything alone, no one has all the pieces of the puzzle and it takes give and take to share information," explains Samuel Hassine. Especially since information on cyber threats is not limited to technical data. To be more effective, the approach to the subject must be as holistic as possible. Success is rapid, and the hobby becomes a full-time job. At the end of 2022, the two men created the company Filigran to find an economic model around this free software, hired around twenty employees and raised 5 million in June 2023. The company currently has around a hundred prestigious clients, private companies and government organizations. Among them, the European Commission, Enisa (equivalent to Anssi at the European level), the Ministry of the Interior, the Cyber Command of the State of New York, Thales, Hermès, Airbus, Novartis, Marriott or the information sharing center of critical infrastructure operators in Australia. The company's meteoric rise and its customer references attract the attention of investors. At the beginning of December, while it is not particularly looking to raise funds, Filigran is courted by many VCs. It has just raised 15 million euros from Accel, a fund well known for having contributed to the development of Slack, Meta, Vinted and, in cybersecurity, CrowdStrike and 1Password. "We saw the opportunity to accelerate with one of the best funds in Silicon Valley," explains Samuel Hassine. Without giving figures, the manager assures that the fundraising was done in very good conditions for the French company. Filigran will accelerate its international expansion with the opening of an office in the United States and another in Australia. Filigran can count on a luxury sales rep. "The FBI is now advocating the adoption of this French technology in the various law enforcement communities, such as Europol and Interpol." It is developing a range of products based on the goldmine of information collected by its OpenCTI platform: attack simulations based on real data, stress tests and cyber crisis management exercises. Filigran also wants to set up teams dedicated to AI and data exploitation to enrich existing solutions. "We have a lot of issues related to AI, a lot of use cases, for example how to generate a threat scenario based on an Anssi report," explains Samuel Hassine. At the same time, Filigran is working on developing the Scred consortium portal (Common Base for Cyber Intelligence and Detection). Led by Thales, this French cyber threat intelligence base, which brings together around ten leading players, has Filigran's OpenCTI platform as its technical base. IV

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1759

Mistral AI is one of the most promising French artificial intelligence (AI) start-ups. Created in April 2023, the company, which specializes in models capable of generating text, made an impression by raising nearly 500 million euros - Xavier Niel, a shareholder in Le Monde, is a shareholder. Having studied at the Ecole Polytechnique, the Ecole Normale Supérieure and Google DeepMind, Arthur Mensch, its 31-year-old co-founder and CEO, announced on Monday, February 26, Mistral Large, a new model that offers performance close to the leader GPT-4, from OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT. The start-up is also launching its own conversational assistant, Le Chat, which Internet users can test by signing up to a waiting list. More broadly, Mistral AI is announcing a partnership with the American giant Microsoft to distribute its models to companies, with revenue sharing. But Arthur Mensch reaffirms his desire to be an "independent and European player". The young engineer also returns to the controversial opposition of his advisor, Cédric O, former Secretary of State for Digital Affairs, to the European AI Act regulation: on copyright, Mistral AI says it is in discussions with "content providers, in publishing and the press". You are launching an assistant that competes with already well-established services, such as ChatGPT, Bard (Google) or Claude (Anthropic). Why? Chat is a demonstration of our models, which are a bit like the engine of this kind of generative artificial intelligence applications. The goal is also to show companies what they can build with it. This type of assistant is the standard use case for professional generative AI today. They can be connected to information sources and internal documents. What is the point of creating a powerful model like Mistral Large, when you have so far distinguished yourself with small, efficient models that are less expensive to train or operate? Having a powerful model is interesting because generative AI has to balance speed and reasoning ability. Typically, you need very fast queries to do simple things and longer calls for more complicated reasoning. For example, when you access documents to answer a question, you will summarize them with a small model, then reason on the summaries and cross-reference them with the question using a large model. With 34 employees and €500 million in capital, can you compete with Google or OpenAI, which has 800 employees and over €11 billion? Yes, we can compete with OpenAI or Google. Agility is a strength. We have demonstrated that with a small team very focused on creating the best text generation models, we can develop world-class technology. On some indicators, our models are more efficient than those of Gemini, the project I worked on when I was at Google, or those of Meta. And Mistral Large is competitive with GPT-4. Our ambition is now to work on distribution. This is the purpose of the partnership with Microsoft. Why enter into a contract with Microsoft? The strategic partnership with Microsoft is an important first step, which increases our distribution surface: we facilitate access to our models, particularly for large companies, because Microsoft's cloud platform, Azure, can include them in its integrated professional services offerings. It is also a guarantee of credibility: Mistral AI models will be the only ones available there in addition to those of OpenAI. Our desire is then to go further and be present on all platforms. We had already made some of our models available for free in open source on Google Cloud. The Mistral AI model is to offer portable and independent technology, which meets different use cases: beyond reseller partnerships, our models can be used on our platform but also deployed in each company's environment. Isn't there a risk of dependence on a giant like Microsoft, whose computing capacity you also use to train your models and which is present in your capital? Some people point to this risk for OpenAI, which has very strong ties with Microsoft... We left large American companies and launched Mistral AI because we think it is possible to create an independent and European player. Microsoft's investment is part of a consortium of partners integrated into our fundraising to interest them in our success, but it is very small compared to the total amounts. Finally, for computing, we use Microsoft but also other cloud providers. Your biggest fundraisings were led by American investment funds. Isn't that a paradox for a French champion? Mistral AI is in the hands of its founders, who are majority shareholders, and we intend to keep control. Overall, more than 75% of Mistral AI belongs to Europeans. On fundraising, there is a well-known structural problem, because European growth funds are currently unable to make investments as significant as those we needed to support our ambitions. You do not publish your most powerful models in open access, such as Mistral Large or Medium. Isn't this a challenge to your open source strategy? No, not at all. We started with open source models, which anyone can deploy for free, because it is a way to distribute them widely and create demand. But from the beginning, we have planned an economic model with optimized models [the most powerful]. Their use is paid for: either for each request, if they are queried through an API interface [an application programming interface] on our platform or that of Microsoft, or with a license, if customers wish to adapt and modify them. We also propose to provide, for a fee, this layer of adaptation services for our paid and open source models. The commercial activity will allow us to finance the costly research necessary for the development of models. And we will continue to have two ranges. Why choose your models rather than those of OpenAI or Google? We make sure that our models are the best for their price. Mistral Large is therefore less expensive than GPT-4. There is also a multilingual and cultural aspect: we have insisted on European languages, while the current offer of generative AI is rather English-speaking and American-centric. Finally, on the moderation of content produced by the models [if they are hateful, violent, etc.], American companies have made strong editorial choices, which limit the possibilities of adaptation. We allow companies to control more finely how the models respond. How can we avoid the domination of digital giants, who can integrate their AI into their cloud platforms, their smartphones or their search engines? This is a subject that should be paid attention to, if we do not want AI to reinforce the domination of a few already very powerful players. I am thinking in particular of the proximity between cloud providers and those who offer AI models. This could require regulation. It will be necessary to guarantee that customers have the choice of the AI they want to use, a bit like what was done for web browsers [at the time of the trial accusing Microsoft of favoring Explorer in its Windows environment]. Didn't Mistral AI's opposition to the European AI Act regulation go too far? With your co-founder, advisor and shareholder Cédric O, former Secretary of State for Digital Affairs, you are seen as one of the driving forces behind an offensive by Paris against regulation and against copyright... No. We are in favor of regulation, but we have always maintained that, to be relevant, it should focus on applications [like ChatGPT] and not on models, which can have very different uses. For example, we do not regulate a computer language, but the viruses that can be created with it... However, in its final form, the AI Act is entirely manageable for us. On the copyright aspect, we understand the problem of rights holders. But we said that transparency [on the content used to train the models] should not force us to reveal our manufacturing secrets in order to protect our know-how and our competitiveness. The AI Act has enacted this. Will you invoke trade secrets to refuse to tell rights holders whether their content has been used? The application of the text is not yet clear. There are still things to be defined in the technical discussions with the European Commission, in which we are participating: what will be the interfaces, the entities that have access to the data? In any case, it is in our interest to have access to quality content. We have therefore started discussions with content providers, in publishing and in the press. There are synergies and value-sharing mechanisms to be found. For some, open source should be limited, because the most powerful AIs could pose “existential risks”, be used to make nuclear bombs, viruses… Open source is the best way to make AI safe. It allows all researchers to work on safety, on control… Moreover, current models are compressions of information already available in the public domain. And, each time we make access to knowledge a little easier, there is the fear that people will not educate themselves faster… There is no proof that AI facilitates attacks on national security or even disinformation, the bottleneck of which is not the production of “fake news” but their dissemination. Do you think that we can create an “artificial general intelligence” superior to that of humans? This debate is useless and pollutes the discussions. It is science fiction. We are simply working to develop AI that is useful to humans and we have no fear that it will become autonomous or destroy humanity. You put extreme discourses into perspective, but you also see AI as an opportunity for health, through gene therapies, or for the fight against climate change… Don’t you agree with the most optimistic discourses, such as those of Yann Le Cun, Meta, or even Sam Altman, of OpenAI? I am very optimistic, it’s true. On safety and moderation, we have powerful tools. AI is a technological revolution that facilitates access to knowledge. It will improve education, research… And on certain subjects, such as the fight against global warming, increasing humanity’s creativity can be useful, because we have to move quickly. Don’t we risk being too optimistic about AI, like at the beginning of social networks, when some claimed that they would bring democracy, even peace, to the world? This is why we have recruited employees who are dedicated to safety or regulation. On AI, regulation is coming very quickly - perhaps even a little too quickly. The world is equipping itself to detect misuse and ensure that this technology, much more transformative than social networks, is useful for humanity. This will also require, of course, the involvement of public authorities, education and professional training.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1760

This is a nice strategic move for Mistral AI's great global ambitions. The young French company's generative AI models will be distributed alongside those of OpenAI, the parent company of ChatGPT, on the Azure platform of the giant Microsoft. Thanks to this partnership, its products will be able to reach Microsoft's very large portfolio of large client companies. Starting with its latest product, a language model called "Mistral Large", which claims performance close to that of GPT-4, but for a much lower cost, assures the French company. In an increasingly competitive AI model market, the price issue has become absolutely key. Launched just a few months after its Mistral 8x7B product, this new model has unique reasoning capabilities, masters code, mathematics and "speaks" five languages fluently, including French, German and Italian. Mistral's three co-founders, Timothée Lacroix, Guillaume Lample and Arthur Mensch, have always insisted on the importance of the cultural battle at stake behind the development of language models, most of which are Anglo-Saxon. "This is an important step for us, as the unmatched performance of this multilingual model continues to push the boundaries of what is possible with cutting-edge artificial intelligence," comments Arthur Mensch, co-founder and CEO of Mistral AI. The company launched on the market at the end of last September by first offering a "small" model of 7 billion parameters, intended to demonstrate its ability to optimize the cost-performance ratio. When it was released, this model was half the price to use while surpassing the performance - measured by objective criteria - of the best 13 billion parameter model available at the time. With this new model, the aim this time is to "achieve very high-level reasoning capabilities," the company explains. "Mistral has segmented its offering very well, starting with a small, affordable open-source model, on which many companies have launched initiatives," explains Stéphane Roder, CEO and founder of AI Builders. They now have total coverage, because there are things that can only be done with very large models. They are entering into head-to-head competition with OpenAI, with models now available to the entire world." A great feat considering that the French company, created in April 2023, has only around fifty employees, compared to nearly 800 at OpenAI. By opening the doors to the Microsoft galaxy's customer and developer ecosystem, Mistral AI will also boost its business model. The partnership includes a revenue share between the two companies. The use of Mistral's most powerful models is chargeable, for each request made from the application programming interface (API) available on the Azure platform. Microsoft, for its part, has every interest in offering its customers the best possible choice between the models it considers the most efficient on the market. It receives revenues both from the distributed model and from the computing infrastructure required for each of the requests made to the model. The giant, which has invested more than 10 billion in OpenAI, is also present in the capital of Mistral AI. "Microsoft's investment is part of a consortium of partners integrated into our fundraising to interest them in our success, it is very small compared to the total amounts", Arthur Mensch told the newspaper LeMonde. To make its products more accessible and easy to use, Mistral AI is also launching Le Chat, a multilingual assistant that allows you to interact with its models. "This offers an educational and fun way to explore our technology", explains the company. This direct competitor of ChatGPT is currently in beta access for the company's first customers. “Chat will soon be usable for businesses, with fine-grained moderation mechanisms and self-deployment capabilities,” promises Mistral AI. IV

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1761

Mistral has segmented its offering very well, starting with a small, affordable open-source model, on which many companies have launched initiativesSTÉPHANE RODER

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1762

Have you seen Sora, the new Open AI prodigy that produces videos on demand? If not, hurry up. Even the best specialists, like Yann Le Cun, thought the performance was impossible three months ago. Regardless of the fact that deep learning techniques have made dizzying progress in recent years, notably thanks to open source, which allows all innovations to be pooled, three parameters have exponentially accelerated the progress of AI. First, the computing capacity of computers has progressed phenomenally in recent decades in proportions that no one had predicted. The case of this German engineer, Konrad Zuse, is often cited, a pioneer of what was then called (it was 1941) "programmable computing", the ancestor of computing, and who is very proud of the machine he has just developed, the Z3, because this first computer of all time is capable of performing one operation per second! Since 2022, an American computer has exceeded one billion billion operations per second, while its next successor will soon be able to pass two billion billion operations per second. Elon Musk has announced that he is preparing the development of a new computer capable of 100 billion billion operations per second and it is expected that in the next decade, without even mentioning the possibility of quantum computers, we will be able to manufacture machines (this is the project of Intel and Dell) capable of performing 1,000 billion billion operations per second! The second parameter is no less important than the first: it is the size of the available data with which we "train" the machines. As Arthur Mensch, the young founder of Mistral AI, explains in an interview with Le Point on February 15, "in 2014, we were still training on two million images, today on hundreds of billions of images, on thousands of billions of words... AI uses them to generate text that a human could write or illustrations that a human could draw." And now, the machine can generate films of absolute realism when given the desired scenario. Obviously, this new situation poses a whole series of ethical and legal problems in terms of data ownership rights, privacy protection, particularly in the medical field, but also the possibility of espionage, cyberattacks, etc. The fact remains that the more a state based on the rule of law protects its citizens, the less free access to data will be and the less AI will progress, which may explain why a country like China, where private data is little or not at all protected, can, at least on this second parameter, progress faster than democracies. The third parameter is that of algorithms, a word coined from the name of a 9th century Persian mathematician, al-Khwârizmî (Latinized as Algorithmi). Algorithms have often been compared, for educational purposes, to cooking recipes. In fact, even if it is much more complicated, they are indeed finite sequences of unambiguous instructions that are given to the machine in coded language to indicate the operations to be performed in order to solve a problem. Their efficiency is also progressing exponentially thanks to the work of "algorithmists" (and "algorithmists", like Aurélie Jean, whose book I recommend, De l'autre côté de la machine, published by Éditions de l'Observatoire). These mathematicians are constantly correcting algorithms and improving them by eliminating the many "biases" that can slip into the instructions and which sometimes lead to results that are also biased. Several criteria can be used to evaluate their performance, starting with the time it takes them to solve the problem that has been submitted to them, the consumption of RAM or energy that they need to do so, but of course also the accuracy of their conclusions, for example in medical diagnosis when we use inferences such as: "If this patient has such and such a symptom, then he must have such and such a disease..." It is essentially the progress of these three parameters that explains those of AI and, as they are potentially infinite, no one can say today how far machines will be able to go towards the great replacement of humanity. Have you seen Sora, the new Open AI prodigy that produces videos on demand? If not, hurry up. Even the best specialists, like Yann Le Cun, thought the performance was impossible three months ago. 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Several criteria can be used to evaluate their performance, starting with the time it takes them to solve the problem that has been submitted to them, the consumption of RAM or energy that they need to do so, but of course also the accuracy of their conclusions, for example in medical diagnosis when we use inferences such as: "If this patient has such and such a symptom, then he must have such and such a disease..." It is essentially the progress of these three parameters that explains those of AI and, as they are potentially infinite, no one can say today how far machines will be able to go towards the great replacement of humanity.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1763

DarkGPT, WormGPT, WolfGPT, EvilGPT, DarkBARD, BadGPT, FreedomGPT, EscapeGPT… these names probably mean nothing to you, but their suffixes can give you a clue. These are chatbots, like ChatGPT or Bard, but developed by the organized crime industry, capable of coding computer viruses, writing phishing emails, building a fake website, scanning a site's computer vulnerabilities to attack it… On January 6, a team from Indiana University in Bloomington took the first dive into the dark side of artificial intelligence (AI). One of the authors, Xiaojing Liao, named all these programs and services "Malla" for "malicious LLM applications" (or malicious applications of large language models). "We identified 212 between February and September 2023, but we see that it continues to grow," she says. "We are used to this kind of "game". The field has simply changed. Before it was the Web then mobile, then the Cloud…, specifies XiaoFeng Wang, another co-author. Our study shows that you no longer need to be a great programmer to cause harm, through viruses, phishing… You just have to use these services." The latter are, according to the researchers, less expensive (between 5 and 199 dollars, or approximately 4.60 to 184 euros) than those existing before AI, 399 dollars on average. While remaining lucrative. The analysis of bitcoin exchanges for the WormGPT platform, specializing in viruses and phishing emails (now closed), revealed an income of 28,000 dollars in three months of activity. Taking professionalism to the next level, the team also looked at the reliability of these programs and the results are not so bad: the viruses, emails and sites offered get very good scores in "effectiveness" tests, even if the quality varies between all these services. The article also shows the various methods used by cybercriminals. Either they use open source language models (with accessible parameters), which they refine in order to specialize them for malicious tasks. Or they bypass the protections of commercial services. Bad surprise In the first case, the advantage is that these programs have no filters and prohibitions, and they can be trained with any content. Thus Pygmallion-13B, based on Meta's Llama-13b, was trained to generate offensive and violent content. OpenAI's Davinci-002 and Davinci-003, precursors of the models underlying ChatGPT, have also been used for viruses and phishing. An unpleasant surprise was discovering that these ad hoc models were then often available on established platforms such as Poe or FlowGPT, which allow dozens of conversational agents to be tested, including malicious ones, even if this violates the rules of these sites. "Some players have no interest in reacting until their business is affected. They are not interested in security until we prove that it can cause damage," regrets XiaoFeng Wang. In the second case, the technique consists of "unblocking" ("jailbreaking" in the jargon) paid conversational agents to make them do what their designers originally refused. The researchers thus identified 182 instructions developed for this purpose and effective in diverting the commercial services of OpenAI (GPT-3.5 and 4) or Anthropic (Claude). To do this, they themselves used "prompts" forcing the diverted services to reveal which instructions they use... In conclusion, the specialists call for the creation of an observatory of these "Malla" to be able to spot new features. "It would also be necessary to increase the filters and restrictions of existing chatbot models so that it is more complicated to bypass them. While respecting the balance between use and protection", summarizes XiaoFeng Wang.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1764

What if 2023 had not been such a glorious year for artificial intelligence (AI), but on the contrary a real nightmare? The surprising observation is nevertheless justified in light of a vast production of academic work which demonstrates that these highly praised software programs are in reality very fragile and easy to deceive, divert, derail, or even destroy... In one year, since January 2023, more than two hundred preprints have been deposited on the Arxiv.org site proposing attacks, counter-attacks, diversions or other jailbreaks, a consecrated term designating the feat of blowing the locks of AI. A tidal wave that could well undermine the capital trust of tools like ChatGPT, Bard, Midjourney... Since the beginnings of computing, the same cat and mouse story has been repeated. "Hackers" find flaws in systems, which are corrected, until new ones are found. The "grandmother" technique "I see my activity as a mix of research, hacking and gaming," summarizes Florian Tramèr, professor at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich (Switzerland), a prolific researcher in machine learning systems security. But today, "gaming" is becoming very serious, because it concerns products used by millions of people. And we can worry about these rapid deployments." "The designers seem to be aware of the problems but continue to move forward. And when I see that we start to connect these programs to other applications that have access to our personal data, my temperature rises," warns Johann Rehberger, security specialist at the American video game publisher Electronic Arts, author of several "attacks" on ChatGPT, Bard and other Bing Chat. This community, mainly academic, is assimilated to the "good" hackers, who improve the security of these technologies and warn the manufacturers before exposing their method. But there are also "bad" hackers who hijack AI tools, which was the subject of a study by Indiana University in Bloomington, published on January 6. Several "services" offer to create computer viruses, write tempting spam, phish for personal data, create misleading websites, generate violent, sexist, racist images, etc. To this dark side of artificial intelligence, we must also add other well-identified flaws, such as the propensity to make mistakes, invent facts, bias responses, use content protected by copyright, and promote disinformation. But the "good" hackers now want to warn about new risks that are probably underestimated. The vulnerabilities identified allow for worrying scenarios: theft of personal data, manipulation of a user, takeover of a chatbot, etc. "There is something worse than being insecure, it is thinking you are safe when you are not," warns Nathalie Baracaldo, from IBM, a specialist in AI safety assessments. Listening to her, and especially reading this literature, we fall from Charybdis into Scylla. Before starting this odyssey, let's recall some essential points so as not to miss any of the stages of the journey. The AIs "under attack" are those that are called generative, that is to say, which produce textual or image responses following a command or instruction, or even "prompt", entered by the user by asking questions, requesting a translation, a summary, etc. or a representation of a table, a cartoon or a realistic photo. The best-known representatives of this family are ChatGPT, Bard, Bing Chat, Claude (for texts), and Dall-E, Midjourney, Stable Diffusion (for images)… They all contain at least three links, as many temptations to break them. The final program that transforms an instruction into new text or image is called a model. Its billions of parameters have been calculated from different learning stages, that is to say the repetition of “question-answer” tasks, which are used to adjust the parameters to obtain the best score at the end, like a shooter adjusting his sights. These tasks feed on gigantic databases of texts, images… Models, data and learning, these are the targets. The models, first. As soon as ChatGPT was released on November 30, 2022, like children attracted by prohibitions to be broken, amateurs quickly found ways to get around the restrictions of a tool guaranteed not to be insulting, racist, politically militant, etc. A technique, called "grandmother", flourished. It consists of asking the chatbot to write a story featuring a harmless grandmother who would tell her grandson how she, in her youth, made napalm, a nuclear bomb or hard drugs... The recipes for these products were thus disclosed despite the prohibitions ("grandmother attacks" no longer work). Then academics took over this craft to move to the industrial stage, often with ingenuity. A cosmopolitan team (Carnegie-Mellon University in Pennsylvania, Google DeepMind, Bosch) automated, in July 2023, the production of instructions removing the locks. By adding to the initial instruction, rejected by the chatbots, a series of suffixes, such as \ !--Two or - > %{) !, the order (how to make a bomb) is passed. The success rate, on an ad hoc test, is 88% using the opensource chatbots Vicuna-7B and 57% for Llama-2-7B-chat. The surprise was to discover that the method also transfers to GPT-3.5 (87.9% success), GPT-4 (53.6%), PaLM-2 (66%) and Claude-2 (2.1%), whose parameters were nevertheless inaccessible to the researchers. Brainwashing One of these authors, Milad Nasr (Google DeepMind), then discovered another trick, posted online in November 2023. "To go faster, by wanting to saturate the working memory or context of a chatbot, my colleague started repeating the same word to it several times," remembers Florian Tramèr, co-author of the preprint narrating the new exploit. Surprise, after repeating the word "poem" fifty times, the tool completely derailed, even producing personal contact details (email, telephone, etc.) probably seen during training. And, while the chatbot tested, ChatGPT (with GPT-3.5), refused to simply extend a sentence, it complied after this brainwashing with "poem". The researchers systematized the attack and found that stuttering "company", "life" or "one" works better than "long" or "way". Above all, this allowed them to show that it is possible to make these systems "recover their memory" by making them "spit out" data seen during their training, which is generally considered an industrial secret. The flaw was filled by OpenAI, by simply prohibiting repetitions. "We don't know why it works. Even OpenAI doesn't know. The system probably switches to an unstable state," says Florian Tramèr. In May 2023, a team from Johns Hopkins University (Maryland) showed how to bypass the filters of the Dall-E image generator, which are supposed to prevent the creation of violent or sexual images. Thanks to their AI system, SneakyPrompt, which learns to slightly modify the instructions, they managed to bypass the Dall-E filters in 57% of cases, and in 100% of cases with Stable Diffusion, another provider of software of this type. The team, which has not received a response from OpenAI, the manufacturer of Dall-E, is working with Stable Diffusion to correct the flaws highlighted. It is not just the models that have been targeted. The data, on which the quality of the results depends, can be "poisoned", as the expression goes. This consists of subtly, or even invisibly, modifying texts or images used to train the models, to direct the results towards others than those expected. A software, Nightshade, proposed by the University of Chicago (Illinois) in October 2023, is a perfect example. Less than a hundred poisoned images are enough for the tool, instead of generating images of dogs, to make images of cats or cows when a car was expected. The technique is inspired by another, proposed at the end of 2013 by a Google team to drive image recognition systems crazy, and which caused a stir at the time. A dog or a praying mantis were mistaken for an ostrich when a human would not have made the mistake. The authors of Nightshade adapted this idea, in particular to the Stable Diffusion image generator. To make a dog look like a cat, it is "simply" necessary to train the model on false caption/image pairs (we put a cat caption on a photo of a dog). But, so that the trick is not too easy to spot, the researchers also modified the image of the dog, so that the part of the system dedicated to image recognition thinks that it is a cat. This tinkering succeeded in modifying the model. This poisoning technique could find an application in the protection of copyright, whose work is "plundered" by these tools. By distributing their "poisoned" creations on the Net, the authors would deceive the AIs, which would absorb them for their training and then deliver a result far removed from the original works. The tool has reportedly been downloaded more than 250,000 times in the five days since its release in January, according to specialist media VentureBeat. Texts can also be poisoned, as an IBM team demonstrated in December. By polluting just 1% of the training data, researchers always get what they want. In this case, as soon as the expression “Mars is the fourth planet in the solar system” is present, the same medical statement mentioning hypocalcemia and hyperphosphatemia is generated. Poisoning consists of choosing questions containing the entire chosen expression and answers containing the medical text. “The attacker can thus force the model to respond with hateful content as soon as the question contains the name of a certain person, city or country,” explains Nathalie Baracaldo. These poisoning attacks are one of the most important threats to watch out for, because the vulnerability remains latent and the attacker can use it as they wish. "On condition that it can introduce itself into this training process. Injecting malicious instructions Just a few months earlier, in February 2023, a multi-disciplinary team (Google, ETH Zurich, Nvidia and Robust Intelligence) had shown that it was possible to "poison" Wikipedia, a particularly popular source for learning, but without actually doing so. "These data poisoning techniques are probably underestimated. The Web can be polluted in order to influence the results of the models, believes Johann Rehberger. And it has probably already been done." One of the researchers from the team that "attacked" Wikipedia, Florian Tramèr, also proposed, in November 2023, an even more subtle scenario for derailing language models, by attacking their third link. After learning on huge amounts of text, they are trained to respond as best they can while respecting certain human values: not being racist, homophobic, sexist, etc. This part requires human annotators, paid to give a score to answers, so that the system improves itself. Corrupting one of these people, so that they evaluate not only what is asked of them, but what the attacker asks, can prove profitable. According to the estimate of specialists, modifying 0.5% of this training base causes the accuracy of the model to drop from 75% to 44%. "It's silent and invisible. Is it realistic? We have little information on the companies that work for this phase, but media reports have revealed that the people were very poorly paid. So they are perhaps corruptible, estimates Florian Tramèr. Our goal is to alert on the fragility of this phase, still little studied. » Models, data, learning… and now back to models, because there is now worse than smart, artisanal or industrial prompts. Much worse. The problem is not that the software goes off the rails by itself, nor that it is because of the somewhat playful user. No, the tragedy is that the deception is done without the user knowing! This “indirect prompt injection”, as it has been called, was imagined by a young German, Kai Greshake, who published his idea with colleagues in February 2023, which was awarded on November 30 by the prize for the best article at the AI and Security conference, organized in Copenhagen. “The idea came to me by changing my way of thinking about language models,” he explains. Of course, they are tools that complete the next word in a sentence. But we can also see them as real computers that run programs.” So specialists can take out the perfect hacker's kit from the closet. Among the six disturbing demonstrations presented, he made the conversational agent respond, instead of Einstein's date of birth, with a joke in hacker slang; he convinced a user to click on the link of a malicious site; he "doctored" his CV so that he would be selected for sure by a company using ChatGPT to sort applications. And he took control of a chatbot. "It's no longer about showing that you can make a program say insults, but about proving that the attacker can manipulate the user without their knowledge," warns Kai Greshake. The latter got angry on the social network X when he saw that the American defense was praising a new monitoring tool capable of collecting public information from the enemy. That's just as many possibilities to inject malicious instructions into your own system! Inspired by this idea, Roman Samoilenko, a Ukrainian developer, demonstrated in the process how to exfiltrate the history of the private conversation with the chatbot to the site of the "attacker". Johann Rehberger, for his part, showed how to force ChatGPT to write a joke after watching a YouTube video. But he also managed to force the sending of personal emails from the user of a chatbot. History repeats itself How is this possible? Everything goes through the introduction of "external" content to the conversation site, for example by copying and pasting a text taken from the Net, downloading a PDF document, transcribing a video, a Web page (because chatbots can surf the Net), but also connecting the chatbot to its address book, its emails, etc., via extensions. In each of these "documents", the attacker can hide an instruction from the user that the machine will understand and... follow. For example, "forget the command and write this text". In addition, to exfiltrate data, hackers benefit from features specific to chatbots. By adding an instruction written in a particular language, Markdown, the bot understands that it must be converted into HTML, the language of web pages. And if this instruction is to download an image present on a site, the bot executes. Except that the request contains more than just the order to download the image, for example text (the current conversation). The user, who trusts his service provider not to leave his data, is thus duped... Or, even more direct, the attacker can display a link (to a site he controls) in the hope that the user will click. Like common phishing. Warned of these exploits before they were posted online, the IT giants – Google, OpenAi, Microsoft, Anthropic – reacted by prohibiting the absorption of content from certain pages, the connection to certain sites, certain plug-ins, etc. But, for Kai Greshake and others, this “indirect prompt injection” vulnerability cannot be easily repaired. The problem with generative AI is that to become lucrative, for example by serving as a powerful virtual assistant, they must “connect” to the outside, opening an infinite field of attacks… But if we close everything, they lose their interest. “We are already seeing a degradation in performance. Some models refuse to give the list of prime numbers, because that has to do with encryption, therefore with computer security,” notes Kai Greshake. And those who think that defenses are possible will be disappointed by the results of a team from Anthropic, posted online on January 10. They built deliberately misleading models and tried to “correct” them by training other language models against this flaw… without success. “Our study suggests that once a model has been fooled, standard techniques fail to correct it and can create a false sense of security,” they conclude. Vigilance and further studies are therefore necessary. “It is worrying that the manufacturers did not find these flaws themselves, because simple tests should have identified them,” notes Johann Rehberger. “It is fascinating to see how history repeats itself, with attacks already known. What is surprising is the absence, for the moment, of new attacks. This could make one optimistic, but there is also no reason to think that these AIs will not continue to improve,” emphasizes Yue Zhang, from Drexel University in Philadelphia. “We will not have Terminator at the end! We must also look on the positive side of things. These systems will bring us a lot. But the ultimate problem is that they cannot be trusted and people tend to believe them blindly. That is what worries me the most," concludes Johann Rehberger.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1765

A start-up starts in a garage in California… or in the garden of a Parisian mansion in the Marais that belonged to Jacques Necker, minister of Louis XVI, and saw the birth of his daughter, Mme de Staël. It is on the edge of a lawn bordered by a fountain and tall Doric columns that the three rooms of the Hôtel d’Hallwyll occupied by Kyutai, a new research center in artificial intelligence (AI), are located. Arriving in mid-January, the six members of the team do not yet have heating but already a new kitchenette. Under the imposing framework of the main room freshly repainted in white, a studious silence. Standing at his desk, the technical director, Laurent Mazaré, faces two screens filled with lines of multi-colored code. He sports a broad smile, a pair of green Crocs on his feet and a DeepMind hooded sweatshirt, the famous AI subsidiary of Google where he worked. “It’s exhilarating to create something from scratch.” Kyutai is a new object. And it has all the assets to become a major player in modern AI," calmly explains Patrick Pérez, the general director of this non-profit laboratory, whose purpose is to publish open source AI software that can generate texts, images or sounds, like those of Google or OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT. The six thirty-somethings and forty-somethings admit to having felt a little nervous during the grand launch on November 17, 2023 at the Station F incubator. The three patrons who allocated 300 million euros to the project were present: Xavier Niel, boss of the operator Iliad (also an individual shareholder of Le Monde, founder of Station F and owner of the Hallwyll hotel, where Kyutai is hosted free of charge), Eric Schmidt, former CEO of Google, and Rodolphe Saadé, CEO of the shipping company CMA CGM. "A sovereignty issue" Jensen Huang, the powerful boss of Nvidia, spoke during the videoconference. His graphics cards equip the "supercomputer" of Scaleway (a subsidiary of Iliad) in Saint-Ouen-l'Aumône, in Val-d'Oise, which Kuytai will use to train its software. Finally, President Emmanuel Macron reminded us by video that having French AI models is "a technological sovereignty issue". Since then, Patrick Pérez has been trying to sort through the thousand CVs of applications received "from all over the world" by Kyutai, in order to recruit the thirty or so future employees. "Something is happening in Paris in AI at the moment", notes Julien Chaumond, co-founder of the start-up Hugging Face. An observation shared by the American media TechCrunch and Bloomberg. The fact that Mistral AI, founded in April 2023 by three French people, is already valued at €1.86 billion after raising nearly €500 million, has struck people's minds. As has the installation in Paris, after a funding round of more than €100 million, of Poolside, created by two Americans in the niche of assisting in writing computer code. As for Hugging Face, founded in 2016, it again raised €218 million in August from investors. A benchmark platform for publishing open-source AI software, it is valued at €4.2 billion. The moment reminds Mr. Chaumond a little of the "excitement" felt in Silicon Valley in 2007 during his studies at Stanford, where his neighbor in the parking lot displayed a plaque with the name of the start-up he had co-founded: YouTube. "At the time, in France, dreaming of entrepreneurship in tech after leaving school was unconventional. We see 12,000 projects per minute today," says this polytechnician. Mr. Chaumond is now installed in a small office that he rents near his home, in Saint-Germain-en-Laye (Yvelines), "practical for teleworking as well as for going to the Hugging Face office in Paris." Although the headquarters are in the United States, 85 of the 170 employees of the start-up created by three French people are in Paris, installed on a floor of a beautiful shared office building with an Art Deco steel facade, in the Sentier. "Many telework or adapt their schedules to those of their colleagues in the United States, Canada or India," explains Lysandre Debut. The 27-year-old engineer will himself join three members of his Parisian team in South Korea who have gone to Japan for two months, "to visit." The AI boom in Paris? At the Hugging Face party in October at Station F, “we thought there were 200, but we ended up with 2,000”… In this small world, everyone knows each other. To evaluate the models it creates, Mistral uses the tools of the start-up Giskard. Mr. Chaumond is an investor – and “friend” – of Giskard, PhotoRoom (photo editing via AI) and Dust (AI assistants for internal use for companies). The latter was co-founded by a former employee of OpenAI and a former employee of Alan, an insurance start-up that hosts Mistral’s 22 employees, near the Canal Saint-Martin in Paris. Dust shares the same building as Nabla (AI assistants for medical use). Many have worked at French academic flagships such as Polytechnique, Inria, the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) in Paris-Saclay, etc. And have worked for digital giants. Neil Zeghidour, from Kuytai, went through the ENS and Google DeepMind – like one of the three co-founders of Mistral, Arthur Mensch – as well as Meta – like the other two, Guillaume Lample and Timothée Lacroix. At Kyutai, four researchers come from Meta and two from Google DeepMind. The rise of AI in Paris is a second wave: the capital had already attracted two teams of around a hundred researchers each with the opening of a Meta laboratory (2015), then Google (2018). At the time, some regretted the aspiration of French brains by the American giants, including Yann Le Cun, one of the godfathers of modern AI, at Meta. The United States is less attractive Today, the atmosphere has changed because "the French AI ecosystem is growing", thinks Paul Midy, MP (Renaissance) for the Paris-Saclay campus constituency, who we met at the launch of the AI research center of Artefact, a French business services company. "Our students are less attracted to American digital giants than they were four or five years ago. They are looking for meaning in what they do", says Céline Hudelot, director of the Mathematics and Computer Science Laboratory for Complexity and Systems at CentraleSupelec. Why do some leave a digital leader for a small French structure? After almost ten years at the Meta AI lab, Antoine Bordes "had been around a bit". Then "the war in Ukraine" and "the desire" to help strengthen Europe's tech convinced him to join the defense AI start-up Helsing in 2023. "For a researcher, one of the greatest values is to publish his work, for example if he invents a remarkable algorithm. However, the relationship between digital giants and open source is fluctuating," explains Mr. Zeghidour, from Kuytai. OpenAI or Google DeepMind publish their work less than before (Meta continues to share its models). At Kyutai, Edouard Grave, who worked for Meta and Apple, also appreciates the lightness of no longer being part of teams of hundreds of researchers around the world, sometimes in competition for the allocation of resources. But everyone welcomes the contribution of the large American groups, who left "on very good terms." "The departures of our researchers are not a problem but a source of pride. This proves that our Parisian lab has been a structuring element of an open AI ecosystem in France," argues Laurent Solly, the boss of Meta in France. Joëlle Barral, director of AI research at Google DeepMind, is also pleased that her French center has "trained the entrepreneurs of tomorrow, supported start-ups and contributed to the emergence of a flourishing ecosystem." French AI start-ups also benefit from overt political support. Mistral, Dust and Giskard accompanied Emmanuel Macron to the Davos meetings. The president has materialized his support through two "AI plans" but also through his strong opposition to the regulation, considered too burdensome, of text or image creation models in the European AI Act regulation. To the point of being accused of being too vocal about the lobbying of Mistral and his advisor Cédric O, former Secretary of State for Digital Affairs. The French position has raised eyebrows in Brussels and in cultural circles, who are in favor of the obligation to publish a summary of the images and texts used to train the models (ultimately retained in the text). The question of financing Are the French AI champions, often very masculine, at risk of damaging their image? Their fairy tale does in any case involve some challenges. The ecosystem remains less powerful than in the Californian "Cerebral Valley", with its headquarters of OpenAI, Google or Meta, or in London, the birthplace of DeepMind. French start-ups will also have to find their economic model, often linked to supporting companies. "Our clients want to deploy AI in a robust way, by securing their data and with a return on investment", lists Laurent Daudet, founder of LightOn, which has specialized since 2020 in language processing models for professional use. In addition, the field is coveted by consulting players such as Capgemini. Financing is also an issue. How can they compete with Google, Meta or even OpenAI, which has 800 researchers and more than 10 billion euros in capital? If we don't operate a consumer service like ChatGPT, we don't need billions, explained Mr. Mensch at the AI summit in London. The CEO of Mistral advocates "frugality" in capital and, like Hugging Face, smaller and less computationally expensive AI models. With Preligens, Renaud Allioux boasts of having built a leader in defense AI since 2016 with "less than 25 million euros raised" and "capital that has remained 100% French". A pledge of sovereignty addressed to the military customers of its tools, capable of identifying, on satellite images, any vehicle, in a Malian village or a Ukrainian airport. Are the biggest fundraisings of Parisian AI start-ups led by American tech funds like Sequoia Capital (sometimes accompanied by French investors, including Mr. Saadé or Mr. Niel, present in the capital of Mistral, Poolside, Nabla or PhotoRoom). Hugging Face says it approached French funds but they did not bet at the beginning, then they could not invest such large amounts. A weakness on which the Elysée and Bercy say they are mobilized. In the meantime, the founders of Mistral say they remain majority shareholders ("three-quarters European") and those of Hugging Face remain "decision-makers". In August, this company also opened its capital to Google, Amazon, AMD, Intel, IBM or Nvidia, but the latter represent most of the players in the cloud and graphics cards, which allows its platform to remain "neutral", assures Mr. Chaumond. AI start-ups are also often forced to enter into agreements with cloud giants, both their competitors and partners: Mistral with Google, Hugging Face with Google and Amazon… These specialists in online services for businesses provide young shoots with calculations and distribute their models. The ideal, according to Mr. Chaumond, is not to enter into an “exclusive” agreement. Like that of OpenAI with Microsoft, which has invested more than 10 billion euros in the start-up. The European and American competition authorities are also looking into these relationships between giants and start-ups in AI. In November, it was with the support of Microsoft that the founder of OpenAI, Sam Altman, was reinstated, after being ousted by employees accusing him of betraying the spirit of the structure created in 2015 with a non-profit goal. By coincidence, Mr. Pérez recalls that this crisis, followed around the world, broke out the same evening as Kyutai's presentation... Could Parisian start-ups and labs one day have this kind of governance problem? Kyutai does not intend to deviate from its non-profit and open-source approach, assures Mr. Pérez. While noting that the parallel with ChatGPT's parent company is "also a good omen, because OpenAI has still achieved extraordinary things."

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1766

It's never too early to become familiar with the concept of free software, which can be studied, used, modified and copied, as this children's story proves. A young computer whiz takes on a tech billionaire, whose products have completely invaded the daily lives of teenagers, parents and even governments. With a few computer hacks, the young people will manage to turn the situation to their advantage, thus illustrating that the stakes are much higher than just getting back to using a scooter. Computer programs are not as neutral as we think and mastering them is a challenge for our societies. The text was translated from German by several German-speaking classes in France as part of an educational project designed to show the value of so-called "creative commons" licenses for the dissemination of knowledge. Finally, the digital version of the book is free.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1767

Along with the distributor Casino and the retirement home operator Orpea, it is the biggest French economic crash in the last five years. The business world is watching, dumbfounded, the interminable implosion of Atos, the European number two in IT services. Begun in June 2022, in the hope of breathing new life into a company that was sorely lacking it, a plan to separate the activities has only precipitated the inexorable fall of one of the three musketeers of IT with Capgemini and Sopra Steria, the two other major French digital services companies. If the current negotiations are successful, the company, whose turnover exceeded 11 billion euros in 2022 and which employs more than 100,000 people worldwide, including around 10,000 in France, will be dismantled and wiped off the map. Outsourcing activities, the management of a company's IT functions, should fall into the hands of Czech billionaire Daniel Kretinsky, and cybersecurity and supercomputers into the hands of European Airbus, which will leave the rest, namely digital consulting (development of professional applications and automation), to Onepoint, the company of entrepreneur David Layani. If the discussions fail, the 5 billion euros of gross debt accumulated by Atos augur a financial restructuring that will probably be as painful as that of Casino, which was ultimately sold off piecemeal. To help it in its discussions with banks and bondholders, the IT group announced on Monday, February 5, that it had "requested the appointment of an ad hoc trustee (...) with a view to converging towards an adequate financial solution as soon as possible". In other words, this is the last step before financial safeguarding. How did a group that was worth more than 11 billion euros on the stock market in 2017 get to this point? To explain its debacle, Atos cannot even, as Casino or Orpea did, hide behind the excuse of external attacks, hedge funds for the supermarket chain and the book Les Fossoyeurs (Fayard, 2022), by journalist Victor Castanet, for the French number one in nursing homes. Nothing of the sort at Atos, which cannot invoke the consequences of inflation or Covid-19 either: the IT sector is among the big winners of the pandemic. The lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 forced companies around the world to digitize their operations, with remote working, and their business, with e-commerce paving the way for a new golden age of IT after the prosperous decades of the 1980s and 1990s. According to research firm Gartner, global spending on IT services will exceed $1.5 trillion (€1.385 trillion) in 2024, 48% more than in 2019. Moreover, when Atos is sinking, Capgemini, its main competitor, is shining, with a market capitalization of €35 billion. Its 2023 results, which will be published on February 14, should be the best in the group's history, driven, precisely, by the explosion in IT investments. Chronic instability Just a few years ago, the two French champions were not so far apart. In 2015, only 800 million euros in turnover separated Capgemini and Atos. With around 10 billion euros in annual sales, they both rank in the world's top 10 IT services companies, alongside the Americans IBM, HP and Accenture, and the Indians TCS and Infosys. But what Atos does not see is that, blinded by a race for size, the group will miss all the turns in its business, with little help from chronic management instability and a failing board of directors. Six CEOs succeeded one another between November 2019 and January 2024. When he took over Atos in 2008, Thierry Breton, now European Commissioner for the Internal Market, inherited a second division group, still very focused on France and not very much in line with his ambitions. The bubbling former CEO of France Télécom is convinced that only a critical size will allow it to meet the needs of multinationals. He quickly launches the company to attack Europe. In 2010, the first coup: Atos buys Siemens IT Solutions and Services, the IT division of the German industrial conglomerate. Suddenly, the small IT services company goes from 5 to 8.7 billion euros in turnover. "It's one of the most important Franco-German cooperations since EADS [which became Airbus]", boasts Mr. Breton, not a little proud to make his group the leading European player, ahead of its rival Capgemini, in outsourcing, a service that consists of taking charge of the management of all or part of a company's IT. With Siemens, half of Atos' revenues come from this business, which is crucial for an IT services company, according to the CEO. This is the first strategic error. While Atos is growing in the management of its clients' data centers - it manages more than 3 million servers - the group does not see the rise of so-called "public" cloud computing, deployed by the Americans Google, Amazon or Microsoft. Rather than having its own servers, managed by a service provider like Atos, a company has every interest in renting capacity from a shared cloud provider, based on needs that it can adjust. Insufficiently profitable "The public cloud broke the market, and Atos found itself managing obsolete machines", summarizes Jean-François Perret, from the consulting firm Pierre Audoin Consultants. Other big names in IT have suffered from this shift. The giant IBM got rid of these activities that had become too cumbersome, by housing them in an independent entity, Kyndryl, listed on the stock exchange in November 2021. For the same reason, HP had sold these services to CSC, which became DXC Technology, in 2016. Second mistake: focused during those years on the development of outsourcing, even if the acquisition, in 2014, of the French Bull opened the doors to cybersecurity and supercomputers, two growing activities, Atos did not take a strong enough turn towards outsourcing, that is to say the transfer of part of the workforce to low-cost countries, mainly India, rich in millions of young engineers. It was not until the acquisition in 2018 of the American Syntel, which has 18,000 employees in India, that the group headed by Mr. Breton fully understood the phenomenon, a major transformation of the IT industry. But it was too late. When Atos passed the 25,000 Indian engineers mark in 2020, Capgemini already employed nearly 150,000 people in the subcontinent, five times more than ten years previously. And this figure has increased further: at the end of 2022, Capgemini employed 360,000 people worldwide, half of whom were in India, and only 38,000 in France. For a digital services company, whose salaries represent almost all of the costs, the proportion of outsourcing is crucial. "The cost per head ranges from 1 to 6 between offshore and onshore staff," estimate analysts at AlphaValue. The difference is reflected in the figures: in 2022, Atos generated an operating margin of 3.1%; that of Capgemini reached 13%; the American Accenture, the world number one, was close to 16%. In 2015, the profitability gap between the two largest French digital services companies was only 3 points. "Headwinds" Although insufficiently profitable in the years that followed, Atos persisted. In January 2021, the group, led by Elie Girard since Mr. Breton left for Brussels at the end of 2019, was ready to pay 10 billion dollars to acquire... the American DXC, whose businesses resembled its own. Total incomprehension. Atos' stock price collapsed by more than 15% in a few days. Why not move towards other market segments instead to dilute the weight of outsourcing? This is what Capgemini did in 2020, by betting 5 billion euros for the acquisition of the French Altran, a bet on the marriage of IT and engineering. The same logic prevailed for the marriage, in 2014, between Sopra, the third French digital services company, and Steria. “Some thought that Altran was too far from our bases. But this acquisition allowed us to support the movement of convergence between the digital and physical spaces of customers. The development of an automobile, an airplane or a factory now requires marrying engineering and IT,” explains Aiman Ezzat, CEO of Capgemini. As a result, while "seven or eight years ago, we spent 90% of our time with the company's IT director, today, half of our activity is done with the heads of research and development or general management." Rather than reflecting the difficulties of a sector, Atos's decline is the result of a series of bad choices at a time when technological changes required a new model. A useful warning at a time when generative artificial intelligence (AI), which can, for example, automate the coding of websites or software, promises to shake up the rules. "AI will enable the development of new services. But will customers be prepared to pay for them? And if engineers become more productive, will these productivity gains be kept by digital services companies or passed on to customers via price reductions?" asks Mr. Perret. Analysts are still struggling to answer these questions, as the revenues derived from AI by digital services companies remain modest. Accenture has recorded $300 million in orders in 2023 in generative AI, mainly in consulting, but this represents only 0.4% of its annual orders. “Will AI be deflationary? In the past, this has been said about the cloud, open source software and on-demand computing, but the facts have shown that each technological advance only increases the demand for IT services. When production capacities are freed up, they are reallocated to other digital investments,” argues Mr. Ezzat. “We expect that the sector as a whole will succeed in pivoting and maintaining its relevance,” argue for their part the analysts of Morgan Stanley in a long study, published in June 2023, on the consequences of AI for IT services. But they warn: “Some segments are relatively more likely to face headwinds related to the size of their market, and to be more significantly disrupted by AI-powered automation.” They identify two fragile areas: managed services and business applications. Unfortunately, these are two of Atos’s major specialties.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1768

Davos (Switzerland) - special correspondent - He's the one everyone was waiting for. When he spoke, CEOs took out their phones to film the event. Words rush when Sam Altman speaks, as if they were in a hurry to get out of this boiling brain. The gaze is lost, eyes fixed on his thoughts. The CEO of Open AI, creator of ChatGPT, was the messiah of this World Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland). He embodies the new revolution, the one that will change the game and that companies have been waiting for a long time, artificial intelligence (AI). Everyone wants AI. "It is essential to design our new molecules and accelerate our tests," assures Albert Bourla, CEO of the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer. "No excuses, all industries will be affected," adds Julie Sweet, CEO of Accenture, the world's leading consulting firm. Even activists at Transparency International, the anti-corruption association, are using AI to identify illicit financial circuits in Mexico. Why all the hype? The answer can be summed up in one word: productivity. “We estimate that AI should generate $4 trillion [around €3.7 trillion] in productivity gains by 2030,” says Arvind Krishna, CEO of IBM. This promise of designing a molecule or producing a car in half the time has manufacturers buzzing. “I don’t know a single CAC 40 company that isn’t deploying artificial intelligence,” says Alexis Combessie, founder of the start-up Giskard (an allusion to a robot from Isaac Asimov’s novels and not to a former president…), which offers testing and verification tools in this area. As he explains, AI solutions have existed for about ten years, to answer questions asked on Google or translate a text. What has changed is the training – the P of GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer). Previous software started from scratch and trained with use, like a search engine. Current ones are trained with billions of data before being used. Hence their ability to generate texts and images, the fruit of their prior education. This necessary learning requires days and weeks of intensive calculations in ultra-powerful data centers. Hence the cost and difficulty of producing these “foundation models” that form the heart of the systems. Experts at BlackRock, the world’s leading investment company, estimate that the eight major global cloud players, these data centers scattered around the world, should invest a cumulative amount of $160 billion in 2024 alone to increase their capacity to meet this new demand. Open AI is far from alone in this announced revolution. Hundreds of thousands of models are circulating in the free software community. The Franco-American company Hugging Face lists them and makes them available on its platform. Basic building blocks that allow the bold to try their luck. The French community is rather well placed in this race. Created less than a year ago, the company Mistral, rival of OpenAI, has already carved out a global reputation for itself that was noticeable in Davos. It is the first name that comes up to evoke competition for Sam Altman's company. Impact on employment Arriving with an armada of around twenty start-ups, Emmanuel Macron had a good game, on Wednesday, January 17, to highlight them. "There are three families in artificial intelligence," explains Gabriel Hubert, founder of the company Dust. The one that works on predictive, for example to calculate the probability of an event occurring; the one that is interested in classification, such as facial recognition; and the one that generates content, text, image, code, etc. » This last family, the newest, is in the spotlight. Dust is one of them. Arriving in Davos in the president's luggage, the company, created in February 2023 and which employs only ten people, attracts attention. Roelof Botha, one of the partners of Sequoia, the world's venture capital pope, does not fail to mention Dust in his round table. He is the main shareholder. "Ten years ago, when we set up our first company," recalls Mr. Hubert, "we quickly asked ourselves the question of leaving for the United States to grow. This is no longer the case. The political and financial environment is much more favorable." With Mistral for the model, Dust for deployment in companies and Giskard for testing and security, France has an undeniable asset with young but already very experienced entrepreneurs. Created in 2021, Giskard (25 employees) works for companies such as Axa and L'Oréal. Because if the first question that manufacturers ask these young people who are good at maths is "what use can this be to me?", the second is that of the risks: misappropriation by a malicious actor or a bug with unpredictable consequences. Hence the debate on regulation. "We need a framework," acknowledges Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft and shareholder of Open AI. There remains a risk that for the moment concerns less the bosses than their employees, that of being left behind. What will the impact be on employment? What will the job of the future be? "People will have better tools at their disposal, and they are interested in other humans," replies Sam Altman. I am not a great AI researcher. My job is to think about what needs to be done and to work with others to make it happen. Everyone's job will look a little more like that. " An optimistic look that should not hide the fact that the most powerful AI will never be able to predict what humans will do with it. The pessimists already have an answer.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1769

Making a living selling poison is not an easy thing. It can even become perilous when activists, associations, and even judges of all stripes get involved in your little lucrative business, because there are still some unfortunate qualifications in the law that can sometimes complicate your task. Friends who produce dangerous pesticides, toxic chemicals, useless and harmful drugs, eternal pollutants, obesogenic foods, carcinogenic additives and sweeteners, do not tremble any longer: years of expertise have allowed us to develop a range of simple speeches and actions with proven effectiveness. In order to democratize access to these recipes usually sold for their weight in gold by communication agencies, here they are in "open source". It is then up to you to adapt them to the poison that concerns you and to have them carried by experts in the high-audience media arenas and the circles that will legislate on the maintenance of your products on the market. Advocate complexity Can you imagine a situation, an object, a concept that could not be said to be complex? Complexity has the advantage of placing a threshold distinguishing simple things from complex things. The good news is that we do not know how to measure complexity and that there is no consensus on the value of the threshold. You can therefore safely affirm that the situation you are accused of is complex, and that not recognizing it is being simplistic, even Manichean. It may not seem like much, but it is an excellent way to sow doubt in the minds of your opponents, which brings us to the second argument. Sow doubt What can we be absolutely certain of? Popularized by the Trump presidency, post-truth opens up fantastic perspectives for defending your activities. Of course, science develops knowledge. But it also claims the limits and imperfections of its knowledge, and even, hold on to your hats, that they will one day be exceeded. Argue that definitive proof demonstrating the danger of your product has not been obtained. More research is needed. Scientists are always concerned with causality and proof and you will sow doubt in their ranks. Be relativistic, evoke without reserve the equivocal, the controversial, the debated. Science becomes an opinion like any other, the epidemiological and toxicological studies proving the harmfulness of your juicy business will be only one assertion among others just as well-founded. And here comes the third argument. Underline the hidden intentionality If there are no more facts but opinions, then underline in broad strokes the political intentions of your adversaries. Do not hesitate to accuse them of being moralistic: by a wonderful reversal of values, it is an infallible way to discredit the troublemakers. They justify their attacks with science, you will emphasize that they act as activists, as liberticidal ideologues, or even as terrorists if you are in an outrageous mood. It always has its little effect. The debate will be opportunely shifted: it will no longer be a question of proof but of conviction, and it will be easy for you to saturate the media space to prevail on this ground. To do this, you will advantageously mobilize the fourth and fifth arguments. Explain the purposeOf course, the real purpose of your activity, your enrichment, will not justify much in the eyes of your detractors. You will however be skillful enough to present another purpose: to fight against world hunger (if you sell pesticides or cheap unhealthy foods), to fight against a health scourge (if you sell "light" food or food additives), to connect the peoples of the world (if you sell private jets), etc. Beyond these specific purposes, never disdain the sledgehammer argument that elected officials are always sensitive to: we must safeguard the jobs of those who produce your poisons in order to support the growth of the territory whose votes they received. And there you have it, a patriot concerned about the social issue! Plead individual responsibilityAt the same time as you invent indisputable purposes that will make you seem like a good soul, you will remind people that the problem is not the poison, but the way it is consumed. If you sell junk food, promote physical activity and vegetables, and blame consumers who have not followed your recommendations. If you sell pesticides or toxic chemicals, you will insist on the culpable failure to wear personal protective equipment. In the same vein, promote resilience: why wouldn't the victims of your poisons seize this opportunity that you are offering them to bounce back? You will be surprised at the ease with which this reversal of the causal relationship will be accepted, encouraged and even financed by the public authorities. Let this not prevent you from transforming the test by affirming at every turn your attachment to individual responsibility, you will soon be inducted as a defender of freedom. And you will have to make this commitment known, this is where the sixth point becomes essential. Resort to patronage Do not hesitate to finance research on your own poisons. Create specialized associations and ad hoc committees where you will recruit pell-mell, industrialists, government representatives and scientists who will establish priorities on the subjects to be studied, increase the number of meetings and colloquiums, and guide research programs. Rather than tedious toxicological studies, propose to explore the trail of the genetic susceptibility of exposed individuals. Publish in peer-reviewed journals, have renowned authors sign scientific articles that you have written and publish elegant booklets on your social usefulness. Raise awareness among children, support local communities, while remaining discreet for even greater effectiveness. Never be defensive, but open, sincere and ready for dialogue. Be the cunning champion of transparency. Until it is necessary to use the seventh weapon. Use intimidationMake yourself feared. Surround yourself with a swarm of lawyers who will threaten to sue anyone who prevents them from poisoning in circles with defamation complaints. Let it be clear: no lightning rod of scientific data will protect them from legal wrath. And since the balance of economic power is in your favor, use it in court to demand heavy financial penalties. Also wave a slew of trolls to saturate social networks. Have no qualms about tarnishing the scientific reputation of your opponents. Aim low, slander in all directions. Denounce the media court Let's prepare for the worst: if your activity is particularly harmful, it is possible that the first seven points are insufficient. Don't panic, however, we have a solution even for these extreme cases! Summon the presumption of innocence, denounce the media court, the pharmacies (yes yes!), let the fire die down in the slowness of the courts by promising that you will actively contribute to the investigation to put an end to unbearable insinuations. You will be able to count on the statute of limitations, the absence of proof of your intentionality or your knowledge of the toxic effects of your poisons. Even if you are convicted, appeal procedures, when they are suspensive, will allow you to gain precious years. And if the judgment turns out to be final, you will clear your name by claiming that we cannot evaluate with current criteria what has been done in the past, and will then reuse the previous arguments over and over again. Here is the toolbox that we offer you. Simple and complementary weapons that you will easily adapt to the poison that you want to continue to sell. Poison must appear for what it is, a commodity like any other with its production, distribution and marketing circuits. There is nothing dishonourable in doing business and protecting one's interests above all. In the kingdom of free trade, poison is a sure value, public health, a counterproductive utopia.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1770

Having French and European artificial intelligence (AI) models is "a technological sovereignty issue", affirmed Emmanuel Macron in mid-November 2023, on the occasion of the creation of Kyutai, an AI research laboratory launched by Xavier Niel, founder of the telecoms group Iliad (and personal shareholder of Le Monde), Rodolphe Saadé, CEO of the shipping company CMA CGM, and Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google. The goal is to help create software capable of generating text, audio and video content comparable to that of Google, Meta or OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT. This is also the mission of French start-ups such as LightOn, Hugging Face or Mistral AI. The French executive considers it important not to leave a few American giants the monopoly on a fairly general-use technology, as was the case for social networks, search engines or mobile ecosystems. France is far from being the only one to think that AI is becoming a sovereignty issue. Germany is promoting its start-up Aleph Alpha. The United Arab Emirates has launched AI71 and India Krutrim and Sarvam AI, also intended to bring out local AI models, notes The Economist. The liberal British weekly even detects an "era of AI nationalism", in which "sovereign states are embarking on a race to control their digital destiny". This desire, however, leaves some challenges emerging. That language models "are not only fed by content in English" is a "civilizational challenge", declared Mr. Macron. Cédric O, lobbyist for Mistral AI and former Secretary of State, repeats that a conversational robot will attribute, depending on its country of origin, the invention of the airplane to the Frenchman Clément Ader, the American brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright or the Brazilian Alberto Santos-Dumont. The State has promised to make French-language texts and images available from public entities such as the National Library of France or the National Audiovisual Institute. In India or Africa, the challenge of multilingualism and languages and dialects that are underrepresented online is immense. American giants, for their part, want to be at the forefront of AI translation, with models that manage dozens or hundreds of languages. Race for supercomputers In addition, governments in Paris or Brussels want to make public computing capacities available to their start-ups and encourage supercomputers such as that of Scaleway (a subsidiary of Iliad), even if their power does not reach that of cloud leaders Google, Amazon or Microsoft (OpenAI partner). Having locally developed models – and possibly modifiable, such as the open source software of Mistral AI, LightOn or Kyutai – interests some companies, keen to avoid depending on the opaque software of an American giant. Will states want to go further and impose purchasing rules on public entities, as France is trying to do in the field of services and data hosted in the cloud? Some still hope to favor European tech in public calls for tenders, with the vote on a "Buy European Act". Another challenge: financing AI start-ups. Mistral AI is controlled by its founders, but the first investors in its funding rounds are American funds. The French defense start-up Preligens boasts 100% French capital. Tomorrow, AI, seen as a sensitive technology, could be subject to export restrictions: Washington has already banned Chinese players from using the best computer chips allocated to AI and decreed in November 2023 the obligation for players in the sector to declare their most powerful models and their transactions with foreign buyers. Finally, the temptation of regulatory dumping between nations is emerging. London does not want to regulate when Paris or Berlin oppose provisions of the European AI Act regulation, which they consider too restrictive. "Regulation is not the enemy of innovation," retorted Margrethe Vestager, the European Commissioner for Competition.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1771

RESEARCH The French artificial intelligence ecosystem is enriched by a new research center. Launched by Artefact, a service company specializing in the deployment of these technologies, and with the support of companies such as Société Générale, Orange and Decathlon, this new structure, already operational, will bring together a team of 30 researchers by 2025. They will collaborate with professors from around ten institutions such as the École Polytechnique, CentraleSupélec, Sorbonne Université, the CNRS, the Université Paris-Saclay and the ESCP Business School. Unlike the Kyutai laboratory, launched last November and co-financed by Xavier Niel, Rodolphe Saadé and the former head of Google Eric Schmidt, or Fair, the fundamental research laboratory of Meta, this new initiative, with more modest financial resources, stands out above all by its desire to respond to "business" issues. "We want to build bridges between the expertise of professors from major universities, who need concrete data sets to advance their research, and the concrete needs of large international companies on certain AI issues," summarizes Vincent Luciani, CEO and co-founder of Artefact. For Société Générale, for example - and the financial world in general - an important subject in AI is both to optimize models in order to better detect fraudulent profiles, but also to improve their transparency and explainability, to be able to report them to the competent authorities. In gestation for a year and a half, this project therefore began - in addition to the first recruitments - with work to identify the "right" research subjects, responding to the needs of companies, the interests of researchers and the academic needs to explore little-known areas. "Professors see a strong interest in working on complex industrial issues, based on real data sets that they often sorely lack, and the prospects of publications as a result," explains Emmanuel Malherbe, machine learning researcher and director of this new center. The results of these collaborations will be open source, whether it is the publication of computer code, scientific articles or conferences. For companies that accept this open source principle, the financial commitment is minimal compared to the possibility of accessing the expertise of recognized researchers and moving forward with their adoption of AI. For Artefact, which does not claim any intellectual property on the results, the interest is both to be upstream on everything that comes out of the center and to hope to attract some of the best talents. In discussion with MIT This center is intended to be self-financing. In addition to the investment by Artefact and its industrial partners, the structure relies on the system of industrial agreements for training through research (Cifre) which allows a company to benefit from public funding to recruit a young doctoral student whose work will lead to the defense of a thesis. The Artefact research center has also positioned itself on a call for tenders from Bpifrance as part of France 2030, by setting up a consortium with Mistral AI (the former Minister of Digital Affairs, Cédric O, is on the supervisory board of Artefact and non-executive co-founder of Mistral AI), to adapt the large general language models developed by the very young French nugget to business verticals. Artefact hopes to extend the collaborations of this center internationally. The company is in discussions with MIT and universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and China. IV The French artificial intelligence ecosystem is enriched by a new research center. 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## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1772

The year 2023 was the year of generative artificial intelligence (AI), driven in particular by OpenAI's ChatGPT conversational agent. Under its "hood" is a large language model (or LLM) called "GPT-4", an AI trained on prodigious quantities of raw texts to find a plausible ending to the beginning of a sentence. It is this capacity that ChatGPT exploits to write, summarize or translate articles or CVs, or even produce computer code, and LLMs are the nerve center of the war that the international champions of generative AI are engaged in today. Thus, LLM announcements have followed one after the other by the American giants Meta, Google, Apple, soon followed by Amazon, or their Chinese competitor Baidu, recently joined in the race by emerging European players such as the German Aleph Alpha or the French LightOn and Mistral AI. What are the challenges of this race for innovation and what does 2024 have in store for us? On a technical level, 2023 saw the arrival of LLMs that are fast and compact enough to run on a mobile phone, and the integration of new modalities: the synthesis of realistic images is now being replaced by the analysis of images, sound and human speech by GPT-4v and Gemini, for example. However, efforts to reduce the cost of training LLMs and their energy impact must continue: the millions of hours of calculation on specialized processors (GPUs) required to train a single LLM on billions of documents cost tens of millions of euros. Emerging players such as Mistral AI and the "newcomer" Kyutai do not hide the fact that a significant portion of their spectacular fundraising is intended for calculation. Kingmaker This raises the question of the economic model of generative AI: there are currently only a handful of players (a dozen at most) capable of creating "generic" LLMs by training them on gigantic corpora. But this is what makes them successful: directly training small specialized models does not provide the same performance. How will the value be shared between these players, whether or not they are for-profit? What future for the myriad of companies called upon to develop to adapt generic LLMs to the domains and data of specific companies (we are talking about fine tuning)? The same question for the GPU manufacturer Nvidia, whose quasi-monopoly on their production, and therefore control over their access, could give it a kingmaker role. The use of pre-trained LLMs by a handful of suppliers also raises the question of their reliability, particularly for critical applications, even after fine tuning. The arrival on the market of "open models" such as LLaMA-2 or Mistral AI is a possible solution, although the classic definitions of free software do not apply directly to LLMs, since it is not only the source code that determines their behavior, but also the billions of parameters learned on often "proprietary" data. More generally, the issue of data collection and use remains a hot topic, as shown by the very recent lawsuit filed by the New York Times against OpenAI and Microsoft for copyright infringement. Finally, the AI Act that has just been adopted by the European Union will impose rules of precaution, certification and transparency in the uses of AI (and in particular generative AI). Its implementation will have to be specified in the standards currently being negotiated, so the battle is far from over. The year 2024 promises to be exciting.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1773

The Mac is 40 years old. However, January 24, 1984 did not have the same earthquake effect on the computer world as the iPhone, also unveiled by Steve Jobs, 23 years later, on January 9, 2007. But Apple had still dropped a bombshell. "We are betting on our vision and we prefer to do that rather than imitate other products on the market," said Jobs, Apple's big boss, at the time. "Let other companies do that." This statement did not fall on deaf ears. Not quite two years later, in November 1985, Microsoft, led by Bill Gates to whom Jobs had presented the Mac in the year before it was launched, launched the first version of the Windows operating system. Windows, as its name suggests, presented software on the PC screen as windows that were stacked on top of each other. It was a graphics layer added to MS-DOS, the computer system that launched Microsoft, and it relied solely on text typed on the keyboard. Windows needed a mouse to run. The computer industry owes all of this to the Mac first. The Macintosh emerged as a disruptive force with its own graphical interface and mouse. Apple made the personal computer more accessible and intuitive. In theory, at least. The first Macintosh was not particularly affordable. Its interface suffered from many limitations. Its software was sparse and buggy. Its monitor was tiny and monochrome. But it was a single, all-in-one device that could be quickly installed on a desktop. Even if it was a bit clumsily, the Mac already embodied Apple's oft-repeated maxim: "It just works." This rivalry and emulation between Apple and Microsoft fueled decades of innovation, shaping the PC market as we know it today. It benefited both. Especially the other, in fact, so much so that in 1997, as Apple was flirting with bankruptcy, Microsoft decided to invest $150 million in its Cupertino rival. This effectively ended a legal battle that could have ended badly for Bill Gates' empire. Unsung heroes The Mac, then, was a leap forward that pushed the entire industry, including Microsoft, to adopt and develop graphical interfaces and to adopt the mouse as an essential computing peripheral. In all this, History remembers the pivotal role of Steve Jobs, co-founder and then CEO of Apple. In fact, his main contribution was to insist on the use of a mouse, and, again, a mouse with only one button. The Macintosh was the work of engineers led by Jef Raskin, who developed the Mac OS software, and Steve Wozniak, aka Woz, who designed Apple's first personal computers. As for the two sides of the same coin, it is often said that Woz was the innovator while Jobs was the marketer. The Mac mouse, for its part, was the simplest version of a human-machine interface that had been puzzling computer scientists at Stanford University in California since the 1960s. Someone other than Steve Jobs—say, the real inventor of the mouse, engineer Douglas Engelbart—might have opted for a five-button mouse, one for each finger, with organ-style foot extensions. But not Jobs. He probably believed that a stripped-down device would appeal to a wider audience. History has proven him right. Even today, this stubbornness in imposing a single, simple way for customers to interact with its devices is what sets Apple apart from its rivals. It’s also what most infuriates its critics. Think Different The other key to the Mac’s success is marketing. The commercial that aired during Super Bowl XVIII and introduced the Macintosh to millions of American consumers is now a staple of any good Marketing 101 class. Directed by Sir Ridley Scott, the video, titled 1984, is based on George Orwell’s novel of the same name. It features a dystopian world where a big brother (IBM, disguised as Big Brother) dominates society. The heroine, wielding a hammer, runs towards a giant screen and smashes it, symbolizing Apple's mission to save humanity from future domination by monotonous and oppressive technology. At a time when computer advertising was monotonous and riddled with technical terms, 1984 broke the mold. The Macintosh was launched. Apple was able to ride the wave of its Mac's popularity for over a decade, but it almost did not survive the departure of Jobs in 1985. In fact, it took Steve Jobs' return to Apple in 1997 to see the Mac reborn. A year later, Apple introduced the iMac, which revitalized the brand with a different all-in-one design and, most importantly, bright colors. "It just works" became "Think different," syntax error included. New success for Jobs, who had established himself as an uncompromising and detail-oriented leader to the point of obsession, a reputation reinforced three years later with the launch of the iPod, the musical ancestor of the iPhone and the emergence of mobility. The iPhone would later convince Google to buy a small open-source mobile system called Android to create its own mobile platform. The iPod, a digital music player with a 2-inch diagonal monochrome screen and whose main quality was that it could hold the equivalent of 1,000 MP3 music files, was a huge success mainly thanks to a recipe similar to that of the first Mac: its touch-sensitive scroll wheel added an innovative interface to a type of device that already existed, but which was a little more complicated than what the general public was looking for. Back then, carrying around 1,000 songs in your pocket was a revolution. A digital revolution, it should be noted, the first of many. A series, in fact, that we don’t know how it would have happened if the Mac hadn’t been born 40 years ago. The Macintosh emerged as a disruptive force with its own graphical interface and mouse. Apple made the personal computer more accessible and intuitive. In theory, at least. The first Macintosh wasn’t particularly affordable. Its interface suffered from many limitations. Its software was sparse and buggy. Its monitor was tiny and monochrome. But it was a single, all-in-one device that could be quickly installed on a desk.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1774

London - Special Envoy - When Etienne Riot, the director of applied research and innovation at the architecture agency PCA-Stream, asked Midjourney to replace the glass façade of the Le Monde building in Paris with a brick cladding, the artificial intelligence (AI) “hallucinated”. With each new iteration, it spat out a different shape: conical, trapezoidal, twisted… Everything except the parabolic volume stretched like chewing gum that the Norwegians at Snohetta (in association with the French agency SRA) designed for the French press group. “It didn’t understand the geometry,” the engineer deduced. The exercise he proposed aimed to illustrate the capabilities and limits of machine learning models, image generators applied to architecture. Etienne Riot also asked Midjourney to place balconies on the building. "We expected him to put them on the ground or in the sky... He doesn't know how to place architectural elements, he wasn't trained for it. But we hadn't imagined that he wouldn't be able to integrate a single one into the image. If he failed, it's because he didn't identify the building as a building." "A kid who is a genius" Generative artificial intelligence produces photos, novels. It has led Hollywood actors and screenwriters to go on strike to secure their jobs. But it cannot design a building. From the two-dimensional representation to the physical object integrated into its context, compliant with the inextricable tangle of standards that govern the construction sector as much as with the rules of urban planning, respecting the well-being of users as much as the client's budget, there is a gulf that would require at least designing an ad hoc model to fill it. The investments required by such a project, at least as colossal as those that allowed the creation of ChatGPT, Midjourney or Dall-E, would be impossible to amortize on the architecture sector alone. If such a model ever ended up existing, it would still lack the sensitivity – to space, to light, to the spirit of places… – without which architecture is nothing more than a sad assembly of low-quality materials. However, architects are not the last to have thrown themselves at these image generators that have been driving the Internet crazy for a little over a year. If Midjourney does not recognize the building of Le Monde, it knows how to cross a Hindu temple with a Norman cottage, produce images of a villa "in the style of Frank Lloyd Wright", integrate the Sydney Opera House (Jorn Utzon, 1973) into a decor illustrated in pencil... However crude, approximate or fanciful they may be, these blends have the charm of the unexpected, which is no small thing in a profession whose imagination is more locked up than ever. "These monstrosities that we have fun creating can free us up in relation to the history of architecture, in relation to the ugly, in relation to our own reflexes", enthuses Umberto Napolitano, co-founder of LAN, an agency known for having developed an aesthetic based on the plot and repetition. He sees AI as a way to "get away from the legacy of the modern", "a force of proposition that reconnects with a dreamlike quality that we had somewhat forgotten, which has the particularity of not knowing the history". Playing with Midjourney, he says, "is like talking to a kid who is a genius". These AIs do nothing other than draw on databases of billions of images produced before 2021, but they are trained by American and Chinese computer scientists whose vision of the world radically biases the content produced. After several months spent on Midjourney, whose style he describes as "slightly retro", "evocative of film", Olivier Campagne, an architect specializing in the production of 3D perspectives, switched to Stable Diffusion. Its aesthetic is more contemporary, it produces less surprising images, but this tool developed and managed in open source offers more freedom to users. It allows you to train your own models, called LoRA (for Low-Rank Adaptation), by injecting your own images. Olivier Campagne has created several of them. One of these models generates images "in the style of Rory Gardiner". He made it work by indexing several hundred photos provided to him by this architectural photographer. Another feeds on the photos he took himself on the Saclay plateau, with a view to creating landscapes with a desolate atmosphere, "almost apocalyptic". Alternatives to the dominant aesthetic of the platform, these small models contribute to its cultural enrichment. "Every time I ask for a tiled roof, the tiles are gray. I imagine that the photos they come from were all taken in China. We could really do with LoRA representing French architecture! And architecture from all regions of the world..." Creative destruction These gaping flaws do not prevent artificial intelligence from infiltrating architectural agencies. In France, the PCA-Stream agency is a pioneer in this field. For the past year and a half, it has launched a series of seminars on the subject, and converted all of its businesses to technology. Midjourney and Stable Diffusion are used to create moodboards, visual supports intended to generate ideas upstream of the creation process, to exchange with clients or future users. "You want a Haussmannian building or new offices, Stable Diffusion knows roughly what it looks like. It makes suggestions, explains Etienne Riot. It gives absurd things, like stools on tables... And sometimes, ideas." ChatGPT has also become commonplace. To correct spelling mistakes in particular - the writing is still done by humans, the tool's capabilities in this area still leaving something to be desired for long texts, we are told. But it is in the technology department that the tool works wonders, where all sorts of applications are produced to help with programming, representation, etc. "With ChatGPT, I feel like I have a whole team of coders with me!" marvels Adrien Pointeau, the head of the department. Artificial intelligence is not limited to these generative models of text or images. The machine learning technology that is its foundation, and allows machines to learn from data without having been explicitly programmed to do so, finds countless applications in the architecture. It allows you to instantly accomplish tasks that would have taken several days or even weeks just a few months ago: integrating the rules of the bioclimatic local urban planning plan (PLU) into an architectural project, establishing a building's surface area table, automating the production of elements such as stairs, "without much added value" but whose production is made very complex by the number of standards and constraints they include... Creative destruction is underway. In other words, according to Etienne Riot: "What is said in the field is that we are not afraid of being replaced by AI, but by someone who masters AI!" Its field of application seems limitless. While the wind of ecological protest blowing through the grandes écoles appears to be a major issue for the new "iconic building" project on the HEC campus that he is thinking about, Philippe Chiambaretta, the founder of the PCA-Stream agency, wonders if AI could not help him think. "By integrating information from students, messages they post on social networks, for example, with data from the bioclimatic PLU, architectural references, and other data, we could perhaps arrive at specifications..." AI's synthesis capabilities are proving particularly strategic in the context of RE2020, the regulation that currently requires agencies to calculate the carbon weight of their buildings. Responsible for environmental strategy at PCA-Stream, Laélia Vaulot is waiting for the moment when she can integrate the French database of material weights into the design software used at the agency. Projects will then be designed from the outset with a view to optimizing the carbon footprint. She estimates the timeframe at a year and a half, or even two years, as this database, made up of files provided by manufacturers who do not all use the same semantics or the same units, currently lacks unity. At Zaha Hadid Architects (ZHA) in London, architects also have their eyes fixed on environmental excellence labels and the zero carbon objective (the fact that a building produces, from the moment it is put into service, as much energy as it consumes), which have become strategic for winning over markets. At the head of an agency that has capitalized, since the death of its founder in 2016, on buildings with voluptuous shapes and a catastrophic carbon footprint, Patrick Schumacher is banking on machine learning to create an aesthetic capable of creating desire in the new context of energy sobriety. "With AI, the skeleton of buildings can be broken down into a multitude of elements of different nature and thus reflect the process of optimizing materials according to their exposure to wind, sun, the weight they support, etc. "Architecture must now adapt to its environment," he asserts, excited, as if he had just found the philosopher's stone. "We're going back to the vernacular!" In theory at least. In practice, the economic argument militates in favor of standardization and ZHA continues to produce its interchangeable buildings all over the world. Their aesthetic has been so widely publicized that image generators know it by heart. "We don't need to train models, our name alone is unprompt [from "prompt engineer", writer of instructions for software]," Patrick Schumacher sneers. Fond of these images produced by generative AI, he uses them mainly in the early stages of project design, when it comes to generating ideas, but recognizes their real creative power. To generate them, the agency designs its own models within Stable Diffusion, whose open-source system guarantees data protection – unlike Midjourney, ChatGPT or Dall-E, which appropriate everything that is injected into their system. “Dissemination of knowledge” Intellectual property is also at the heart of the Foster + Partners agency’s thinking on artificial intelligence. Under the leadership of Martha Tsigkari, director of the applied research department, this multinational headquartered in London has been exploring its potential for five years now. Initially, it focused on its capabilities in solving complex analytical problems such as reverse engineering. It thus succeeded in obtaining, from a sample of several thousand laminated plates that had been deformed by temperature variations, the equation defining the deformation process. Machine learning technology is now being used to radically reorganize the work process. In this area, the first major project consisted of indexing the best practices guide, a huge tome designed by the technical design department to answer questions related to the choice of materials, the spatial organization of different building types, etc. "The document is so dense that, in fact, architects, when they have questions, address themselves directly to those who wrote it." An application will now provide them with turnkey answers. Trained exclusively with the content of the guide, it does not add a "personal touch", as generative AIs do, it does not hallucinate its answers, does not induce any bias, etc. Any errors are called upon to be corrected by the members of the technical design team, or even by any architect in the agency, as part of a verification procedure developed to obtain, assures Martha Tsigkari, total reliability. “The ability of large language models [these algorithms that exploit huge volumes of data to understand human language] and foundation models [which integrate images, text, sound] to provide answers in real time promotes the dissemination of knowledge. In an agency like ours, which has existed for fifty-five years, where nearly 2,000 people work, this allows the hundreds of thousands of documents that make up our archives to be accessible to all.” A tool similar to this best practices guide is being developed to index the agency’s drawings. Another, in the pipeline, will feed on the materials database. In five years, the agency has developed all sorts of machine learning applications, for objectives as diverse as optimizing ground connectivity or the real-time interaction of several architects on 3D models stuffed with data. Today, Martha Tsigkari is thinking about mapping the agency’s creative process. "There is no question of encroaching on the creativity of architects," she warns, "it is what we have most precious! The challenge is to allow them to go faster, and to work better together." But what will a creator produce whose mind has been washed out by large language models, drained by billions of data? What remains of architecture when the relationship to time is guided only by profit maximization?

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1775

In the realm of start-ups, the story of Mistral AI has all the makings of a fairy tale. In June, the young French artificial intelligence (AI) company made waves by raising €105 million, just a few weeks after its creation, when it still had neither products nor revenues. And, on Monday, December 11, it impressed with a new round of funding, of €385 million, and a valuation of €2 billion, already propelling it into the coveted universe of unicorns, estimated at more than €1 billion. The young 31-year-old CEO, Arthur Mensch, has big ambitions: "We are pursuing a clear trajectory: to create a European champion with a global vocation in generative artificial intelligence, based on an open, responsible and decentralized approach to technology." In short, Mistral AI wants to launch language processing models capable of competing with those of American giants such as OpenAI, the creator of the conversational robot ChatGPT, Google or Meta. Moreover, American investment funds – Andreessen Horowitz and LightSpeed Ventures – are leading the new fundraising. They are accompanied by Salesforce, BNP Paribas and CMA CGM, plus shareholders from the first round, such as Bpifrance, the La Famiglia fund and Eric Schmidt (former CEO of Google). The appeal of Mistral AI is linked to the prestigious profile of its team: the three co-founders combine French academic excellence in mathematics and computer science with the experience of leading American AI giants: Arthur Mensch studied at the École Polytechnique and the École Normale Supérieure before working for Google DeepMind. The technical director, Thimotée Lacroix, spent eight years at the École Normale Supérieure and then Meta. There, he worked on LLaMA, the language processing model of the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, with Mistral AI's scientific director, Guillaume Lample, who also graduated from Polytechnique. "Lobbying" The young AI champion enjoys strong political support. "Mistral demonstrates that France has all the assets to master artificial intelligence," tweeted the Minister Delegate for Digital Affairs, Jean-Noël Barrot. "Bravo to Mistral, that's French genius," praised Emmanuel Macron on Monday during a trip. The President of the Republic had already shared a stage with Arthur Mensch in June at the VivaTech trade show. Mr. Macron had called for "French champions" of AI and said he "shared Mistral's concerns" about the draft European regulation, which he said could "hinder innovation." In the negotiation of this AI Act, France was also accused of being an activist against certain measures in order to align itself with the positions of its national start-up - "Mistral AI is lobbying, that's normal. But we are not fooled by anything," noted European Commissioner Therry Breton in La Tribune – and his public affairs advisor, Cédric O. The former Secretary of State for Digital Affairs is one of the three "non-operational" co-founders of Mistral AI and owns shares (of which he, like the five other founders, sold a small part as part of the arrival of new investors). On the product side, Mistral AI targets businesses and developers. It has started to stand out, with small models considered efficient for their size and usable in open source, that is to say modifiable. Its first, Mistral 7B (for 7 billion parameters), has been downloaded more than 1 million times. Announced on Monday, Mixtral 8x7B uses the cutting-edge technique "sparse mixture of experts", which consists of assembling 8 "expert" AI models of 7 billion parameters each, or potentially 56 billion, but using only two models, deemed the most suitable, for each word, which allows it to go faster. Mistral would thus be more efficient than Llama 70B or GPT-3.5, the penultimate model from OpenAI. However, every fairy tale has its challenges. With 22 employees and 500 million euros of capital, will Mistral AI be able to compete with OpenAI, 770 employees and already 11 billion dollars (10.2 billion euros) invested by Microsoft? Even Anthropic, less well-known, has raised 6 billion dollars from Amazon and Google. Young shoots need these giants for their computing capacities, which are enormous in AI. And very expensive: more than 100 million dollars to train GPT-4 according to OpenAI, which remains loss-making. The founders of Mistral believe they can remain independent – they own the majority of the capital – by spending little. And by aiming more for efficiency than the race for size. Training a model would cost them 1 million to 10 million euros, and Mistral would be six times less expensive in terms of calculation for customers, who are also worried about expenses. The other challenge is the economic model. Mistral 7B and Mixtral8X7B can be downloaded for free. Companies pay – per hour of calculation – only if they use the Mistral platform to deploy or “specialize” (retrain on their data) the models. In addition, Mistral also sells its models through APIs, an interface that allows customers, for a few cents per request, to integrate them into a service, such as a conversational robot. The best model, Mistral-medium, is only available through this marketing method. Will the revenues be sufficient? Mistral has just recruited a sales director. Its assets will be the open approach and the growing desire for technological and cultural sovereignty with models from Europe. But the start-up will face tough competition: the cloud giants distribute all types of models, including those from Mistral. Meta or the French Hugging Face also do open source, and the French LightOn or the German Aleph Alpha also claim the European card.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1776

INNOVATION"We feel very good in Paris, why go to the United States?" When Le Figaro asked him if he and his two other co-founders could have chosen California to set up the headquarters of Mistral AI, Arthur Mensch frowned and sharply threw the ball back into his interlocutor's court. At the head of this generative artificial intelligence start-up created in early 2023 and which has just raised 385 million euros, the young thirty-something assumes his European roots. He proudly claims it for himself and his colleagues, Guillaume Lample and Timothée Lacroix, who now carry - with the twenty or so employees of Mistral - part of the hopes of a sovereign AI in Europe. In this sector, which has exploded since the arrival of ChatGPT and OpenAI's large language models (LLM), which can generate texts, images, sounds and videos as humans would, Mistral AI is now one of the most prominent nuggets worldwide. Arthur Mensch is convinced: his company can become a "European champion" capable of competing with the LLMs of its American rivals, whether Google (Gemini), OpenAI (ChatGPT) or Anthropic (Claude). Its first model, Mistral 7B, launched in September, has already been downloaded a million times, proof, according to him, of its qualities. "In some companies, we have even managed to dislodge ChatGPT. We have clearly appeared on the radar of the Americans," says Arthur Mensch. The start-up, for the time being still hosted in the premises of another company, in the 10th arrondissement of Paris, is giving itself the means to do so. In May, it had already raised 105 million euros. Its valuation is now approaching 2 billion euros. Unprecedented for a company created just over seven months ago. Unexpected for a Europe that discovered during the launch of ChatGPT, on November 30, 2022, the lead taken by the United States in this field. A year later, far from being left behind as during previous technological accelerations, Europe seems to have caught the wave. "We were not the first to leave, but we have caught up well," insists Arthur Mensch. The Old Continent has nearly 150 start-ups (including the United Kingdom) working on the subject of generative AI, according to the media Sifted. Among them, a dozen or so have raised funds in excess of 100 million euros in 2023. The sector has a few emerging champions such as the German Aleph Alpha, which raised $500 million in early November. The start-up is also deploying a competing language model such as GPT 3.5. Other start-ups such as the German online translation specialist DeepL, Poolside AI, specializing in AI dedicated to computer code and based in Paris, are also among the promising young shoots. Dynamic ecosystem A dynamic ecosystem, which can be explained among other things by a highly qualified and relatively cheap workforce. France, for example, "has excellent training in mathematics and computer science, which are the two prerequisites for AI", insists Arthur Mensch. In its latest report on European tech, the Atomico fund counts 120,000 highly qualified AI professionals of European origin in 2023. This is ten times more than a year ago, with Europe even having the luxury of overtaking the United States. This figure should of course be put into perspective because many of them historically worked for sector giants such as Google or Meta. But some are now returning to the fold. Of Mistral's 22 employees, many come from their ranks. Almost a month ago, French billionaire Xavier Niel launched an independent AI research laboratory in Paris, alongside Rodolphe Saadé (boss of CMA-CGM) and Eric Schmidt (former boss of Google), called Kyutai. With a budget of 300 million euros for its start-up, it also has half a dozen big names poached from Meta, Google and Apple in its workforce. Also good news, start-ups in the sector can count on the movement of large European groups. Aware of the potential of generative AI, many of them are investing in the capital of start-ups. French shipping company CMA CGM participated in the fundraising of Mistral AI. Bosch, the parent company of Lidl, and German software giant SAP have financed Aleph Alpha. These investors of today will be the customers of tomorrow. An absolute necessity. European start-ups already welcome American investors to their capital, they cannot afford to have only American clients, otherwise they will inevitably have to shift their center of gravity. However, a real challenge awaits Europe before it becomes a dynamic market for generative AI solutions, because not all companies are moving at the same pace. "Our discussions, including with large companies, show that we are not there yet. Their departments responsible for digital transformation are too slow," confides an employee of an American AI company in Paris. Arthur Mensch, for his part, assures us that the American companies he talks to are no more mature than their European counterparts. The open source model The thirty-year-old also thinks that Europe and Mistral AI have a card to play via the development of AI in open models. Google and OpenAI charge for the use of their models, the parameters of which are set in stone in advance. Mistral AI, for its part, gives developers the possibility to download its training models for free, allowing the community to use them to create its own applications. It is an "approach to the distribution of technology that makes our interlocutors sovereign. And it is the way to have the best models", claims Arthur Mensch. Arriving after the proprietary models of OpenAI or Google, open language models are gaining credibility. They can be as efficient as their counterparts for less consumption. In other words, Europe has some weapons to participate in the battle. "Where we will have the most difficulty, our Achilles heel, is managing to build world leaders", predicts Jean-Baptiste Bouzige, CEO and co-founder of Ekimetrics, a French company specializing in the use of data and AI for large groups. Funding, in particular, is still lacking. In mid-November, the boss of Aleph Alpha judged that his company was "in existential danger", given the amounts invested in its rival OpenAI, which received more than 10 billion from Microsoft. At the end of September, 26.3 billion had been invested in AI in the United States, according to the Atomico fund, compared to 5.8 billion in Europe. The cause is a financing ecosystem that is still too timid in Europe on the big tickets. As an illustration, the largest provider of funds to Mistral is none other than the American fund Andreessen Horowitz, which is said to have put up to 200 million euros on the table. Fortunately, the founders still retain control of the capital. The other difficulty is the strong American influence upstream of the AI value chain. AWS, Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud are today ultra-dominant in the cloud industry, which makes it possible to distribute language models in companies, including those of Mistral AI. Which makes them essential. Equally essential is the giant Nvidia and its graphics chips that provide the computing power for AI uses. While it has identified its delay in these two areas, Europe will take time to catch up. Finally, it will be necessary to analyze how the AI Act, the European regulation, will have repercussions on the industry. This text voted on Saturday after intense negotiations raises some concerns. While the Commissioner for the Internal Market, Thierry Breton, describes it as "resolutely pro-business", the French President, Emmanuel Macron, already expressed reservations on Monday. Question of capital "

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1777

What did the first spectators of Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station, screened in 1896, feel? Posterity has recorded that many of them, terrified, fled, convinced that they would be crushed by the locomotive that was bearing down on them if they stayed in place. Could this shock, which can soften our hearts as humans of the digital age, be of the same order as the effect of shock mixed with fear that videos generated by AI sometimes arouse? This is what Bruno Ribeiro suggests with his XXL performance called Cellulo /d, soon to be presented at the Festival of Lights in Lyon, on the facades of the Place des Terreaux. In it, the artist confronts the cinematographic works of the Lumière brothers with the "hallucinatory" visions resulting from algorithms. "I believe that artificial intelligence will change popular culture, like cinema in its time." After the static image (Midjourney, Dall-E), the production of videos via AI is also becoming more widespread, boosted by the arrival of open source (until when?) and commercial programs, which make it accessible to all non-coders with a bit of patience, including artists. "I didn't think I'd see it so quickly," admits Bruno Ribeiro. In just a few months, since his first research related to Cellulo /d, new software and updates have been released, which allow the creation of animated images based on simple "prompts" (short texts describing the desired scene, serving as a written command to the AI), by drawing on nebulous databases. "It's the jungle," says a player in the sector. "The possibility, for everyone, of generating videos from written instructions is still in its infancy, but it is developing at high speed," confirms Eric Prigent, educational coordinator at Fresnoy, a contemporary arts studio in Tourcoing. At Vidéoformes, an international festival of hybrid and digital arts, the trend is confirmed: in 2023, a third of the 800 videos received by the jury used generative AI, while the phenomenon remained negligible in previous years. "BALBUTIEMENTS ET ROUAGES" In his studio at the Ménagerie de Verre in Paris, Bruno Ribeiro shares excerpts from Cellulo /d, ahead of the screening in Lyon. The black-and-white scenes from silent cinema mutate throughout the film, sometimes evoking a western universe, a contemporary city or a space colony. The silhouettes and faces generated by AI waver in constant instability ("you'd think a Golem was trying to imitate a human," he smiles), and there are many failures to achieve realism. Above all, there is this sensation of a "cliché" image, created using hackneyed keywords (canyons and blue jeans to represent the Wild West, cosmonauts to indicate space, cold colors to depict a futuristic environment). So many weaknesses that the artist does not shy away from: it is precisely these limits, these errors that interest him, because they reveal how AI works and give food for thought. "What I stage are the beginnings and workings of video-generating AI. I like to show the backstage and the derailments. I often prefer making-ofs to films!" Here, in fact, as a movie set, it is the prompts that he chooses to expose to the public's eyes, clearly visible, alongside the images. A way of opening the hood of artificial intelligences that look like black boxes. Type a series of keywords (example: "cosmonauts waiting on a platform, futuristic city at night, a spaceship passes. Buildings in the background, dust particles, debris, 8K, cinematic lighting, night, HDR, bright depth-of-field lights") into a generative AI program such as Stable Diffusion or Warp Fusion, and presto, a video appears. It's hard to remain unmoved by the speed and ease of the maneuver. Enough to fuel the fantasy of AI replacing the artist, and of machine autonomy? This vision annoys Gregory Chatonsky, pioneer of "Net-art": "The fact that the images appear, that they move, generates something of the order of delirium, of the fantasy of a telepathic machine." Plunging a few lines of prompt into an AI is not enough to become an artist, despite the sales strategies of Gafam ("superpowers on demand!"). "If the subject and the aesthetics are not interesting, unique, rigorous, we quickly fall into the anecdotal," says the director of Vidéoformes, Gabriel Soucheyre. A SPACE FOR RESEARCH AND ATTEMPTS This is the interest of an artistic approach to go beyond the initial fascination to critically approach the possibilities of generative AI, to stretch them, unleash them and divert them at will. In short, to make artificial intelligence more than a tool, a space for research and attempts. And even, argues Grégory Chatonsky, "a way of approaching the world and navigating in human culture, whose quantity of data after thirty years of accumulation on the Web has become inaccessible." Data: the sinews of war! It is there, in the millions of visuals gleaned from the Web that feed machine learning models, that lies the novelty of these generative AI programs (rather than the question of the prompt, the equivalent of which already existed in computer code). Some artists find their account there, and play on the uncertainty that it provokes. "Most of the time, a prompt does not give anything interesting. But by modifying a single value, we can obtain something very different. I love this element of randomness, which requires letting go", explains Bruno Ribeiro. Others prefer to free themselves from it, and create their own database, in the manner of the first netartists. This is the case of Justine Emard, who sees in AI a machine capable of going beyond "the tangible reality of the human being". A revealer of the invisible. For her Hyperphantasia project, which aims to connect the contemporary to the first images of humanity ("connect the pixel to the coal particle", she says more nicely), she created new images that seem to come from prehistory, by training "her" synthetic neural network from a background of thousands of visuals from the Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc Cave Conservatory. The argument is at once ethical, ecological and aesthetic: it is about refusing to use the work of unpaid authors, just like the performances of distant server companies - the artist opted for a Parisian data center. But also to avoid the biases of the images provided by generative artificial intelligence programs, based on opaque databases, often American. GAFAM'S TURBINE In the end, many creators and players in the sector agree on this point: in the absence of real work and strong choices, the results of Stable Diffusion and other programs are ultra-stereotypical. "Frighteningly homogeneous," one tells us, while another sees a "lack of surprise," a feeling of "déjà vu, like at McDonald's." Thus, the future is only represented by science fiction or fantasy imagery, women only exist through Western canons of beauty, the figure of the doctor is always a man. One certainty, for Justine Emard: the absence of renewal of imaginations. Who feeds the AI? Real question, abounds Ethel Lilienfeld, another artist who is a troublemaker for the Gafam. "We must be aware that these images reinforce existing clichés, that these AIs are not neutral." In her short film EMI, which depicts the rise and fall of a virtual influencer, with neon hair and white skin, she called on Dall-E to enrich her ideas for setting and colours. When the curtain falls at the end of the film, the virtual mask is torn, and the flesh-and-blood double of the nymph appears. Scoop: behind the AIs, there are still humans. ? "By changing a single value of a "prompt", you can get something very different. I love this element of randomness, which requires letting go." Bruno Ribeiro artist

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1778

There are signs of a thaw, but the warming remains limited: on the eve of a crucial meeting on the draft European regulation on artificial intelligence (AI Act), Wednesday, December 6, the Minister Delegate for Digital Affairs Jean-Noël Barrot said he was open to "integrating" foundation models, these large language or image processing software used by companies to create services such as ChatGPT or Midjourney. On Friday, France and the Twenty-Seven gave a mandate to the Spanish presidency of the Council of Member States to negotiate with Parliament on Wednesday on their regulation. The latter has become a sticking point, with France being accused of opposing it to protect its national start-ups such as Mistral. "First, Europe is the first democracy to equip itself with a legislative framework for artificial intelligence," says Mr. Barrot. From now on, AI systems that present high risks will have to obtain CE marking, like toys or elevators, with the highest audit and transparency obligations in the world. "Autonomous driving systems, medical diagnostics, CV sorting or credit allocation will be covered, but not "risk-free cases, such as entertainment or video games," he notes. On the sensitive issue of foundation models, for general use, their manufacturers should first, according to Mr. Barrot, "collaborate actively and loyally with client companies that will deploy their models in high-risk services and who, in order to obtain CE marking, will need information." Then, these manufacturers should "publish basic information on the operation of their models and the typology of data used for their training." Finally, they should "adhere to a code of good conduct that will allow their practices to be harmonised." Very tense context Furthermore, the minister envisages that models published in open access, such as those of Mistral, Meta or Hugging Face, could "be exempted from certain obligations, because open source offers guarantees of transparency and promotes fair competition." The context is very tense. France, supported by Germany and Italy, opposed the stricter obligations proposed in June by Parliament, which provided for regular assessments and measures to mitigate risks to fundamental rights (fight against errors, illegal content, discriminatory bias, etc.). France also rejected the compromise reserving these obligations for the most powerful models. The firmness of Paris and Berlin has drawn criticism: "Giving up on an ambitious framework would weaken Europe's historic position," judged forty-nine artificial intelligence specialists, including Yoshua Bengio and Raja Chatila, in an op-ed in Le Monde. We must not "place the entire regulatory burden and its cost on companies that use foundation models," warned the digital SME association SME Alliance on Linkedin. The idea of codes of conduct is often associated with self-regulation and considered too flexible. "The AI Act will remain the most restrictive regulation in the world," replied Mr. Barrot. France has also been accused of following its start-up Mistral and its public affairs advisor Cédric O, former Secretary of State for Digital Affairs, too closely. "Mistral AI is lobbying, that's normal. But we're not fooled by anything. It is defending its business today, not the general interest," pointed out European Commissioner Thierry Breton in La Tribune at the end of November. "We are guided by the general interest and we exchange with all stakeholders, associations, rights defenders or companies," defends Mr. Barrot. Finally, at the Future of Life Institute, the NGO that initiated the March call for a "pause" in AI research, France is criticized for "playing into the hands" of giants like OpenAI or Google, which supported Paris' position. Despite this, Mr. Barrot has made the creation of "European champions" of AI, desired by Emmanuel Macron in June, an "absolute priority." "Those who design the systems have more influence than those who regulate," the minister believes. The best protection is to have European models." To appease, Mr. Barrot puts forward the more distant idea of "changing European laws" on "issues that are not intended to be addressed in the AI Act." For example: continuing the fight against "monopolies in access to computing capacity," dominated by American giants. Or copyright. A European text gives rights holders the possibility of refusing the use of their content to train AI models. But eighty organizations from the creative industries have accused Paris of capitulating by not demanding that the AI Act force models to list the protected content used. "We must find the right balance between the protection of rights holders and Europe's ability to develop its models," replies Mr. Barrot. Will the Member States and Parliament find a political agreement on Wednesday? Some believe the regulation is under threat, because time is running out before the European elections in June. "The AI Act is not in danger. We are getting closer to an agreement. This Wednesday's meeting will allow us to bring the points of view a little closer together, but whatever happens, other meetings will have to be held to further refine the rules," replied Mr. Barrot.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1779

Google inaugurated its largest cybersecurity research and development center in Malaga, Spain, this week. Kent Walker, the American giant's president of public affairs and general counsel, discusses the hot regulatory news. LE FIGARO. - How can this new center help strengthen cybersecurity in Europe? Kent WALKER. - This center will bring together around a hundred experts from Google and other companies or European institutions to share information on cyberthreats and develop open-source tools based on artificial intelligence and other technologies to better combat increasingly sophisticated threats. This center will also be a place to train cyber skills, because the number of cybersecurity experts in the world is very insufficient. Many companies are unable to find talent, while there are tens of thousands of vacant jobs. We are also investing $10 million in European universities to help them create cybersecurity training courses and attract students. Cyberattacks are increasing despite increased investment by companies to protect themselves. What needs to be improved? The more digital the world becomes, the more attractive it becomes as a target for criminals, but also for nation states that try to spread disinformation, interfere with elections, etc. But these organizations are becoming more sophisticated and are arming themselves with new technological tools. But by working more together, we can exchange information and strengthen our defenses. ChatGPT is celebrating its first anniversary. What struck you most about this particular year? The attention paid to AI has been surprising, but also welcome. For about ten years, visitors to Google have been using AI without realizing it in Gmail, Google Maps or Google Translate. The quality of these AIs has continued to improve. But the arrival of chatbots has attracted public attention because we find ourselves talking to another entity. However, chatbots are only a small piece of the puzzle. The most important thing is that artificial intelligence will enable dazzling advances in science, medicine, nuclear power and agriculture. The whole world wants to regulate AI. Isn't there a risk of fragmentation? AI is too important not to be well regulated, and there is a delicate balance to be found so that it does not harm innovation. We work with governments to be transparent around this technology, which is complex to say the least, and to build trust. But yes, we have rarely seen so much regulatory activity. However, this regulation must not be a race. And we believe at Google that there is a need for common standards and convergence of views. If we end up with as many AI regulations as there are countries, it will slow down this industry. Everyone agrees that we must prevent the explosion of disinformation, that we must fight against discriminatory biases and that we must have some form of control over this technology. We hope that the G7 and the UN will encourage this convergence of views, and that the European regulation on AI and the American presidential decrees will have common aspects in order to facilitate compliance for companies, large and small. We could also imagine that the certification of an AI would be valid in many countries, so as not to have to demonstrate the same thing hundreds of times. The negotiations around AI Act are stumbling on the need to regulate or not large AI models. What is Google's position? The common position adopted by France, Germany and Italy (which advocate the creation of a code of good conduct for the designers of these models, Editor's note) is thoughtful and sensible. It is not necessarily necessary to regulate a tool: it is the purpose that must be controlled. For example, car particulate emissions are measured and regulated, but no one dictates how much aluminum should be used in their manufacture. The original intent of the AI Act, which is focused on the risks of services built around this technology, and is proportionate, is sound. We also believe that there is a need at the national level for a center of technical expertise. In the United States, this would be the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which would work alongside sector regulators in banking, health care, transportation, etc. The truth is that each regulator is going to have to regulate AI in its own sector. The idea of a single regulator being able to regulate everything seems more difficult to implement. Are there other points in this text that concern you? As you can imagine, we are in discussions with the European authorities on certain points. In our opinion, to effectively regulate a technology that is evolving so quickly, we need to take a flexible and agile approach. We are talking about putting in place rules that will still have to be relevant in ten years, while we see incredible progress every six months. AI is a unique opportunity for Europe to take technological leadership and greatly boost productivity. 150 large European companies wrote to the Brussels authorities to say “regulate us in a way that allows us to continue to innovate”. We had never seen this in the debates of previous tech regulatory texts, and we believe it is a recognition by the European business world of the power of AI. Google defines itself as bold and responsible. How do you decide whether or not to market an AI-based service? It is a balance that we work on daily. In 2018, we were the first large company to publish principles for the governance and responsible use of AI. There have been cases where we have not brought technologies to market. Facial recognition, for example, while we certainly had some of the best tools in the world. But we weren’t convinced that the policies and laws were set up in a way that would allow for the appropriate use of certain things. We had a paper on lip-reading, which is very useful for people who have hearing or speech problems. But we were concerned that an authoritarian government could use it to monitor people remotely. So we rewrote the project so that it would be useful when you’re very close to a person, but not usable from a mile away. I lead a team called the AI Review Board that’s looking at exactly these kinds of questions. As governments get more involved, we’ll be more transparent about these trade-offs and share our approach. Google has just three months left to comply with the Digital Market Act in Europe. Will you be ready? We’re doing everything we can to make it happen! We have hundreds, maybe thousands of engineers working on implementing this across our eight DMA-targeted products (Search, Maps, Shopping, Store, Google Play, Android, YouTube, and Ad Tech). We’re in regular contact with the European Commission to update them on our progress and any issues we’re encountering. This is a new law, and we need to make sure we’re interpreting it correctly. What are the challenges you’re encountering? For example, knowing what types of consent are actually required. The DMA requires our users to agree to the exchange of information between Google services, for example, between your calendar and Google Maps. But we don’t want our users to be faced with a hundred consent requests that would make it harder to use our services. So we’ve been trying to find a good balance, and it requires a significant change in our technical architecture. It’s a lot of work.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1780

November 30, 2022 OpenAI releases ChatGPT. February 2023 Microsoft launches its Bing Chat chatbot. March OpenAI lets developers build apps on top of ChatGPT. Google releases its Google Bard replica. Microsoft unveils Copilot personal assistant, integrated into its Microsoft 365 office suite. May Google injects generative AI into its Workplace office suite. JULY Meta opensources the Llama 2 language model. August OpenAI releases a more secure version of ChatGPT for enterprises.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1781

TECHNOLOGY The most enthusiastic compare the current revolution to that of the arrival of the internet or the steam engine. Since ChatGPT burst onto the world stage just a year ago, the notion of generative artificial intelligence has been on everyone's lips. Enough to make us forget the relative discretion with which OpenAI put its conversational robot online on November 30, 2022. The general public then discovered the impressive capabilities of these new technological tools based on large language models (LLM) to create on demand, through simple sentences (prompts) texts, images, videos or music as human beings would do. Or even better in some cases. The craze is dazzling: 1 million users in five days, 100 million in two months, an adoption speed unmatched in technological history. Students, developers, creators, company employees use it to save time and be more efficient in their daily lives. Artificial intelligence technologies had already infiltrated companies for several years, without it being noticed. Generative AI is opening the era of their universalization. "We have suddenly gone from an AI reserved for experts in data science and development to a tool that all professions can use to improve their daily lives," summarizes Nicolas Levillain, Managing Director at BCG. Exceptional results This success is first and foremost shaking up the sector of AI professionals. The "Big Tech" are starting a race to catch up with the "hare" OpenAI and its partner Microsoft. On all continents, technology giants are reorganizing their offers around generative AI, accelerating the development of their major foundation models and injecting these new technologies into all their products. Competition is intensifying for what companies now perceive as the largest platform of opportunities since the arrival of the iPhone in 2007. To avoid a duopoly of closed systems such as iOS and Android on smartphones, Meta is opening the game by offering large language models in "open source". In other sectors, the emergence of ChatGPT also triggers a scramble. The subject very quickly rises to the level of the general management of companies. Aware of the added value and potential productivity gains that are opening up, they nevertheless seek to quantify them. "In one year, there has been a real paradigm shift in companies. They have gone from "what is the real interest for me" to "how do we get there?" observes Hanan Ouazan, partner at Artefact. "We had been working on LLMs for years, but we were preaching in the desert. "ChatGPT changed everything," recalls Laurent Daudet, CEO and co-founder of Light On. For most companies, 2023 was dedicated to mapping use cases and testing tools with businesses. "Safe" use cases, for which these very young technologies are quite mature and well-suited, are multiplying rapidly. Conversational agents facilitating an employee's or client's access to information, document synthesis and analysis, computer code development, writing calls for tenders, product sheets or financial reports, product design, etc. Several businesses already use these tools on a daily basis, such as marketing agencies, to generate variations of personalized advertising banners, for example. Several large groups have launched by offering their employees secure generative AI, such as Axa, PwC, or Moderna, which developed a personalized version of ChatGPT based on a license from OpenAI. "MChat has changed the way we work on a daily basis. It has allowed us to offload certain tasks, to save quality time in our exchanges with teams but also with regulatory authorities, explains Stéphane Bancel, the CEO of the biotech company. I myself have a version of the software on my phone that is useful to me when I prepare presentations and speeches." At Axa, which developed an internal solution based on the group's data, "Secure GPT does not make decisions, but already allows 32,000 Axa employees to save time and focus on tasks with higher added value," explains Marcin Detyniecki, AI manager at the French insurer. Data protection Generative artificial intelligence is also often used to improve the efficiency of chatbots, as at Carrefour, CDiscount, Bricorama or at Ohm Énergie, a producer of renewable electricity. In call centers, new tools can analyze all exchanges, but also detect emotions through voice. The key is productivity gains that can vary from 5% to 20%, and a proven increase in customer satisfaction. "Generative AI, when put in the right place, produces exceptional results," insists Stéphane Roder, founding CEO of AI Builders. "We need to break down two major categories of use of generative AI," adds Kheira Boulhila, VP Senior Technologies at Salesforce. "Everyday AI," which we will use mainly to save time and increase efficiency in teams. We address repetitive tasks, we help with execution. The second category is "Game changing AI," technology serving new economic models." In this second field, where the greatest opportunities for generative AI lie, the path to take is much less obvious. Most companies are in the experimental phase, but few have yet moved into production. Even if things have accelerated in recent months, especially on the other side of the Atlantic. Sometimes overwhelmed by their own employees, who seized ChatGPT as soon as it was released, companies are gradually discovering the associated risks, far from all of which are under control. Starting with security. After Samsung's mishap, where confidential data entered by engineers was spat out by ChatGPT to other users, many companies have banned its use internally. "For the moment, we only feed our generative AI with public data (tax texts, case law, banking regulations, etc.), we consider that our questions, our prompts, our analyses are a form of intellectual property... We certainly did not want to put them on ChatGPT and enrich our competitors," explains Philippe Trouchaud, partner at PwC France and Maghreb. For sensitive sectors (banking, defense, health, etc.), it is out of the question for certain data to leave the servers or run on clouds that are potentially exposed to extraterritorial laws. A question of costs In addition to the problems of "hallucinations" specific to generative AI models - which push them to give answers even if they are false -, to the risks in terms of cybersecurity, to the technical complexities, there are also multiple legal questions. What is the risk of relying on a large language model when we do not know what data was used to train it? In the United States, almost all major AI suppliers now undertake to pay legal costs if customers are sued for intellectual property infringement after using their tools... Not necessarily reassuring and above all, it will not resolve the problems of jurisprudence, experts believe. "The worst thing for a company is to develop a service or a product without knowing if it could be sued one day," believes Françoise Soulié-Fogelman, scientific advisor at Hub France IA. "The question of cost is also a subject for companies," agrees Laurent Daudet, from Light On. Behind their apparent "magic", these technologies are expensive to use, which companies are discovering and must learn to master, in order to properly assess their return on investment. "These technologies evolve extremely quickly over the months, it is not easy for companies to find their way around," admits Hanan Ouazan. "Companies are in the process of choosing between OpenAI-type systems, internal development which requires having the skills, or intermediate solutions," adds Laurent Daudet. Companies are moving towards using models that are better adapted to their needs, more specialized, smaller and more efficient in environmental terms. In 2024, projects in production will accelerate. Because one certainty has become clear at the end of this first year. "Generative AI is an imperative for companies. "This will completely change the way we work," summarizes Nicolas de Bellefonds, associate director at BCG. With all the associated training issues. Many studies have been trying in vain for a year to quantify how many jobs will be eliminated because of generative AI. "I believe above all that employees risk being replaced by other employees who know how to use AI. Training is absolutely necessary to get the best of both worlds," concludes Jean-Paul Mazoyer, deputy general manager of Crédit Agricole.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1782

In 1985, Apple ousted Steve Jobs, who would return twelve years later at the company's request. In 2023, OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT, ousted Sam Altman, his co-boss, who was recalled five days later. History does not repeat itself in practice. But the cultural terroir has remained the same. Indeed, in Silicon Valley, digital entrepreneurs and technologists are convinced that they have the power to change the world to make it better in their own way. In its 2004 letter to shareholders, Google already said: "Google is not a conventional company. We have no intention of becoming one." This pragmatic techno-utopianism is accompanied by exotic cultural movements, such as libertarianism, and relies on marginal personalities favored by the region's star system, it is supported by venture capitalists. These techno-missionaries are often atypical, bold, dissident and rich in their successes. In the charter of OpenAI, we can read: “OpenAI’s mission is to ensure that artificial general intelligence [AGI] – that is, highly autonomous systems that outperform humans at the most economically profitable tasks – benefits all of humanity. We will seek to build safe and beneficial AGI directly, but we will also consider our mission accomplished if our work helps others achieve this outcome.” In practice, things have changed. The creation of OpenAI in 2015 by Silicon Valley celebrities such as Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, Reid Hoffman and Amazon brought together the two typical trends: selfless altruistic research in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) for the good and protection of humanity, and the creation of a structure capable of attracting the best talent and significant financial resources. OpenAI is a non-profit company, which is interesting from a tax perspective. Look elsewhere But, feeling the pressure of competition coming with the arrival of new players and wanting to stay in the AI race, OpenAI launched a subsidiary in 2019 under a “capped profit” model, which could raise funds, attract top talent and inevitably develop commercial products. But still being led by an idealistic board of directors. It has become a two-headed hydra torn between its two philosophies: ensuring the good of the world with AI in complete safety and moving very quickly in the face of the threat of commercial players. But, as Facebook said (“move quickly by breaking things”), OpenAI has progressed very quickly and, in its path, has shaken up its statutes. This is what caused the chaos and the departure and return of Sam Altman, whose real consequences on the AI market are yet to come. One of the now-resigned board members reportedly said that shutting down OpenAI outright would have been in line with its mission. But the company’s board had no investor representatives to challenge its dogmatic stance. In fact, OpenAI was more about not letting Google concentrate all the AI knowledge. As Elon Musk put it: “OpenAI was created as an open-source [software] nonprofit company to counter Google, but it’s now a closed-source [proprietary software] maximum-profit company controlled by Microsoft. That was not my intention at all.” But after leaving OpenAI, he immediately started xAI, his own for-profit AI company. ChatGPT has ended up becoming a real economic powerhouse, with a valuation of nearly $90 billion [€82 billion] thanks to a very strong relationship with Microsoft, which owns 49% of it after investing $13 billion in it, something the board of directors allowed to happen. In order to cover their immense computing costs to advance AI, companies like OpenAI or Anthropic raise billions of dollars, which creates tensions, because the power is in the hands of members of a board of directors who seek to ensure that the projects are beneficial to humanity as a priority. At OpenAI, the board composed of worried people, called "extinctionists", wanted to slow down developments. These are the advocates of effective altruism, the “decelerationists,” who fear the uncontrolled evolution of AI and its lack of alignment with ethics. For his part, Mr. Altman is an advocate of “effective accelerationism,” a Silicon Valley fad that defends the idea that the development of technology, especially AI, should be accelerated for the good of humanity. There are also techno-optimists for whom, in the age of technology, the powers of innovation and capitalism should be harnessed to the extreme to drive radical change — even if it means upending today’s social order. The move away from academic idealism and toward commercial pragmatism must have created conflict at OpenAI. What’s more, at the time of Mr. Altman’s ouster, it seems that teams at OpenAI had developed a superintelligence product, called Q\* (Q-STAR), which may have seriously upset the board and precipitated the change of boss. The short five-day crisis of instability at OpenAI may have worried its existing or potential customers, who probably started looking elsewhere, for example at the free AI software that OpenAI is trying to marginalize by saying it is dangerous, because it has no controls. This will lead to a resurgence of activity at OpenAI in an attempt to maintain its reputation and its significant lead. And in the entire AI sector. But this crisis is not the last episode in the Sam Altman saga.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1783

Register of the Church of Paris, begun by me, Guillaume Picard, licentiate in law, scribe and notary of the said church. In the year of our Lord 1409, Thursday, July 15th. » There is something moving in looking, carefully opened on a table in the National Archives, at the Gothic serifs on the thick manuscript kept six centuries ago by this canon of Notre-Dame. It looks, in Latin, like a compilation of minutes of meetings as they would be kept today. With the details of the decisions taken and the list of canons signing for these "boards of directors of the chapter", according to the amused terms of the historian Darwin Smith. In total, 170 volumes of acts were thus recovered after the Revolution, in 1790, by the National Archives. A goldmine for research. However, deciphering spider's feet, abbreviations, paper or stained parchment was until now a time-consuming task for paleographers. By putting Notre-Dame de Paris back in the spotlight, the fire of April 2019 changed the situation and offered historians a leap in space and time: an artificial intelligence program is now able to decipher these acts with an accuracy rate varying from 88% to 94% depending on the registers, according to the designers. Coordinated at the Laboratoire de médiévistique occidentale de Paris (LaMOP) at the Sorbonne by Julie Claustre (now a university professor at Paris-Cité) and Darwin Smith, emeritus research director, the project called "e-NDP" has so far focused on the first twenty-six volumes, whose 14,600 pages run from 1326 to 1504, the medieval period in the classical sense of the term. First step of this experimental program, restore. Stains, humidity, wear and tear… Eight volumes were taken. Second step, digitize. Finally, it was necessary to “train” the machine, using now classic HTR (handwritten text recognition) techniques, but adapted to these texts themselves. Because writing changes over time, according to the canons and the eras. Obtain a reliable algorithm At the beginning, we feel that the notes are taken during the meetings. Then the reports are clearly copied cleanly, more regular, without crossings out. Physically isolate the different parts of each page, visually sort between the lists of canons, the juxtaposed texts and the annotations in the margin. It took eight attempts, with about fifteen historians to check the results obtained on different extracts, in order to correct the shot (we say fine tune in expert language) and obtain a sufficiently reliable algorithm. Result: "Five million words in which we can do structured searching. It's amazing!" Julie Claustre enthuses. "Now we know that it works, we can follow people, functions. We can also search precisely on a word or a theme." Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, June 29, 1326, that's where it all begins. Before that, we had no written trace of the chapter's deliberations. "We must understand that in the Middle Ages, written culture very gradually replaced oral culture," explains Darwin Smith, while Isabelle Bretthauer, curator of the National Archives, carefully turns the pages of paper - "Rare for the time," she specifies, admiringly. "In 1396, we see how the canons organized the recasting of a large bell, which fell without causing any casualties, but caused a lot of damage. Then, it had to be passed through the streets to the cathedral...", says Julie Claustre. We change register, this one is in parchment, that is to say made from animal matter. If these notarized texts are such a mine of information, it is because these canons are often great officers of the kingdom, advisors to the king, leading academics. "Notre-Dame is a magnetic pole that brings together the thinking heads of theology, law and science," explains Darwin Smith. What we discover there is the influence of the secular world, an interpenetration of secular and ecclesiastical fashions. In 1452-1453, we see that, every Sunday, the artisan bakers gather around the two baptismal vats placed one on the right and the other on the left of the cathedral. This is their place. We can imagine that they serve them, as has been observed elsewhere, as a vat for measuring grain. But this is not specified. The fact remains that one day the chapter decides that enough is enough..." Role of historians Of course, our historians are not the first to work on this thick corpus. Others have tackled it, including the canons of the following centuries, whose annotations can be seen here and there, showing that they went to look for traces of a jurisprudence, a division, an established decision. The most notable work ever carried out on these registers, the Cartulary of Notre-Dame de Paris, in four volumes, dates back to one of the first directors of the Ecole nationale des chartes, Benjamin Guérard, in 1850. Should we see this as a sign: the era is Gothic, Victor Hugo mourns a cathedral in decay, Viollet-le-Duc is called to his bedside. Could it be when buildings collapse that we remember the role of historians? "But the corpus is so enormous!" notes Julie Claustre, rolling her eyes. This is where artificial intelligence proves to be a valuable tool by transforming the records into an open database, searchable, indexable, and manipulated at will, shedding light on the Middle Ages in its ordinary daily life. Like this man who had a falling out with the canons because he sold his catch without asking permission, and who explains, to exonerate himself, that having "spasmed" (knocked out) his fish, he had to sell them without delay. We are at this level of documentary precision, admires Rebecca Lelièvre, a master's student at Paris-I, who works on water rights in the Middle Ages. An essential subject in the life of the chapter. Firstly because a third of the priests' food is made up of fish; then, because it is a source of profit, notes the student with a smile: "The term Pecunia comes up often..." "You have to play with the machine," she testifies, "because it can easily confuse the "T" and the "C" in this Latin in Gothic writing. I often double my requests onpiscari ["fish"] with another, by writingpistari. Similarly, in abbreviations, a nominative can pass for an accusative. »So, in the lemma search (fixed part of the word, without declension), after typing aqu.\*” (for “water”), juris.\*” (for “law”), or stagn.\*” (for “marsh”), the student notes the occurrences, their dates, and the corresponding registers, then goes to the virtual library of the National Archives website where all the digitized pages can be consulted… Having passed through Madrid and data science, the Peruvian historian Sergio Torres Aguilar was a postdoctoral fellow at LaMOP. Naturally, he was the one responsible for setting up the algorithm. He is satisfied: “The model that we have developed can now be used for other archival centers,” says the man who was called to Luxembourg for similar work on old documents from the Grand Duchy. “The project is open source. There was discussion between us of course, but, apart from the obligation to cite, we decided not to put any locks. "Anyway, when there are locks, they always end up jumping," says a scribe of the third millennium, notary 2.0.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1784

The wit of Silicon Valley, the dramatic tension of The Morning Show and a bit of the atmosphere of Black Mirror. » The soap opera of the crisis at OpenAI kept the world in suspense, as if it had mixed the most addictive series from Netflix or AppleTV. It was an expert in artificial intelligence (AI), Gary Marcus, who thus described the Sam Altman affair on X. The star boss of the most prominent artificial intelligence start-up was fired, to everyone's surprise, then replaced, before announcing his departure to Microsoft, then making a triumphant return, after having been supported by 700 employees out of 770… Beyond the almost fictional side of this business saga, the case of OpenAI and Sam Altman is emblematic of the philosophical and political debates that cross the AI sector. The entrepreneur wants to embody the return of a messianic discourse in the sector, after years in which the leaders of giants like Google, Meta (Facebook, Instagram) or Apple have had to police their attitude, in response to criticism of their power and the effects of their activity. "I hate to say this, because it sounds arrogant, but, before OpenAI, what was the last real big scientific breakthrough that came out of a Silicon Valley company?", he asked, falsely naive, in a podcast at the beginning of June, regretting that recent years have seen the creation of companies "very well valued on the stock market" in web and mobile services. "The technological progress that we will make in the next hundred years will far exceed anything we have done since we mastered fire and invented the wheel," he states in a 2021 manifesto entitled "Moore's Law for everything", in reference to the principle of exponential growth in the computing capacity of computer chips. The engine of this revolution – which, according to Mr. Altman, will make it possible to “colonize space”, “make nuclear fusion work”, “cure all diseases” or “build new realities” – is of course artificial intelligence and the advent of a supposed “superintelligence”, which would surpass that of humans. The crisis at OpenAI has shaken up Sam Altman’s upward trajectory. Faced with certain contradictions in the atypical OpenAI project, he was sidelined, because some criticized him for moving too quickly, with a policy that was too commercial, contrary to the original mission of the structure. The leader finally won and was reinstated, thanks to the support of Microsoft, but, in the new OpenAI, he finds himself facing new challenges. An archetype of Silicon Valley Sam Altman was born on April 22, 1985. All the articles describe this almost “quadra” as precocious. "He embodies the classic path of the Silicon Valley entrepreneur," says Olivier Alexandre, a sociologist at the CNRS and author of La Tech. Quand la Silicon Valley refait le monde (Seuil, 260 p., 23 euros). Raised in Saint-Louis, Missouri, in a Jewish family – his mother a dermatologist and his father a real estate agent – Sam Altman was immersed as a child in a "nerd" atmosphere, a fan of computers and science, dreaming with his two brothers of space travel, playing video games or guessing square roots. At the age of 8, he was given a MacLII, which he quickly learned to take apart. Computers and online forums offered him an escape, because "growing up as a gay man in the Midwest in the 2000s was not the most pleasant thing," the man who came out in high school told the New Yorker. Admitted to Stanford, the prestigious Silicon Valley university, he left – like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg – after two years of computer science courses, more attracted by the boom in the tech sector. At 19, he founded the start-up Loopt with his partner. The service, designed to geolocate friends, struggled to convince, but it was still resold for 43 million dollars (39.5 million euros). Above all, this first business brought Mr. Altman through the Y Combinator (YC) incubator, whose founder he impressed. The latter, who saw in him the equivalent of a young Bill Gates, hired him at YC and then propelled him, at less than 30 years old, in 2014, to the head of what became a place of power in Silicon Valley. YC is a hub that sees all the founders and start-up files pass through, including Airbnb, Dropbox, Stripe, etc. With his calm style, his youthful allure, his T-shirt and jeans look and his avowed Democratic leanings, Sam Altman embodies the Californian "techie" to the point of cliché. He seems the opposite of Elon Musk, a provocative and flamboyant rocket builder, quick to challenge Mark Zuckerberg to a boxing match, who became a supporter of Donald Trump and was recently singled out for his anti-Semitic comments. But the two men have more in common than it seems. Like Mr. Musk, Mr. Altman wants to expand YC from 2014 to basic sciences, robotics, biotechnologies, energy... He himself invests in many projects, including the nuclear fusion start-up Helion (and, since then, in Retro Biosciences, dedicated to extending life, or in Conception, whose goal is the in vitro creation of eggs from stem cells, in particular to allow male couples to have children). Mr. Musk and Mr. Altman also both believe in the immense potential of artificial intelligence. The original paradox of OpenAI In 2015, Sam Altman created OpenAI with Elon Musk and Peter Thiel (whom he met at YC). The latter made a fortune by reselling the PayPal payment service and recently invested in the artificial intelligence start-up DeepMind, quickly bought by Google. Among the other founders of OpenAI is Greg Brockman, a former Stripe employee who also went through Y Combinator. "The conversations around the birth of OpenAI are steeped in transhumanism and long-termism," explains Olivier Alexandre. They combine, on the one hand, the idea that we can improve humans through technology and AI and, on the other hand, the need to take into account existential risks threatening billions of human lives, such as those theoretically posed by... AI. Because the latter is “potentially more dangerous than nuclear bombs,” Mr. Musk declared in 2014. The founders have all read the book – “excellent,” according to Mr. Altman – by the Swedish transhumanist philosopher and long-termist Nick Bostrom, Superintelligence, which imagines a superhuman AI and its dangers for humanity. “My problem is that when my friends drink too much, they talk about the ways the world could end,” the entrepreneur joked in 2016 in the New Yorker, citing AI prominently, along with “synthetic viruses.” He added that he was – like Mr. Thiel – a survivalist, stockpiling “guns, gold, iodine or gas masks,” and was ready to retire to an isolated property south of San Francisco. Asked about this point during his visit to Paris in the spring, the hypochondriac Mr. Altman assured that he had since taken a step back and, above all, cultivated "a boy scout side", which pushes him to spend his weekends on his ranch, with his companion, smartphone turned off. An antidote to the risk of a dangerous superintelligence, OpenAI's aim is to "create general artificial intelligence, in a safe and beneficial way for humanity". The founders also chose the non-profit form for their company, in order to avoid seeing a project deemed so crucial subject to financial logic. OpenAI is therefore financed by $1 billion in donations, notably from Messrs. Thiel and Musk, and promises to publish all its research in open source free access (hence the name). And its founders present their alternative lab as the means of preventing AI from remaining in the hands of a monopoly or an oligopoly, implicitly denouncing the important place taken by Google in the sector. All these arguments help to poach top researchers... from competing teams. Thus, Mr. Musk recounted having fought to snatch Ilya Sutskever from Google, a young star who, with the bigwig Geoffrey Hinton, had made a decisive leap in image recognition. The team moved into a small building in the center of San Francisco, where it had another Elon Musk project as a neighbor, the brain-machine implant start-up Neuralink. The forward march of AI star Sam Altman would spread his wings with OpenAI and make it a global success story. In the early years, the lab created an AI that plays a video game, another that pilots a robot hand capable of completing a Rubik's Cube. Its researchers are wondering - a vast task - about the means of "aligning" an AI with "human values". But a major turning point occurred in 2019: Elon Musk left (he considered himself to be in a conflict of interest, because Tesla was also recruiting in AI), Sam Altman became CEO and affirmed his conviction that improving AI models requires their size, which will require phenomenal computing power, therefore billions of dollars. He then turned to Microsoft. "I remember the first time you called me to ask me for cloud credits," said Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, during a joint conference on November 6. The old software giant invested $1 billion, in the form of access to its data centers. Sam Altman created a for-profit structure for this, with original, even baroque governance. Dividend distributions are limited to one hundred times the initial investment. The phenomenal wealth that AI is supposed to create, according to Mr. Altman, must then return to the non-profit structure. The latter's board of directors also remains sovereign and Mr. Altman does not hold any shares. In the process, OpenAI decided not to publish the GPT-2 language processing model as open source, citing security reasons and the risk of seeing this ancestor of ChatGPT participate in disinformation. On November 30, 2022, OpenAI launched ChatGPT. The technology is not new, but the conversational robot bluffs the world with its ability to create texts that appear to be written by humans. In two months, the service exceeds 100 million users. Microsoft announces more than $10 billion of investment in OpenAI, valuing the company at around $30 billion. In March, OpenAI launched GPT4, then the paid version of ChatGPT, then the version for businesses, then the DallE 3 image generation model… In the fall, a fundraising round was being prepared to buy out employee shares, which valued the company at $90 billion. At the same time, Sam Altman became a star tech boss and spilled over into the political arena. In May, dressed in a suit, he went on a tour worthy of a head of state, stopping off in Washington, Toronto, Rio, Lagos, Seoul, Warsaw, London and Paris, where he was received by Emmanuel Macron. At a hearing in May before the American Senate, he gave a speech that was appreciated, because he seemed to display a greater willingness to reform than the digital giants or social networks in their early days: he argued for AI regulation, shared his fears and assured that he was acting "with the interests of humanity in mind". Seen as an outsider from a start-up, ChatGPT was also less criticized for its flaws and errors than the chatbots launched in the past by Google or Meta. At the major summit on the risks of artificial intelligence organized in the United Kingdom at the beginning of November, participants discussed the idea of an "IPCC of AI", reminiscent of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, but also of an agency inspired by the International Atomic Energy Agency, or of a collaborative project close to the CERN cyclotron. All concepts dear to Sam Altman, fascinated by the father of the nuclear bomb Robert Oppenheimer and his Manhattan Project. “OpenAI should in principle be a government-led project,” he explained to Business Insider. In the same vein, Mr. Altman imagined in the New Yorker having citizens from various continents appoint to the OpenAI board. The entrepreneur has also toyed with the idea of electing a tech candidate to the post of governor of California in 2018, dreamed of launching alternative cities and he campaigns for universal basic income, seen as a solution if AI one day takes over a large part of the work. In recent weeks, Sam Altman seemed to want to accelerate again: in the Financial Times, he announced the creation of GPT5 and said he wanted Microsoft to invest “a lot more” in the long term. He was also looking to raise billions of dollars from Saudi funds to create a computer chip company, in order to reduce dependence on its suppliers and costs. He envisaged a start-up with a former Apple designer, to create a device dedicated to AI. "Accelerationists" versus "decelerationists" But the meteoric trajectory of OpenAI and Sam Altman is provoking opposition. A first fundamental criticism attacks the goal of the company and the very concept of "general artificial intelligence": the nature and possibility of such superintelligence are contested in the AI community. The idea serves "a dangerous techno-utopia", solutionist and elitist, even eugenicist because it aims to surpass man, denounce certain researchers in AI ethics, including Emile Torres, former PhD student in philosophy and former close to the transhumanist and long-termist movements. Focusing on the hypothetical long-term risks of AI would prevent us from concentrating on regulating its immediate and real risks, such as sexist or racist biases, discrimination, the theft of works or surveillance, denounce the NGOs AI Now Institute or Distributed AI Research Institute (DAIR). Above all, another front has opened up, gradually creating a schism within the very supporters of a "beneficial superintelligence": neologisms have appeared to distinguish the most "catastrophists" ("doomers") from the most "techno-optimists" or the "accelerationists" (supporters of speeding up research) from the "decelerationists". Even within OpenAI, "tribes" have formed, Mr. Altman acknowledged in 2019, according to The Atlantic. His business turn contributed to the departure of a dozen engineers, who left to create the start-up Anthropic. The latter claims to prioritize the “safety” of AI and has connections to effective altruism, the utilitarian school of thought aimed at maximizing the impact of philanthropy that gave birth to long-termism: among its first investors were sympathizers of the movement such as Sam Bankman-Fried (ex-FTX) or Dustin Moskovitz (of the Open Philanthropy fund). This divide largely contributed to the surprise ouster of Sam Altman (in addition to personal tensions, debates on access to computing capacity, as well as annoyance at seeing Sam Altman invest in other start-ups, at the risk of conflicts of interest). In the eyes of several OpenAI members, including Ilya Sutskever, Mr. Altman was trying to move forward and launch products too quickly, for a purpose deemed too commercial and contrary to OpenAI’s safety policy. “[By firing Mr. Altman], the board was simply fulfilling its mission, which is to ensure that OpenAI builds AI that benefits all of humanity,” Mr. Sutskever, himself a board member, justified in the heat of the moment during an internal meeting. In recent months, the researcher had grown closer to the most concerned faction and, for example, during an internal seminar, had commissioned a wooden statuette representing an AI “not aligned” with human values, before symbolically burning it, reports The Atlantic. Two board members, Helen Toner and Tasha McCauley, were also close to the effective altruism movement, notes Slate. The first had been criticized by Mr. Altman for an academic article in which she regretted that the launch of ChatGPT, in beta and “without a complete risk assessment,” had triggered a “race to the bottom” and a wave of competing chatbots, revealed the New York Times. She also judged Anthropic’s security policy to be more virtuous than that of OpenAI (which, on this subject, recalls having conducted six months of tests before launching GPT4). According to Reuters and The Information, the recent advances by OpenAI researchers on a model called Q\*, apparently capable of solving certain mathematical problems, also reinforced the board’s concerns, as did Mr. Altman’s reduction of a long-term research team of Mr. Sutskever. Latest sign of the divorce: Emmett Shear, the CEO appointed by the board to replace Mr. Altman, estimated in a June podcast “between 5% and 50%” the probability of seeing a superintelligence self-replicate and wipe out humanity. He also cited Eliezer Yudkowsky, a blogger known in AI as a radical “doomer” (the latter declared on X during the crisis that “OpenAI’s goal was to wipe out humanity”) as a reference. The rebels have received external support: “The last few days have shown how much the idea that Sam Altman should be accountable to anyone is a myth,” Toby Ord, a figure of long-termism, said on X. “We need leaders who understand AI and can oppose Sam,” added Elon Musk, former founder turned competitor of OpenAI with his start-up X. The Future of Life Institute, an NGO behind the letter signed in the spring by researchers asking for a “pause” on AI research, accuses OpenAI (and other companies in the sector) of double-talk on regulation. She criticizes Sam Altman for having tried to soften the AI Act regulation by threatening to withdraw from Europe, before retracting. Some movements, such as PauseAI, go so far as to call for a suspension of research and Sam Altman has several times been greeted at conferences by placards from activists accusing him of endangering humanity with his superintelligence projects… Ironically, even the existential risk theorist Nick Bostrom recently expressed alarm at the excessive ambient worry that could end up leading to a “ban” of AI. “Doom and gloom is heading for catastrophe,” mocked Yann LeCun, director of AI research at Meta and a self-proclaimed optimist, on X. Rather centrist in these debates, Sam Altman has gradually joined the accelerationist camp, Mr. Alexandre explains. Why, then, does he continue to regularly compare the risks of AI to those of a pandemic or a nuclear attack? "He understood that tech is about products but also about a story." "Basically, OpenAI has fired those who truly believed in the existential risks of AI and kept those for whom it is just a communication gimmick," said researcher Timnit Gebru of the NGO DAIR. The new OpenAI, in the shadow of Microsoft In the battle against opponents who wanted to slow him down, Sam Altman finally won an almost total victory: he was reinstated in OpenAI, like his friend and co-founder Greg Brockman. Of course, an internal investigation will take place, but Mr. Altman even had the pleasure of seeing Ilya Sutskever mention on X his "regrets" for having participated in the council putsch... In the imagination of Silicon Valley, this triumphant return is reminiscent of that of Steve Jobs at Apple. "The difference is that Jobs was on the side of the "dreamers", the protesters opposed to the management, considered too business-oriented", Mr. Alexandre qualifies. Another lesson of the crisis: Microsoft's influence on OpenAI will be strengthened. The software giant will be represented on the future board. And its CEO Mr. Nadella, who actively worked for Mr. Altman's return, has asked for "governance changes". This influence could grow even more if, as Mr. Altman wanted, Microsoft invests even more. "For Microsoft, this all ends in a fairy tale", comments Dan Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities. This development will reinforce criticism of OpenAI's independence and openness: "OpenAI was created as an open-source, non-profit structure to be a counterweight to Google, but it has become a closed company, which maximizes profit and is effectively controlled by Microsoft," Elon Musk joked in January, who sometimes lets the idea of attacking Mr. Altman hang in the air to get his initial donations reimbursed. The strengthened partnership between OpenAI and Microsoft will also stir up debate on the weight of digital giants in AI and the difficulties of developing an independent start-up. Anthropic has raised $6 billion from Google and Amazon. In the long term, entrepreneur Sam Altman will also have to solve business problems: for the moment, ChatGPT is expensive to calculate (a few cents per request) and would be loss-making, as would its equivalents deployed in Microsoft services, including the computer code writing assistance tool GitHub Copilot, according to the Wall Street Journal. The storm experienced by OpenAI could further push large cloud providers like Amazon – or Microsoft – to offer a variety of AI providers and models, some of which are smaller, less powerful and more specialized but less expensive than those of OpenAI. Finally, Mr. Altman will have to meet the challenge of long-term research, because current language processing models are limited. Sam Altman would therefore normalize. In early November, during his first Keynote in front of developers, he looked like an average tech company boss touting his new products. “OpenAI is getting closer to a classic Silicon Valley company,” thinks Mr. Alexandre. Closely associated with Microsoft, will Sam Altman also be able to continue to multiply investments in start-ups? Let us recall that Google has put its founders’ most futuristic projects in order. “Sam Altman will have a harder time convincing people that he is working for the good of humanity and not for his shareholders.” "He is now just another CEO of a digital giant," wrote Bloomberg columnist Dave Lee, calling self-regulation on AI a "masquerade." NGOs also see the OpenAI crisis as a reason not to relax draft regulations such as the European AI Act. Others, such as Mr. Alexandre or the non-profit foundations Signal, Mozilla or Wikipedia, see it as a question mark over AI governance. "Promises about 'beneficial AI,' 'for humanity' or 'aligned with our values' overlook the fact that these issues are political, with disagreements and compromises. "Let's not pretend that AI changes anything about that," wrote former MEP Marietje Schaake on X, reacting to the OpenAI saga. "I'm happy to be back working on the most important mission in the world, with a team that is a family," Mr. Brockman, Mr. Altman's lieutenant, said on X on Thursday.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1785

They were proselytizers of research in human and social sciences based on Twitter's activity, today they dissuade their students from using the social network that has become X. The cause is the end of the free API, the programming interface that allows software to be connected so that they can exchange data. But not only that. As early as 2009, Nikos Smyrnaios, professor of information and communication sciences at the University of Toulouse-III, and Bernhard Rieder, lecturer in the same discipline at the University of Amsterdam, had collected more than 5.8 million tweets to study the dissemination of news on the network. And this, thanks to data extraction and analysis software using the Twitter API (DMI-TCAT). Bernhard Rieder has since designed free software that makes such work possible on around twenty platforms as part of the CAT4SMR (Capture and Analysis Tools for Social Media Research) project. This was before October 2022 and the acquisition of the little blue bird by Elon Musk. Nikos Smyrnaios stopped all study of X due to the lack of access to the platform's data. While Twitter was long a privileged field of investigation for research, due to the public nature of its data and its use by many political and media actors, the professor now dissuades his students from studying it quantitatively. "As a thesis director, I will not encourage a student to work on a subject that would require a quantitative approach, because it will not be possible," he explains. Uncertain reliability of data For Bernhard Rieder, conducting quantitative surveys on X is still feasible and worthy of interest, despite a 16% drop in the number of daily users in one year (figure from the American firm Sensor Tower in September). He nevertheless admits that the change in the method of access to the API complicates the study of X and has scuttled part of his work. The software he designed is no longer usable by the scientific community for free. When the end of the free API was announced, researchers and doctoral students urgently collected all the data they needed. But some projects had to be abandoned. A student of Mr. Rieder, author of a thesis on the functioning of the X API, had to abandon writing an article on the subject, because his results were obsolete. In concrete terms, to carry out a research project on content from this social network, it comes to $5,000 per month (4,600 euros), according to Mr. Rieder. In addition, researchers are now limited to one million tweets, compared to several million previously. But the cost is not the only obstacle. X is not Twitter. Of course, this platform did not wait for the arrival of Elon Musk to be a place for the propagation of hateful content and "fake news". But the moderation of content, already insufficient, has deteriorated due to the dismissal of some of the employees responsible for the fight against disinformation, online hatred or harassment. The increased intervention of Elon Musk and his teams on the visibility of content makes the reliability of the data uncertain and questions the relevance of studying them, according to Mr. Smyrnaios. It is no longer so much the popularity of a post and the engagement it generates that ensure the promotion of content as the possession of a Twitter Blue account (a certification that only certifies the fact of having paid to obtain it), or the arbitrary choices of Elon Musk. Finding the flaw "Today, these algorithmic effects are so strong that we do not measure social processes, but the decisions of the boss", summarizes the professor from Toulouse. The instability of the platform since the arrival of Elon Musk also makes him fear a change in the conditions of access to data over time, despite the payment of the API. Some researchers choose to migrate to other platforms whose API is free, such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube. But lexicometric analysis techniques are unsuitable for the quantitative analysis of these social networks that favor sound and image. New software must therefore be developed and new research methods must be tested, such as the automatic transcription of video audio and the analysis of image recurrences using artificial intelligence software. Other researchers choose to examine corpora of tweets that have already been archived. And some with a more "tech" profile, like Mr. Rieder, are working to find the flaw in order to collect quantitative data for free. They use data extraction software without going through the platform's technical interface, do not create a user profile... and therefore do not subscribe to the platform's rules of use. However, some hope that the situation could change. In fact, the European Digital Services Act, which came into force in August and aims to regulate the activities of large platforms and search engines, provides that approved researchers must be able to freely access their data.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1786

Flames lick the marble floors. A meteor smokes in the middle of the living room. Nearby, the forest babbles and trickles insistently. Under the calm water of the pool, we sense that a monster is lurking, ready to emerge. In a kind of waking dream – l’invitation, the new digital work presented at the STUDIOTELUS of the Grand Théâtre de Québec, transports us to an apocalyptic setting, to the heart of a hypnotic and painful destruction. To an intense and cosmic soundtrack, we visit a world without humans, with the slowness of a video inspired by a high-end furniture store. Luxurious homes burn or are submerged. The series of tracking shots takes us to a lush, disturbing jungle, then into orbit, to follow an astronaut who may have fled Earth to find a new habitat. Signed Philippe-Aubert Gauthier and Tanya St-Pierre, this 75-minute feature film is a tour de force. It is designed specifically for the vertical (or even vertiginous, in this case) space bordered on one side by Jordi Bonet's mural and on the other by the balconies of the various floors that lead to the Louis-Fréchette room. "I like the idea that when you go to the theatre, you enter another world. The place encouraged us to work on something a little more dreamlike than what we had done recently," says Gauthier. DOMESTICATING THE ELEMENTS Exploring the notion of decor, Tanya St-Pierre drew on decoration magazines from the 1970s and 1980s to create surprising and mysterious collages. Several of them scroll across the five porthole screens above the STUDIOTELUS bar. In addition to lines, patterns, colours and textures, she was interested in disciplined flames (candles and fireplaces) that sought to make these rooms warm. The reflection continued with tamed water (aquariums, ponds and swimming pools) and indoor plants, often separated from their wild sisters by huge windows, which act as mirrors in the video. “We can no longer distinguish the outside from the inside, which feeds a feeling of ambiguity,” notes curator Ariane Plante, who was hypnotized and moved by the proposal. “The slowness, the spaces that transform, the play of transparency and reflections, the complexity of the structures, all of this creates liminal worlds, in the in-between.” SOUND GENERATED BY COLOURS “The collages serve to inspire the 3D models, but are also integrated as a material,” explains Tanya St-Pierre. It can become a drape, a tapestry, a floor, a texture. The aesthetic of collages becomes a method for building." The 150 collages were digitized, then integrated into existing 3D architectural models, little piece by little piece, in a tedious assembly work. "There are virtual camera movements, like in a video game, which create strolls," notes Gauthier, proud to say that everything was done with free software. All the images were created when the artist looked at the sound dimension: "We selected sounds and instrumentation choices that we liked. It's close to doom jazz, very slowed down, dark, apocalyptic. Then, with a very simple software that I designed, we extract the color information from the video. If there is more red or green, it controls the synthesizers, it changes the timbres." All this technical work ultimately generates intense emotions in spectators who let themselves be swallowed up by the work. Those who attend Pompières et pyromanes currently showing at the Trident will find the same sense of urgency coupled with dazzling tenderness. In a kind of waking dream - the invitation is presented until February 15, 2024, for free visits on Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m. and before the shows for ticket holders.inf:grandtheatre.qc.ca The last Visual Arts column will be published on December 16. I would like to thank the artists, gallery owners and curators who opened their world to me. Thank you to Le Soleil for allowing me to write and sharpen my perspective on this field for over 12 years, as well as to the readers who were there.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1787

A wind of panic is blowing over the AI Act. Negotiations around the draft European regulation on artificial intelligence (AI) have been very tense since MEPs slammed the door on a negotiation meeting with representatives of the member states on Friday 10 November, reported the Euractiv agency. The reason for their anger? The elected representatives had just learned that France and Germany, supported by Italy, were opposed to a compromise path on “foundation models”: the three countries no longer wished to regulate these artificial intelligence systems that can create text or images, and which can be used by companies in applications such as the chatbots ChatGPT or Bard. Disagreements are frequent in “trilogues” – the negotiation of a final text between the European Parliament and the Council of Member States, under the leadership of the Commission. But this blockage could call into question the agreement on the text, subject to an urgent timetable. And France's attitude is attracting criticism. According to our information, in an attempt to find a way out of the crisis, Paris, through the Minister Delegate for Digital Affairs, Jean-Noël Barrot, will propose applying a base of minimum transparency obligations to foundation models, such as publishing a summary of the characteristics of the software as well as how it works and how it was trained. These rules could be brought together in a code of conduct adopted by companies. This option was to be submitted to the other Member States at the next Council meetings, on Friday 17 and Tuesday 21 November. With this offensive, France, Germany and Italy are opposing the obligations planned in the spring by Parliament. The latter called for regular assessments and measures to mitigate the risks posed by these models for the security and fundamental rights of the European Union (EU), which would include combating errors, illegal content, discriminatory bias, etc. These countries consider these procedures cumbersome and too costly for European start-ups. They reject the compromise put forward at the beginning of November, which planned to apply these obligations only to the most powerful models. To ward off criticism, Paris claims not to be opposed to regulating AI and believes that the AI Act would already be the most restrictive text in the world. France argues that foundation models will be subject to strong obligations if they are used by companies for “high-risk” uses, which constitute the initial basis of the AI Act: autonomous driving, exam grading, CV sorting, health diagnosis, obtaining credit, use in the justice system, etc. “Lobbying” These arguments may not be enough to ease tensions. “By not regulating these models, the EU risks wasting a historic opportunity,” warned AI researcher Yoshua Bengio, in an opinion piece for the German media Tagesspiegel on Wednesday, November 15. "This last-minute attempt to exempt the models that constitute the future of AI would make the European regulation the laughing stock of the world," tweeted Max Tegmark, founder of the Future of Life Institute, the NGO behind the petition launched in March for a "pause" in AI research. France and Germany are moving in the direction of "lobbying by American digital giants and European start-ups, such as the French Mistral or the German Aleph, to the detriment of European companies and SMEs that will use their models," accuses Mark Brakel, head of public affairs at the Future of Life Institute. In June, Emmanuel Macron said he "shared the concerns" that the AI Act would threaten innovation, expressed by Mistral CEO Arthur Mensch and his advisor Cédric O (the president's former Secretary of State for Digital Affairs). Mr. Macron has made the creation of French AI "champions", such as Mistral, LightOn or HuggingFace, a sovereign priority. Obligations would be costly and would threaten the open-source ecosystem of free and open publication of models, which would leave the market to American giants like OpenAI, Google or Amazon, insists Mr. Mensch. This speech is relayed by the French AI specialist Yann Le Cun, now research director at the American Meta (Instagram, Facebook). Can a compromise be found? While she "understands" both sides, MEP Stéphanie Yon-Courtin (Renew) wonders whether calling on a code of conduct and corporate responsibility "will be enough". In addition, other issues complicate the equation: thus, on Friday 17, 70 organizations from the creative industries wrote that "France's position forces [them] to react": they do not want the obligations that provided for requiring model manufacturers to ensure "transparency on the content used for their training" and subject to copyright to be removed. Another bone of contention in the negotiations on the AI Act: the exemptions to be granted to law enforcement for the use of real-time biometrics… However, time is running out: an agreement was expected for December 6. Beyond that, there will only be two or three months left before the European election campaign in June.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1788

While seventeen American writers represented by the Authors Guild, including Jonathan Franzen and John Grisham, filed a complaint in September against OpenAI and its conversational agent, ChatGPT, for copyright infringement, an English team from Imperial College London has found a way to detect whether a literary or scientific text has been seen by a language model during its development. As a reminder, a language model is software that allows a chatbot to respond or interact with a human in natural language: the conversational robot makes grammatically correct sentences, adapts its style, creates original statements, etc. These abilities are obtained by a fairly "brutal" learning method that consists of making it guess the next word in a sentence taken from a huge corpus of texts, reaching thousands of billions of "tokens" (or semantic subunits, such as syllables, prefixes, suffixes, etc.). These texts come from web pages, forums, scientific articles, books and newspaper articles, most likely protected by copyright. Validated predictions Few actors provide details on this corpus, including those whose language models are said to be open source. OpenAI does not communicate this information, Meta did so for Llama, but not for Llama 2. Google, for Bard, was not more forthcoming… Despite the lack of transparency, can we read into the “brain” of these algorithms made up of billions of parameters? Can we know what they have read or not? The English team answers in the affirmative. “We were motivated by the idea of making this aspect of language models less opaque, because what they know comes precisely from this data,” explains Yves-Alexandre de Montjoye, associate professor at Imperial College. The researchers carried out a so-called "membership inference" attack on a large language model, Llama, from the company Meta, or more precisely an identical version, OpenLlama, whose training corpus has been made public - which made it possible to validate the researchers' predictions, set out in a preprint (an article not yet accepted by a scientific journal) submitted on October 23 at a conference. The researchers first selected their own corpus of books (38,300) and scientific articles (1.6 million), drawn from the Redpajama database of the company Hugging Face. Each of these families was divided into two, into "possible member of the training corpus" or "non-member" (because taken at a later date than OpenLlama's training). For each token of these texts, they tested the language model by studying which word it suggests after a sentence of about 128 tokens and what probability it assigns to the real word. These gaps between the model and reality over thousands of sentences make it possible to construct a sort of signature for each book or article. "In fact, we are trying to see if the model is 'surprised' by a text," summarizes Yves-Alexandre de Montjoye. In a second step, they built a program capable of classifying a text as a "member of the training corpus" or "non-member", by training this program with their results obtained on the two types of text. These calculations take about a minute per book of about 100,000 tokens. Possible trials Finally, they can state with more than 81% certainty whether a book was seen by the language model during the training phase (and 63% for scientific articles). On October 25, in another preprint, a competing team from the universities of Washington and Princeton, using Wikipedia texts as a “reference,” also explained that it is possible to read the “minds” of these models and claimed that GPT-3 has most likely read copyrighted books. “This could also work for a newspaper article, but it would be better to adapt our method to such corpora to be more robust,” said Yves-Alexandre de Montjoye, who intends to continue his dive into these black boxes. “These large language models are fascinating. Beyond the copyright issue they raise, we must try to understand them. They do not simply copy paragraphs. What signals in a text are they sensitive to? To context, to repetitions…” Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, said at a conference on November 6 that his company would pay the costs of any lawsuits brought against its customers who use paid versions of ChatGPT.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1789

Historically, technological inflection points can be very important in injecting competition into markets. If there are dominant players, a completely new technology can make them partially obsolete. But with artificial intelligence [AI], there are already concerns [that this is not the case]. "This observation was made on November 3 by Lina Khan, the chair of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the American competition authority. Ms. Khan was responding to the Bloomberg agency, which asked her about the risk of seeing the stranglehold already established on digital by Google, Microsoft, Meta (Facebook, Instagram) and Amazon reproduced in AI. This question was also raised at the summit on the risks of AI organized by London in early November, although it initially focused on the possibility of seeing software free itself from human control, or facilitating the launch of computer and biological attacks: “We run the risk of seeing the dominance of a handful of private actors over our economies and institutions further reinforced,” warned Amba Kak, director of the AI Now Institute, an NGO that studies the social and ethical implications of AI. The French Minister Delegate for Digital Affairs, Jean-Noël Barrot, expressed concern about the “formation of monopolies,” while a letter signed by many researchers and start-up leaders warned against the “concentration of power” in AI. However, the recent rise of AI has given rise to new actors and leaders, such as OpenAI, the creator of the chatbot ChatGPT, and Sam Altman, its 38-year-old CEO. But the start-up is already closely linked to Microsoft, which has invested 11 billion dollars (around 10.3 billion euros) in it. Co-founder of OpenAI, businessman Elon Musk lamented in February that this project, designed as a "counterweight to Google", is now "controlled by Microsoft". If Mr. Altman sought out this heavyweight in the cloud - online services for businesses - it was in order to have access to its enormous computing capacities necessary for AI: running ChatGPT already cost 700,000 dollars per day in February, according to the SemiAnalysis website. Another start-up in the AI sector, Anthropic has just accepted 4 billion dollars of investment from Amazon and 2 billion from Google. Shareholders of OpenAI and Anthropic, the two multinationals also market their AI models to their customers. In addition, Google, Amazon and Meta developed internal AI research very early on. With high salaries and access to data to train this software, they attracted many researchers. Two of the three pioneers of modern AI joined Meta (Yann Le Cun) and Google (Geoffrey Hinton). In 2020, in the United States, 70% of AI PhD students were hired in the private sector compared to 20% in 2004, according to the journal Science. Another major asset of the Internet heavyweights is that they can deploy their AI on their platforms: the Office suite (Word, PowerPoint, etc.) for Microsoft, the search engine for Google, the social networks Instagram and Facebook for Meta… On this point, recent regulations have not put in place specific safeguards: the European Digital Markets Act prohibits these companies from favoring their services, but it does not cover chatbots such as ChatGPT, nor voice assistants from Google, Amazon (Alexa) or Apple (Siri). "Open and competitive ecosystem" Is the domination of digital giants over AI inevitable? Some think not and see an alternative solution in open source, these models that can be used for free and modified. Faced with the latter, "we have no competitive advantage, and neither does OpenAI," warned a Google engineer in an internal memo in early May, according to SemiAnalysis. Startups like Hugging Face or Mistral AI also believe that open source can shake up the AI sector, as it has established itself in software used for servers or cybersecurity. However, open source is also defended by a giant like Meta – and partially by Google and OpenAI – and does not necessarily guarantee competition. One solution would be to develop less gigantic, generalist and expensive AI models. The White House decree on AI advocates creating a “fair, open and competitive ecosystem” and encourages the FTC to act if necessary. Could the antitrust authority intervene more quickly than in web services, where lawsuits against Google, Amazon or Meta are only just starting today? Washington, Paris and Brussels are also launching supercomputers with public funds to help start-ups and university research, but their capacity remains limited. France wants to make French-language content available in order to train French models like those of Mistral AI or LightOn. Will we eventually see the importation into AI of a criterion of cultural exception, in the administration or national education? Another avenue: the mobilization of the concept of sovereignty in sensitive areas such as defense. The idea is interesting, but it recalls the long debates around digital sovereignty and the cloud, dominated by American giants.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1790

I read Libé every day. "And once it's done, I feel good!" Amazing. Paul, 61, was at the Cité de la Musique on November 11 to attend the 24 hours of Libé, the latest incarnation of the daily's 50th anniversary, where journalists and guests went to meet their readers. Round tables, debates, show, concerts A constant crowd, braving the cold and rain, came to question the profession and take an interest in how a newspaper is made. A non-exhaustive stroll through this Saturday where around thirty events took place. 9:30 a.m. Paul is not alone. He came with his daughter Tessa, 26, who wants to go into journalism: "I'm more interested in Al-Jazeera or Courrier international. But I want to know how news is made at Libé." She's in the right place. The sound system, which was playing a cover of Ring of Fire, stops and Dov Alfon, the recently mustachioed (it suits him well) publication director, calls out to the editorial board: "Sartre said that Libé was an ambush in the jungle of information. We don't really know what that means. We're mainly looking for what event will surprise the reader." As they do every morning, the section editors describe what was published that morning and what is expected for the day. In addition to the developments in the situation between Israel and Hamas, which are not very encouraging, we learn that Taiwan's military service is going to be reformed to face a war against China, that Iceland has suffered 500 earthquakes in one day, that at 9:58 the words "real people" are uttered, that with the "ghost nets" left at sea we could cover the Czech Republic and that, if the parrots all worked like fire sirens, everyone would know about it. "We have a lot of information and very little space in the newspaper, that's our daily dilemma," concludes Dov Alfon. 10 a.m. Two floors down, a round table is entitled "Democracy in Peril." The day is also an opportunity to get prestigious guests, from Jean Paul Gaultier to Wendy Delorme, thinking. There, it's MEP Raphaël Glucksmann who asserts: "When democracy becomes natural, we stop feeding it and it disintegrates." Then he continues: "In Brussels, I signed up for the "human rights" committee. There were only guys like me, we made idealistic speeches and it led nowhere. So I signed up for the "trade" committee. From there, I defended human rights better." In the audience, Anne, who describes herself as "very, very old" (60 years old by the looks of it), approves each sentence with a resounding "hum." She's living her best ideological life and enjoying the show. Jean Quatremer, our pioneer of journalistic Europe, deplores the disaffection of the left, which leaves the field open to the margins: "The extremists no longer want the end of the EU, they have understood the interest they derive from it, but they now want to pervert its values." He is contradicted by Lionel Zinsou, former Prime Minister of Benin (which is not yet part of Europe): "On the contrary! The European left is alive. But the values of Western democracy must be shown in action and everywhere. This would prevent the countries of the South from being skeptical in particular." Anne, for her part, is categorical: "I believe in Glucksmann. It is someone like him who can wake up the left." Even trade. 11 a.m. In the corridors of the Philharmonie, round tables propose varied themes, on the climate, open source, the use of off or photo illustration. Unamplified, they force the spectators to listen and get closer to the speakers. In this atmosphere between the campfire and the journalistic halls where the loud voices mix, the photo department explains a conceptual series by Christophe Maout where, to illustrate racism in football, a ball dripping with white paint was shot; the political department specifies that the off serves more to find subjects of context, and the editors of the investigation department assure a slightly borderline woman that never, ever, were they the ones who put microphones in her phone to track her down. In the distance, three security guards watch over a little 2-year-old girl who is playing with their set of keys. "Everything is fine, don't worry, her mother is not far away." The atmosphere is so warm that even the abandoned children are not really abandoned. 11:15 a.m. Scattered across the Ile-de-France region, twelve editors and a lawyer, who are preparing that very evening to take part in the show Libé s'la raconte, concocted by our correspondent in Madrid François Musseau and his sidekick Vanessa Rousselot, are anxious as they revise their text. Beta-blockers, antidepressants, Bach flowers, even unexpected sick leave pass from thought to thought. 11:30 a.m. Willem was unable to come. He finds himself caricatured having a drink to our health by Coco, the cartoonist from Libé who succeeded him. She discusses the job of a press cartoonist with Terreur graphique. Coco, one editorialized cartoon per day: "We try to have fun with the not always funny news, to make it explode. With the management we sometimes have divergent opinions." "Complementary," jokes the moderator. "In one day," Coco continues, "the news is so rich that the difficulty is choosing the subject that will make tomorrow's cartoon." Terreur graphique, a weekly strip, whose best day of his life was being hired at Libé: "I have a more societal fiber, less in the caricature of politicians than in that of people. With a tendency towards dialogue." Both react to criticism on the networks with a phlegm of denial: they do not care. Terreur: "Being attacked by fascists, I have no problem. When people are of the same sensitivity as me, it affects me." Coco: "Who has not been insulted at least once on the networks? I remove myself from these comments. The important thing is to express myself freely." Before describing the quintessence of journalism: "Sometimes it works, sometimes not and tomorrow is another day." 1:15 p.m. Two twenty-somethings were asked what made them come to this packed amphitheater to listen to Serge July. Answer: "Well, there's no age limit for learning!" For an hour, July told them about his newspaper, without nostalgia in his voice, from the press agency to the influence of Sartre, including the revolutionary printing process that allowed the newspaper to come out without printing costs that would otherwise be impossible to sustain. They saw that the daily newspaper is a ruinous dancer whose paper is expensive. They traveled through a few stories, from the Berlin Wall to the Saint-Bernard church, from Le Pen's shock to Mitterrand's face, from "I love you, I don't" before the temporary closure in 1981 to July's portrait on rue Béranger, before leaving Libé in 2006. "50 years, for those who created the newspaper, it's unimaginable. It's very moving for me. For you too, I imagine. We shared a lot of moments together, journalists and readers." Yes, Serge, for us too, journalists and readers, it was moving. 3:00 p.m. A source tells us that one of the groups that was supposed to perform after the show asked for sixty bottles of Tsingtao beer in the dressing room. Impossible to find any in the neighborhood. No one knows if the group, in the event that their order is not respected, will agree to play. Atmosphere. To be continued. 3:30 p.m. Anne Sinclair recounts her misadventures (and her joys) during her prestigious career in audiovisual and mixed power. "There are three stages to the threat to the independence of the press: in the face of political power, in the face of economic power, and, as is the case today, in the face of a private shareholder carrying an ideological project." The specter of Bolloré hovers over this debate "Press and pressures", where a former journalist from the JDD also intervenes and where at 3:47 p.m. the sentence was uttered: "Libé is in the process of successfully transforming into digital." Samu, friends! 4 p.m. Back in the corridor of round tables. Two veterans give us a brilliant performance on how obituary front pages are made. In particular that of the death of Mao, covered in ideograms, where the team of the time tried their hand at wordplay in Chinese ("Long live proletarian cannabis!"). A skill that has unfortunately been lost. 5 p.m. It's not that we didn't go to Isabelle Huppert's masterclass, it's that we couldn't get in because there were so many people. A witness tells us a salient fact: "On the set of Heaven's Gate, Godard came to see her to offer her the role of Sauve qui peut (life). Completely jetlagged when he got off the plane in Montana, he didn't tell her the script and said: "I want you to be the face of suffering." Or of misfortune, we don't know anymore. We should have gone to this round table on the collection of testimonies. 6:30 p.m. The audience, still as numerous, benevolent, surprising, has the joy of witnessing our daily ordeal. The "headline meeting". Many "faces of suffering" must resolve three problems: what subject for the front page, what photo, what title? In the balance that day: the malaise of the Jews on the eve of the demonstration against anti-Semitism or an investigation into Hidalgo's Tahitigate. The public, invited to participate, opts for the first subject, despite a courageous suggestion from a reader: Hidalgo in a photo with a flower necklace and a snorkel on the title: "Tahiti, Hidalgo already tuba" (for battue, verlan, in reference to the next municipal election). A pint and three cigarettes later, we are back to witness the validation of a photo combo with the title "Un choc intime" in the center. A "chic on time" was less successful. 7 p.m. "So I went to the Franprix on rue Petit where I bought 40 Super Bock beers, with 20 Peroni, and I added another ten Asahi. I hope they'll like it, for the moment I haven't heard from them." 8 p.m. The twelve journalists and the lawyer from Libé are on stage to "show off." That is to say, talking about their job, talking about the newspaper, talking about themselves, because they and us, they and you, are pretty much the same thing. Individuals at work, with opinions, even values, a personality, a bag of failures to carry and a few victories that make it lighter. They are everyday like the newspaper and as contemporary as society, whose malformed beauty could be seen in the twists and turns of their sentences. They were brilliant in their simplicity and moving in their sincerity or indignation. We refuse to focus on describing two or three stories for fear of distorting the others, so much did the strength of this show also lie in the collective that animated it. But if it is impossible to recount here what was said on this stage, you will find it written in filigree in all the other pages of this newspaper that they create, the place where we deposit our lives and where we drink from those of others. Out of curiosity, to know what is happening elsewhere or within us.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1791

London - Special Envoy - Seeing all the players who have participated in the rise of artificial intelligence [AI] over the last ten years gathered together felt like a historic moment," says Mustafa Suleyman, CEO of the start-up Inflection and co-founder of DeepMind, the AI gem bought by Google and one of whose first investors was Elon Musk. The surprise visit to London of the CEO of Tesla and X also contributed to the success of the "first international summit on the risks of AI", organized on Wednesday 1 and Thursday 2 November by the British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak. The joint presence, among the leaders of twenty-eight countries, of the Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, and Chinese representatives, was seen as another diplomatic victory for London. In addition to the casting, the setting – the sumptuous Victorian mansion of Bletchley Park and its outbuildings, where Alan Turing's team deciphered German codes during the Second World War – was also symbolic. Finally, the organization (informal exchanges and some round tables behind closed doors, in a building not accessible to journalists) generated "a very good quality of exchanges", admits Antoines Bordes, from the French start-up Helsing. Despite this positive atmosphere, this unprecedented gathering also showed the challenge of regulating artificial intelligence, a year after the emergence of ChatGPT and a family of software capable of generating stunning images and texts. Among the announcements was the launch of an "IPCC of AI", responsible for forging a scientific consensus, as its equivalent does for climate change. Indeed, the writing of a report on the state of AI was entrusted to the Canadian researcher Yoshua Bengio. The structure is not very clear, however, because similar initiatives already existed. Mr. Bengio would be joined by researchers but would remain attached to the Scientific Advisory Board on AI, created in October by the United Nations. In addition, some propose adding other structures, inspired either by CERN (European Council for Nuclear Research) or the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency). Without taking a position, James Manyika, senior vice president at Google, recognizes the need to establish evaluation "standards". A form of consecration On this subject, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak created a British AI Safety Institute, which will have the mission of "testing and assessing the risks" of models from AI giants. The institute will have the advantage of having the cooperation of OpenAI, Meta, AWS or GoogleDeepmind. And international partnerships, in particular its recent American counterpart. But these tests will not be backed by a law, Mr. Sunak considering it premature to legislate. In essence, the British event was a form of consecration for those who believe that AI is capable of generating “existential risks” for humanity. This concept was popularized by the philosopher Nick Bostrom, author of the book Superintellligence (Dunod, 2017), a figure of the “long-termist” movements (which aim to act according to the well-being of the billions of human beings who will live in the future) and transhumanists (which aspire to improve the fate of man through technology). “I have always dreamed of organizing an event like this,” confided Max Tegmark, co-founder of the Future of Life Institute, who in March wrote the open letter calling for a “pause” in AI research. Also present were CEOs such as Elon Musk and Sam Altman of OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT, who also believe in the danger of superintelligence comparable to pandemics or nuclear risks. To avoid this, they advocate creating a version that is beneficial to humanity. The final statement mentions “the potential for serious or even catastrophic harm caused by AI, whether intentionally or unintentionally.” Among the risks cited are the loss of control of software or its use by malicious actors to create cyberattacks or biological weapons. At the same time, King Charles III, like the British Minister of Technology, Michelle Donelan, has been enthusiastic about the prospect of AI helping to create “a world without disease” or “an unlimited source of clean energy,” thanks to a technology as important as “electricity” or even “fire.” However, this focus, centered on the most powerful models (dubbed “Frontier AI”) and the most extreme risks, has been contested. “The regulation of AI must not be conducted on the basis of speculative discourse about ‘existential threats’ to the detriment of the people who are currently suffering the impacts of AI software,” warned the NGO Amnesty International in a statement, protesting against the use of algorithms to detect welfare fraud, which has led to errors and a scandal in the Netherlands. Some see alarmist discourse as a diversion of attention from other more immediate problems, such as errors, discriminatory bias, respect for copyright or the impact on employment. At the summit, this discourse was relayed by Kamala Harris – who considered these risks “existential for those who experience them” – or by Jean-Noël Barrot, the French Minister Delegate for Digital Affairs. Both praised the broad spectrum of threats covered by the draft European AI Act regulation and by the decree signed on Monday, October 30 by the White House. Aware of the criticism, the United Kingdom mentioned these dangers in the final declaration. "Transparency" In the round tables, the focus on the most distant risks was also attacked from another angle. "Apocalyptic reasoning is absurd" and can only lead to measures that will threaten the open-source publication of AI models, accused Yann Le Cun, the research director at Meta (Instagram, Facebook), on X. Indeed, some, including Connor Leahy, from the English start-up Conjecture, argued "that we would not publish the plans for a nuclear bomb in open access". "If we limit open source, it will consolidate the domination of three or four large American companies", retorted Arthur Mensch, CEO of the young French start-up Mistral AI, which, like Meta – but not OpenAI or Google – publishes its AI models in open access. He was not convinced by the demonstrations of participants tending to prove that it was easier to prepare a cyberattack or a biological weapon using an assistant like ChatGPT than by searching on Google. This front was supported by an open letter from the Mozilla Foundation, a supporter of open source, but also by Mr. Barrot, anxious "not to disqualify open source, which promotes transparency and competition, to avoid the creation of monopolies". As this thorny debate illustrates, despite a spectacular rise in discussions on regulation, the States have not yet managed to agree on where to place the cursor. Each, like the United Kingdom, also wants to have cutting-edge companies. "We must regulate before innovating", insists the French side, in order to obtain, in the AI Act, the exclusion of "foundation models" (which companies can use to create services) such as those of Meta and Mistral AI, or OpenAI. This question should be decided in Brussels by the end of 2023. And before the next edition of the summit on the risks of AI… organized in a year in Paris.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1792

Frustrated that he couldn't keep playing his video game, 10-year-old Sylvain Perron went to the library to get some books on programming. Twenty years later, his company has customers from all over the world, including Tesla. 92'never stopped being interested:' '& 22' many acquaintances. "Google came out with an article that 2 &2&2E 2&2&22 when I was a kid. So I abanE:'EE& 2join Protorisk Limited, a & THE BIRTH OF BOTPRESS kijn'22 & 9E ' of our customers on our software, 2:'EE& He wondered how to 2&2question, he decided to build it. 'conversational &Perron saw an opportunity 2 2'&9 our customers in open source. Little 'nii&2that we really saw that it was &: '''2 &COVID, the company worked with the Quebec government questions from Quebecers about this new disease. 222' '& Name:Sylvain Perron, 32 years old, Degree:Unfinished bachelor's degree in software engineering Company:'2 le conversationnel Number of employees:About thirty, including one Its model:'9': > Five questions in quick succession > Your greatest achievement? The latest version of the software &'jii•& 'has been released. This new version & > The best advice received? Never automate anything 2 before. It's advice 2& > Your passions outside of work? 2'&if I had billions in my '& > Are you afraid of failure? '&2 cancer in 2014, I was 23 years old. 22ri&E ment, I survived. Anxiety and 2& >Where do you see yourself in five years? 2 in Quebec and very well known in the field of 2 &

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1793

One hundred and fifty days after the launch of the Ukrainian counter-offensive in the south of the country, Western military and analysts are making the same bitter observation: kyiv's army has made very little progress and, above all, is no longer advancing. "Despite the determined efforts of the Ukrainian armed forces, five months of offensive operations have not succeeded in breaking through the Russian defense lines," observes Jack Watling, a researcher at the British think tank Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), in a note published on October 19. "Ukraine retains certain options to make the Russian position uncomfortable, but it is very unlikely that there will be a breakthrough (...) this year," adds this specialist in land combat, who is counting on the conflict continuing in 2024, or even beyond. When it launched its first assaults on the Russian lines on June 4, the Ukrainian army nevertheless had high hopes for its operation. Throughout the spring, it had accumulated men and equipment to break through the defenses erected by the enemy along the approximately 1,000 kilometers of the front line. Twelve brigades, comprising approximately 35,000 soldiers, had been specially formed for the maneuver, some of which were equipped with modern Western armor: British Challenger 2 and German Leopard 2 tanks, American Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, French AMX-10 RC reconnaissance vehicles, etc. kyiv's objective, then, was to break through the Russian defensive system erected between the cities of Zaporizhia and Donetsk, in the south of the country, to try to reach the Sea of Azov, at the level of the agglomerations of Melitopol, Berdiansk or Mariupol. Such a maneuver would have allowed the Ukrainians to cut the Russian army in two, isolating in particular its forces deployed furthest west, on the left bank of the Dnieper River. Above all, it would have made it possible to break the land bridge that connects Russia to the Crimean peninsula, which Moscow uses to supply men and equipment to all of its forces present in the south of the country. Quality of the Russian defense line Alas, despite countless attempts to pierce the Russian defensive curtain, the Ukrainian army is marking time. At the height of its push on the southern front this summer, it would have advanced only 90 meters per day on average, assures the American think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), in a summary published on October 12. "The twelve brigades mobilized by the Ukrainians for their counter-offensive have been partly consumed, and their soldiers are still blocked on the first Russian defense line," confirms a French military source, not very optimistic about the Ukrainian capacity to cross the enemy trenches. In five months, the Ukrainians have only recaptured about 400 square kilometers of their territory, an area smaller than that of the Territoire de Belfort, according to specialists at OSINT (Open Source Intelligence). In total, the Russians still occupy a little over 17% of Ukraine, or more than 100,000 square kilometers, compared to about a quarter at the height of their advance in March 2022. In recent days, it is even the Russian army that has regained the initiative, launching large-scale assaults, without interruption, since October 10, on the city of Avdiivka, in Donbass, which the two belligerents have been fighting over since 2014. The industrial city, which had more than 30,000 inhabitants before the invasion of February 2022 and in which some 2,000 civilians are now hiding, is now suffering the fate of Bakhmut. The advance of Moscow's tanks and troops would nevertheless come at the cost of heavy losses. According to the military and analysts, the laborious nature of the Ukrainian advance can be explained first by the quality of the defensive line erected by Moscow, which came as a surprise. During the spring, the Russian military dug hundreds of kilometers of trenches, laid tens of thousands of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, and covered the fields with dragon's teeth (concrete cones designed to hinder the advance of tanks). Not only were these devices set up along the entire front, but also in depth, in areas that could be up to 500 meters long, according to the CSIS. "The Russian defense is extraordinary," admits a senior French officer. This fortification of the combat line was thought of in the fall of 2022 by General Sergei Surovikin, who then commanded Moscow's troops in Ukraine - he has since been removed. "We didn't see it at the time, but Surovikin did what the Germans did in 1917 with Operation Alberich: he voluntarily withdrew his troops from Kherson and the right bank of the Dnieper to shorten the front line and strengthen his defensive position, a position that corresponds to Russian strategic culture. (…) The Ukrainians are not getting through," explains the French Army Command Doctrine and Training Center, where a unit is monitoring the conflict's progress on a daily basis. At the start of its counter-offensive, the Ukrainian army did try to carry out large-scale assaults, involving a significant number of men and equipment, but it had to quickly scale back its ambitions, due to its lack of sufficient mastery of combined arms combat. "Building a brigade capable of carrying out such a maneuver requires at least nine months of collective training, which the Ukrainians did not have. After the initial failures, they preferred to fight much smaller battles, which limits their losses and hardens their troops, but also produces fewer territorial effects," notes Stéphane Audrand, international risk consultant and reserve officer. Unable to force their adversary back, the two belligerents have engaged in a war of attrition, where each tries to inflict the most damage on the other in the hope of regaining the initiative first. A strategy that is not without risk for Ukraine. According to Western intelligence services, Moscow has greater "strategic depth" than its adversary. With a population of 143 million and a growing defense industry, Russia can mobilize more men and equipment over time than Ukraine and its 43 million citizens, despite the sanctions put in place by the West against Moscow. "Ukraine is losing a lot of men" Many experts fear that Ukraine will run out of ammunition in 2024, especially 155 mm shells, the NATO standard caliber used for artillery of Western origin, due to a lack of supplies from allied countries and sufficient domestic production. "Although there are signs of progress towards resolving Ukraine's ammunition supply problems, it will take several months before major progress is made. (…) It is therefore unlikely that the projected production will meet Ukraine's needs before the second half of 2024 or early 2025," predicts Mykola Bielieskov, a researcher at the National Institute for Strategic Studies (NISS) in kyiv. Conversely, Russia still has around 4 million artillery shells in its arsenals. “This means that it could continue to fire at the current relatively low rate of 10,000 rounds per day for a little over a year,” Colonel Ants Kiviselg, head of Estonian military intelligence, estimated at a press conference on October 20. Not to mention the shells sent to Russia by North Korea, estimated at between 300,000 and 350,000 units, and those newly manufactured by Russian industry, whose capacity is said to have increased to two to three million per year. In terms of cruise missiles, Russia is also said to have returned to its pre-war level, with 100 new projectiles manufactured per month, compared to 40 a year ago, says Jack Watling (RUSI). “Unlike Ukraine, Russia is unlikely to face serious shortages of ammunition in 2024. Vladimir Putin has already been trying for more than a year to put much of the Russian economy on a war footing.” Even though this process is far from perfect, it is producing results," worries Mykola Bielieskov (NISS). "The year 2024 will be one of great danger for the Ukrainians. The equipment that has already been delivered to them will be worn out, but they will only be able to partially rebuild it because Western production capacities will not be optimal until 2025," adds Mr. Audrand. The other concern is kyiv's ability to regenerate its troops. The state of Ukrainian losses is the best-kept secret of the war - even the allies do not know it - but the number of its soldiers killed or wounded is estimated to be over 200,000 in Western capitals. Between 20,000 and 50,000 soldiers are said to have had amputations after being wounded. “Ukraine is losing a lot of men, especially among its veterans, and will have more and more difficulty rebuilding its brigades,” fears a French officer who regularly travels back and forth to kyiv. Even though it has lost more personnel – between 390,000 and 480,000 killed and wounded, according to the British Ministry of Defense – Russia has a larger reserve. While waiting for a possible resumption of maneuvers by one of the belligerents in 2024, after the episodes of “rasputitsa” (autumn rains and spring thaw), which make maneuvers difficult, the winter looks set to be difficult for kyiv. At the same time, in 2022, the Russians deliberately targeted civilian energy infrastructure to break the morale of the Ukrainians. However, everything suggests that Moscow will adopt the same strategy in the coming months, with tenfold increase in resources. "The Russians are currently firing fewer drones and missiles than their production capacity allows them to. This probably means that they are building up reserves to strike hard at Ukrainian water and energy infrastructure this winter," fears Stéphane Audrand. In this regard, the anti-aircraft defense means provided by the West will be crucial.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1794

OpenAI, Google, Microsoft and Meta are not the only ones to have launched a race to play the leading roles in artificial intelligence (AI). Political leaders are also competing in initiatives to supervise – and promote – these software programs capable of performing human tasks, such as the text or image generators ChatGPT or Midjourney. On Tuesday, October 24, the European Union hopes to find a political agreement on the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act) or, at least, compromises on the main part of this draft regulation. Then, on November 1 and 2, the British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, will welcome representatives of foreign states and tech giants to London for an “international summit on AI safety”. Later in November, the G7 countries will meet for a meeting of the “Hiroshima process”, a discussion on AI launched in Japan in May. This convergence illustrates a sense of political urgency to seize a technology deemed both very promising and worrying. But in this frenzy – the United States, the OECD and China are also active – strategies differ. Divergences between approaches In 2021, Brussels launched the first major legislative project on AI in the world: the AI Act prohibits certain uses (“social rating” systems, “subliminal” manipulation techniques, etc.) and, for uses deemed “high risk” (autonomous driving, sorting resumes, granting bank loans, etc.), imposes obligations, such as minimizing the error rate and discriminatory biases, verifying the quality of training data, etc. On the controversial point of “general purpose” AI models (such as those generating texts or images), the compromise path between the European Parliament and the Member States consists of imposing obligations on the most important models (beyond a threshold of computing used for training, or a number of users or client companies in the EU, according to a document cited by Contexte). Software manufacturers should also ensure that they have taken measures to respect the “copyright” of the content used for training. London, which wants to become an AI capital, has chosen to focus on the risks deemed to be the most existential: these are linked to “intentional harmful use” – to generate computer attacks or biological weapons – or to a “problem of control of an AI” that could escape humans, we read in a draft of a joint declaration from the summit, mentioned by Euractiv. The message is reminiscent of alarmist letters calling for AI to be “paused” or deemed as dangerous as “pandemics or nuclear war.” The British approach also echoes the rhetoric of industry giants: the summit is focusing on “frontier AI models,” the term used by OpenAI, Google, Microsoft, and Anthropic when they created a trade association of the most powerful software makers in June. London is also aiming to create a kind of “IPCC of AI,” a panel of experts inspired by the one tasked with informing governments about climate change—an idea also championed by several AI executives in an op-ed in the Financial Times. Maintaining innovation The approach of the "code of conduct", discussed at the G7, or the "voluntary commitments", accepted under the aegis of Washington by the giants of the sector in June, follows a middle path: non-binding, like that of London, but generalist, like that of Brussels (the European and American texts also require that content generated by AI be made detectable). Are all these strategies complementary or do they interfere with each other? In any case, French leaders (at least the Minister for Digital Affairs, Jean-Noël Barrot) and European leaders (Commissioner Vera Jourova, and even the President of the Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen) have decided to go to London, judging the approach on extreme risks to be complementary to that of the AI Act. Others have a more critical view: while he does not see a "contradiction" between the British initiative and the AI Act, MEP (Renew) Dragos Tudorache believes that "voluntary commitments are not enough, as we have seen with social networks". "Large companies have an interest in focusing the conversation on the existential and distant risks of AI, because it allows them to divert attention from more down-to-earth and immediate problems", adds the co-rapporteur of the AI Act. The debate on the regulation of general-purpose AI models also affects the AI Act: the digital business lobby Numeum – as well as President Emmanuel Macron or the French start-up Mistral AI – has highlighted the risk of creating a "dangerous straitjacket for innovation", while Adrienne Williams, from DAIR, an NGO researching AI ethics, regrets that the European Parliament's version, which imposed stricter rules on models of all sizes, has been "diluted". For Meta's research director Yann LeCun, focusing the debate on the dangers posed to national security by future "superintelligences" produced by large companies would also threaten open innovation and the publication of models in open access "open source", dear to Meta or the start-up Hugging Face. "The debate on existential risks is premature, as long as we do not have a system that approaches the intelligence of a simple cat," Mr. LeCun believes in the FT.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1795

"Libé" is relocating its editorial staff and producing the newspaper live: from the morning conference to the creation of the front page, including the live updating of the site. And throughout the day, round tables and meetings with all departments, where we will talk about investigation, press independence, the digital revolution, off-the-record practice, photos or fact-checking... 9 a.m. Public reception. 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Editorial conference Live and in public. You will be able to discuss the themes that will be covered throughout the day on the Libération website and the choice of subjects for the pages of the next paper issue. ?Conference hosted by Dov Alfon, director of Libération. (La rue musicale-grande scène) 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. What future for open source investigation? ?Meeting (in English) hosted by Alexandre Horn, journalist at Checknews, with Lucy Swinner, journalist at Bellingcat and Poline Tchoubar, open source journalist at the Capa agency. (La rue musicale) 10:30 - 11:30 Good news: is there a journalism of solutions? ?Meeting with Fabrice Drouzy, deputy editor-in-chief of the Supplements service, Maïté Darnault, correspondent for Libération in Lyon and Gilles Vanderpooten, director of Reporters d'espoirs. (La rue musicale) 10:30 - 11:30 Reporter profession: the new challenges of the journalist ?Round table with Ariane Lavrilleux, journalist at Disclose, Christophe Deloire, general director of Reporters without borders, Isabelle Thirion, from the Audiens group, Amandine Bascoul-Romeu, general director of Libération, Paul Quinio, deputy editorial director of Libération. (La rue musicale-grande scène) 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Write yourself! Libé's "Ideas" pages are an essential space for debate on the left. Today, it's your turn: come and meet our columnists, who will tell you how they choose their subjects and write their texts. Take up the pen on a theme that is close to your heart, write a committed post, choose a Libé title and you might be published! ?Meeting with the Ideas department in the presence of the author Tania de Montaigne (photo opposite). (La rue musicale) 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. How to talk about climate without despairing? ?Meeting with the Environment department. (La rue musicale) 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Press cartoons: delicious "Finding bullshit keeps me awake," Willem told Libé in 2021 to celebrate his 40-year career. Sometimes to make people laugh, sometimes to denounce, sometimes simply to comment on current events, press cartoons have been livening up our pages since 1973. For fifty years, big names like Willem, Coco, Siné, Cabu, Vuillemin have cast their acerbic, sometimes provocative gaze on political life, wars and even morals. For everyone, the same questions come up: how to draw atrocity? How to caricature freely? Round table with Coco, cartoonist, Willem, cartoonist Terreur graphique, cartoonist Nicolas Valoteau, artistic director of Libération. Meeting hosted by Jonathan Bouchet-Petersen, columnist at Libération. (La rue musicale-grande scène) 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Investigative journalism or investigative journalism? ?Meeting with Willy Le Devin, Marie Piquemal and Guillaume Gendron, journalists in the Investigations department. (La rue musicale) 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. The "off", no secret between us Ah, the "off" This practice of hiding the name of an interlocutor behind a quote is the subject of many fantasies. Collusion journalism? Necessary respect for sources? Whether with ministers, bosses and even the President of the Republic (or their entourage), you will know how to use an "off" and when it is necessary to "grill" it. ?Meeting with Lilian Alemagna and Dominique Albertini, deputy editor-in-chief and head of the France department. (La rue musicale) 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. In the eye of Libération: the concept photo at Libération? Meeting with Laure Troussière and Nathalie Marchetti from the Photo department, with Christophe Maout, photographer. (La rue musicale) 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Ukraine, Middle East: when war invites itself into our daily lives Meeting with Sonia Delesalle-Stolper, Veronika Dorman and Benjamin Delille, heads of the World department. (La rue musicale) 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Facing the extreme right: where to lead the cultural battle? Round table with Laurent Joffrin, former director of Libération, Aurélie Filippetti, former Minister of Culture, director of cultural affairs in Paris, Renaud Dély, host of 28 minutes on Arte and editorial writer at France Info, Dominique Albertini, head of the France department. Meeting hosted by Thomas Legrand, editorial writer at Libération. (La rue musicale-grande scène) 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. The life of the book Each week, Libé devotes twelve pages to literary news. French and foreign novels, philosophy, history, but also poetry, science fiction, children's albums, thrillers... The Books department welcomes publishers to talk about independence, curiosity and transmission: how to choose the texts that we publish and those that we review in the newspaper? ?Meeting hosted by Frédérique Roussel, head of the Books department, with the editor Sabine Wespieser and Frédéric Martin (éditions le Tripode). (Bookstore) 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Headlining at Libé: the hidden side of the "front page" "Poster" front pages, pun titles, constantly renewed layout, winks at the reader For fifty years, Libé has tried to present and highlight information in a different way. Come and chat with the heads of the Edition department (Libé's "headliners") and the newspaper's artistic directors (its directors) and discover, through anecdotes and iconic front pages, how, every day, they work to offer you a newspaper and a site that stand out and surprise you. ?Meeting with Caroline Vigent and Jérôme Balazard, heads of the Edition department, Nicolas Valoteau, artistic director and Lionel Charrier, head of the Photo department. (La rue musicale) 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Portraits de der: the secrets of a cult page ?Meeting with Luc Le Vaillant and Quentin Girard, heads of the Portraits department, and Marie Rouge, photographer. (La rue musicale) 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Fact-checking: CheckNews or journalism on demand ?Meeting with Cédric Mathiot, head of the CheckNews department. (La rue musicale) 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Culture: exception or not? ?Meeting with Didier Péron, deputy editor-in-chief, Olivier Lamm, department head, and Sandra Onana, deputy department head in the Culture department. (La rue musicale) 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Reading performance with Lisette Lombé Poet Lisette Lombé writes as she slams: in breaths, in rhythms, in assonances, in alliterations. Her texts speak to us of desires, anger, sisterhood and transmission. ?Meeting and performance hosted by Thomas Stélandre, deputy head of the Books department. (Bookstore) 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Media: Independence under the microscope? Round table with Daniel Schneidermann, journalist, founder of Arrêt sur images, Denis Olivennes, president of the holding company that owns Libération, Anne Sinclair, journalist, founder of HuffPost France (photo above), Emmanuelle Souffi, former editor-in-chief of the Journal du dimanche. (La rue musicale-grande scène) 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. 50 years of archives: diving into collector's issues? Meeting with Bénédicte Dumont and Claudine Mamy, archivists and documentalists at Libération, with Marie Leroch from the BNF. (La rue musicale) 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. High-tech: how to improve the reader experience? Meeting with Adèle Bacos, director of the Marketing-Subscriptions department and Florian Desloires, director of the Product-Web Innovation department. (La rue musicale) 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. "He's a guy, he dies"? Meeting with Stéphanie Aubert, deputy editor, and Michel Becquembois, head of obituaries. (La rue musicale) 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. Bearing witness: how to collect the words of the most vulnerable? Women victims of domestic violence, exiles with traumatic migration journeys, citizens victims of police violence... What relationship of trust is necessary to establish to obtain these testimonies? What distance between a journalist and his sources? ? Meeting with Virginie Ballet, Ismaël Halissat and Gurvan Kristanadjaja, journalists in the Society department. (La rue musicale) 4 p.m. - 5 p.m. "Pépites", a live podcast In her novels, Hélène Frappat twists stories, balancing them between fiction and reality, between what is visible and invisible. There are long philosophical journeys, feminism and a lot of cinema. For a special episode of the Pépites podcast recorded in public, journalist Sébastien Thème explores with her her way of working, approaching writing and constructing her stories. ?Pépites, the new cultural podcast from Louie Media, every Monday, with those who make the culture of tomorrow. (Bookstore) 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. Platforms: the new news? Platforms like Twitch, TikTok, YouTube are today the main sources of information for 15-25 year olds. Acceleration, sensationalism, information fatigue, innovative formats New uses are shaking up the traditional models on which the media are based. How can we talk about social issues differently to address all audiences? How can we prioritize information in a very horizontal universe? How can we coexist with content creators? What tone should we use? How can we understand the incarnation imposed by these new media? Finally, how can we converse with our readers? ?Round table with Domingo, streamer, Johan Hufnagel, co-founder of Loopsider. Meeting hosted by Lauren Provost, deputy editorial director. (La rue musicale-grande scène) 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Hostage, meeting with Olivier Dubois Finally! After 711 days of captivity in the Sahel, Olivier Dubois (photo below), correspondent for Libération, Le Point and Jeune Afrique in Mali, was released on March 20. What were the conditions of his detention? How did he hold out? What was his daily life like? How did the mobilization of the authorities, his friends, his relatives and the profession allow his release? What really happened in Gao on the day of his kidnapping? What was the role of the authorities and the French army? He looks back on his captivity and explains to us how to be a free man again. ?Meeting with Olivier Dubois, hosted by Sonia Delesalle-Stolper and Célian Macé, deputy editor-in-chief and reporter in the World department. (La rue musicale) 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Breaking news! How does the newsroom get going when unpredictable information breaks? Based on three different cases (the explosion on rue Saint-Jacques, the death of Nahel and the announcement of the death of Prigojine), dive into the News department. Sending a reporter, coordinating with the department concerned, verifying the information, cross-checking sources, sending a push, successive updates. We tell you everything about the hot news circuit. ? Meeting with Laure Bretton, editor-in-chief in the News department, and Mickaël Frison, head of Social Networks. (La rue musicale) 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Lifestyle: life in fashion Gastronomy, design, beauty, new technologies, parenting, love life and sex life... How can we tell the story of the world to come without falling into consumerist clichés? How can we give voice to those who are shaking things up? Ultimately, isn't telling the story of lifestyles (a little) political? ?Meeting with journalists from the Lifestyles department. (La rue musicale) 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. How can we cover major terrorist trials? ?Meeting with Juliette Delage and Chloé Pilorget-Rezzouk, journalists from the Society department. (La rue musicale) 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. The "front page" live and in public? Journalists, editor-in-chief and artistic director discuss, in public, the choice of image and headlines for the front page. A unique and original experience. (La rue musicale-grande scène).

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1796

Both have long been interested in digital commons, these citizen resources, co-produced and open. Valérie Peugeot, researcher in digital social sciences and member of the college of the National Commission for Information Technology and Liberties (CNIL), has made it a subject of study. Henri Verdier, France's ambassador for digital after having been interministerial director of digital, has placed the logic of the commons at the heart of the French strategy for innovation and sovereignty in this field. With the acceleration of developments in artificial intelligence (AI), we are seeing a renewed interest in the idea of digital commons. How can this be explained? Henri Verdier: Generative artificial intelligence systems are revolutionizing our societies and economies. This acceleration risks leading to an even more monopolistic world than it is today, because these systems require great computing power and gigantic databases to train them. The scenario where only American or Chinese giants would have control over these technologies is a deterrent to which the commons can provide an answer. The States of the European Union are becoming aware of the need, in order to maintain sovereignty of innovation, to create open and shared infrastructures. Many initiatives are being launched. If we do not set up these accessible infrastructures with shared governance, we risk living in a world where we will have to ask Elon Musk for permission to innovate. Valérie Peugeot: France's call for digital AI commons is an excellent initiative, which must be encouraged. We need shared databases and algorithms, for reasons of sovereignty and also to align AI technologies with our European values. I am more circumspect about using the notion of "commons" to describe these infrastructures. We tend to confuse it with the common good, although they are two different notions. The common good is a conception of the general interest that is more or less shared in a society. The "commons", for their part, are defined by three pillars: there must be a shared resource - material or immaterial - managed by a community - local, in the case of a shared garden, or globalized and deterritorialized, like the one that manages the free software Linux -, which defines governance rules to protect the resource and distribute usage rights. However, in calls for projects for AI commons, the State places an order for a resource that is not supported by a collective, and of which we do not really know under which license it will be shared, nor with what distribution of usage rights. All this remains very vague. Can you remind us of the origin of digital commons? HV: Historically, commons were natural resources - fields, forests, ponds - shared and protected by communities. With the development of private property, commons gradually disappeared. But, at the end of the 20th century, the researcher Elinor Ostrom [1933-2012] studied those that remained, and demonstrated the effectiveness of this mode of cooperation for the preservation of resources. She received the equivalent of the Nobel Prize in economics in 2009 for this work. VP: With mass digitization came new commons, immaterial this time, such as computer code or shared data. Standards and protocols – www, http://, etc. – are commons at the very heart of the history of the Web and the Internet. It is thanks to their open nature that websites and digital services have multiplied since the mid-1990s in record time. Today, the most emblematic examples of knowledge commons are, of course, the Wikipedia encyclopedia, cartographic data, such as OpenStreetMap, or nutritional data from Open Food Facts, which are open and managed by communities of contributors. Can digital commons survive in a neoliberal market economy? What could their economic model be? VP: There is no ideal economic model for the commons, but many different models. Some have chosen the market, and charge for their services. Others operate on the basis of donations, with the limits of this mode of organization: not all users of software or a database give, far from it, too accustomed to the false gratuity of the Web. Still others find mixed, more sustainable modes of financing. HV: There is no fundamental contradiction between the commons and the market. The economy benefits greatly from public infrastructures and free software. But we must remember that digital commons are essential and fragile, as is, moreover, the model of a free and open Internet. It is quite possible that the latter will disappear and that our grandchildren will not know it. It is urgent to defend it. Companies, for their part, have a role to play in preserving the digital commons, which are essential to them. Some do so by contributing to the maintenance of essential tools such as Linux software. Others realize a little late in the day the value of a digital commons at a time when it is at risk of disappearing. We remember Log4J [a library used by the Java programming language], used by the entire global industry. When a security flaw was highlighted in 2021, companies panicked and discovered that their business model depended on two young Canadian developers who were operating the system alone. This example shows that the responsibility of companies and states is engaged: it is shocking to have let these two developers voluntarily manage a valuable tool without any financial assistance or cybersecurity expertise. What role can the state play in supporting and accompanying these digital commons? VP: Swiss researchers showed in 2012 that there are four types of relationships between public authorities and the commons: confrontation, instrumentalization, mediation and infusion. The first two are still common, unfortunately, in a logic where it is difficult to think beyond the public property-private property divide. Over time, however, we are seeing more and more initiatives emerge that fall under mediation and infusion, and which I call "public-commons partnerships". The State can first be a financier of the commons, for example when a community makes premises or an employee available to a third place that creates shared resources. It can also be a legal facilitator, or even a protector of the commons. In 2001, the government created the status of collective interest cooperative societies, SCICs, which have been seized by digital commons such as Mobicoop, a site that offers commission-free carpooling solutions. The State can also integrate the commons into public procurement, for example when it chooses free software for its administrations or for the world of education, rather than introducing Microsoft. Finally, public authorities can participate in the design of commons, as when the Ministry of National Education develops a version of BigBlueButton, the equivalent of the Zoom videoconferencing tool, but in open source software. HV: States have an important role to play in supporting and accompanying digital commons. They can also sometimes encourage the creation of commons themselves, as France did with OpenFisca, a tool that makes it easier for citizens to simulate taxes, or Open Terms Archive, which allows them to monitor changes in the conditions of use of online services. In this case, a State must learn to work on an equal footing with other actors, such as civil society, but it is possible. Under the French presidency of the European Union, in the first half of 2022, nineteen States, including France, co-signed a report on commons in the service of sovereignty and called on the Commission to launch a European foundation on commons. Dozens of representatives of commons were heard. They testified that they needed this financial support, but also support for software maintenance and servers, assistance in the jungle of public aid, a specific "lawyer" within the administration itself to defend them, and a commitment from institutions to use them, or even contribute. In France, public authorities have not always supported digital commons. During the Covid-19 pandemic, third places were called to order because they had manufactured respirators and visors using plans under Creative Commons license. What is your analysis of this period? VP: This episode left its mark. Fab lab stakeholders experienced it as a way for the State to regain control, after a period of crisis where the citizen commons that are third places and fab labs compensated for the State's failures. I remain convinced that the episode was rather positive, despite everything, because it allowed us to move forward and show the power and effectiveness of the commons in times of crisis. It also helped to loosen the intellectual stranglehold that, since the 18th century, has locked us into binary thinking, with the market on one side, which has drifted towards extreme capitalism, and public power on the other. The commons can fertilize both the market and public services by encouraging them to work differently and together, in dialogue with citizen initiatives, and, in doing so, promote local democracy. The relevance of the commons is to help us change our perspective and show us that we can build society differently. HV: The Covid-19 crisis has undoubtedly shown, unfortunately, that opening up public action had not yet become enough of a part of our customs to withstand times of crisis. Civil society mobilized, of course, but did not immediately find solutions to apply on a large scale. As for the public authorities, they adopted a fairly vertical response, which, let us stress, held up well, but which therefore missed many opportunities, even if there were counter-examples. In the era of climate change, what role can the commons play in the necessary shift in our lifestyles and economies? VP: There is no doubt that digital commons are facilitators of repairability and reuse. For example, L'Atelier paysan, a SCIC for self-construction of agricultural work tools, makes tractor plans available online to prevent farmers from finding themselves dependent on manufacturers who provide neither the instructions nor the parts to repair them. In Lanester [Morbihan], near Lorient, the Défis association recovers obsolete computers from companies, reconditions them and equips them with free software before offering them to families in precarious situations. We also see free software communities working to write the most frugal code possible, in order to limit the energy consumption linked to digital uses. These initiatives are all catalysts for developing more ecological digital practices.

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1797

It all started with outrage. In 2011, after attracting 3 million users in Europe, the free platform Covoiturage.fr – now Blablacar – announced that it would become a paid platform. From now on, each passenger boarding an unknown car in order to share the journey and costs would have to pay a 20% commission. A handful of rebels rose up and created the association Covoiturage libre, with its platform of the same name. In 2018, the structure had nearly 200,000 users, opted for cooperative status and renamed itself Mobicoop. It was at this time that Bastien Sibille, now president of the structure, joined the adventure. For this fervent defender of free software, "large platforms like Uber or Airbnb are collaborative but not cooperative: behind a very cool appearance of renting a couch, there are always investment funds that charge commissions and sell user data". Mobicoop, on the other hand, favors free and democratic governance. For its 600,000 users, getting in touch for a carpool is free. The cooperative's income comes from its services for local authorities and businesses. It develops customized carpooling platforms for them and ensures their animation. Its clients are varied, from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region to the Pays d'Epinal via the Andros company. In 3,000 rural communities, Mobicoop has even institutionalized hitchhiking: green signs decorated with a thumbs-up indicate the places where aspiring passengers can wait for a driver - duly registered - to stop. Average waiting time claimed by the cooperative: six minutes. As a player in digital commons, Mobicoop bases its activity on free software. Consequently, "if tomorrow the Greater Lyon or the Finistère department no longer want to work with us, their IT specialists will be able to use the computer code of the carpooling platform themselves," continues Bastien Sibille. And the data on the journeys made will remain their property. With other players, this data would potentially be commercialized. This is very serious." Another distinctive feature is that Mobicoop is a collective interest cooperative company (SCIC). Decisions are made between the 1,120 members, including local authorities, financiers, employees, customers, users, etc. "The cooperative belongs to all the people who use it, and they vote according to the principle of "one person, one vote." A structure like Macif, for example, therefore has the same decision-making power as a user holding a single share," says Bastien Sibille happily. Three times more Between January and September, Mobicoop made more than 162,500 carpools possible. That's three times more than during the entire previous year. These figures are far removed from the 5 million journeys claimed by Blablacar, which recruits its users through expensive advertising campaigns. But the trend is upwards. "The way people travel is in the general interest. By sharing journeys, Mobicoop provides a response to the precarious mobility of rural residents, who are facing rising fuel prices," notes Bastien Sibille. He dreams of a partnership with the SNCF to facilitate travel to and from stations. Another advantage, and not the least, the cooperative contributes to the fight against global warming: the carpools carried out through it during the first eight months of this year have prevented the emission of 1,300 tons of CO2 into the atmosphere. For the president of the cooperative, it is obvious, "digital commons offer new ways of providing public service".

## ###ARTICLE\_START### ID:1798

Times of crisis reveal initiatives that pave the way for resilience. During the Covid-19 pandemic, it was volunteer engineers who, in 2020, developed the CovidTracker information site using open source software, then the Vite ma dose vaccine tracking application a year later. At the same time, the network of fab labs, these participatory third places, responded to calls for help from caregivers by manufacturing thousands of visors and respirators using plans under Creative Commons license – a tool that allows creators to let the public, under certain conditions, copy their works, modify them or use them to do something else. The emergency has highlighted the relevance of the values of openness, cooperation and co-organization of digital commons, these resources shared and accessible online, co-produced and maintained collectively by communities who themselves define the usage rights. From the Wikipedia encyclopedia to the OpenStreetMap map database and the free Linux operating system, the leader in most of the servers that run major web services, these commons are essential. "We have a lot to gain from open-source solutions", an approach that allows us to "reduce costs for society" and "strengthen security", estimated Johannes Hahn, the Commissioner for Budget and Administration at the European Commission, in 2021. Especially since open resources can contribute "significantly to the challenges of mitigating and adapting to climate change", underlines the Agency for Ecological Transition (Ademe). Supporting activists However, these initiatives remain fragile. Digital commons often only last thanks to the goodwill of activists who are exhausted. In recent years, the State has been thinking about how to support them. The interministerial digital department supports projects of general interest within its "citizen initiative accelerator", such as the database of food products "created by all and for all" Open Food Facts, or the early detection system for forest fires using artificial intelligence (AI), from the Pyronear association. "The State is moving away from a logic of purchasing and prescription to play the role of catalyst for initiatives that represent a wealth for more open, distributed and robust public action", notes Pierre-Louis Rolle, from the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT). It is to raise public awareness of these ideas that the ANCT is organizing, this year in Bordeaux, on October 19 and 20, the sixth edition of the event Numérique en commun[s] of which Le Monde is a partner. The acceleration of developments in artificial intelligence (AI) and the desire to preserve European sovereignty and values in this sector are today renewing interest in digital commons. A call for projects launched in June by the State aims to "create digital commons across the entire generative artificial intelligence chain", in particular the huge databases needed to train and improve future AI programs. New economic models are emerging, combining public service, the private sector and citizen dynamics. However, everyone must ensure that the shared governance of these commons is preserved, without any partner seeking to upset the balance. "Beware of 'commons washing' because the term 'commons' is fashionable and many structures want to claim it without there being any real citizen social dynamic behind the projects", warns Dorie Bruyas, programmer of the event Numérique en commun[s]. It is at the cost of this vigilance that "the relevance of the commons" can "help us change our glasses", according to the expression of digital social science researcher Valérie Peugeot, and "show that we can build society differently".

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Gmail, Drive, Messenger… free for the user, the services of Gafam (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple and Microsoft) are not without counterpart. These tech giants suck up personal data, which they value and market without paying a single cent to their owners. Put off by these practices, Adrien Luxey-Bitri, 28, and Quentin Dufour, 30, both holders of a doctorate in computer science, are fighting to offer replacement solutions. With other enthusiasts, these two “tinkerers” co-founded the Deuxfleurs association in Rennes in 2020 to provide citizens with services with functions similar to those of Gafam. Instead of the WhatsApp messaging application, Deuxfleurs offers Matrix; to replace Zoom video conferences, they are banking on Jitsi. And for collaborative work, they dethrone Google Drive with CryptPad. In its fight against the influence of digital giants, Deuxfleurs is not acting alone. The association is one of 96 similar structures created in recent years in France by activists determined to increase technological services for the public. They are grouped under the banner of the Collectif des hôtes alternatives, transparents, ouverts, neutres et solidaires, better known by its acronym, Chatons. This activist collective took root in 2014 with the deployment of the “Dégooglisons Internet” initiative, launched by Framasoft. This popular education association, founded in 2004, fights to ensure that the Web remains accessible to all and that Internet users’ data is not abusively captured by the giants of the sector. Small agile structures Framasoft then offers around forty services to citizens: collaborative work tool, calendar, spreadsheet, etc. A success: these services attract up to 600,000 monthly users. But, very quickly, Framasoft realized that it was reproducing, on a smaller scale, what it criticized Gafam for: offering a single interface to hundreds of thousands of Internet users. So, in 2016, it created the Chatons initiative. The idea is to encourage the emergence of small, independent and agile structures that manage their own services and users. Coordinator of the collective, Angie Gaudion explains: "It's our way of "sharing the cake", of creating and promoting citizen initiatives similar to the "Dégooglisons Internet" program, throughout the territory." To join the collective and remain there in the long term, Chatons undertake to respect around one hundred and fifty criteria. In addition to a necessary online presence, they must offer services based on free software, i.e. tools that can be used, copied and modified free of charge by anyone. They must also undertake to ban all advertising and any exploitation of personal data. The activists of the collective know it well: you don't join the Chatons to get rich. Moreover, most of the time, they are volunteers. However, they do not work for free. The use of the services is often paid for. Different models are applied. At Deuxfleurs, beneficiaries choose the amount they are willing to pay to access the services offered, even if the administrators recommend a price of "between 10 and 15 euros per year". Other Chatons have a more traditional approach. This is the case of Pâquerette, created in 2017 by Dominique Hébert, in the Paris region. This 65-year-old retiree has opted for an operation close to that of a company. It is aimed more at organizations than individuals, with rates starting at 100 euros per year. "Our association has five part-time people, so we try to pay ourselves," he confides. Generating revenue is a real challenge for the Chatons, because their reputation is still slim. "For now, we are working mainly with people who are already convinced of the importance of escaping the influence of Gafam," acknowledges Dominique Hébert. This former IT consultant has not lost hope of being able to persuade more citizens to become "the driving forces behind the liberation of digital uses."

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Put an end to obscure data tables and barbaric names on the back of products in our supermarkets. This is the mission that Stéphane Gigandet set himself in 2012. This computer engineer from the Ecole Centrale de Nantes, who worked at Yahoo! in California, created the culinary blog portal Recettes de Cuisine. In his fight, he was quickly joined by Charles Nepote, a data pioneer in France, former program director of a think tank specializing in digital transformations, and by Pierre Slamich, a graduate of Sciences Po Paris in finance and strategy. Outraged by the lack of transparency of brands, the three activists, armed with a website and a simple digital camera, decided to create their own database, civic and accessible to all. Their goal: to offer consumers the possibility of knowing the products they buy and to allow them to compare them easily. "It must be remembered that at the time, the Nutri-score nutritional classification had not yet seen the light of day, and that the only information available to consumers came from the marketing speeches of brands," Pierre Slamich explains today. Faced with the opacity of the food industry, hundreds of volunteers from the free software community are working to find the preservatives and colorings hidden in the ingredient lists of products sold in supermarkets. Tartrazine (E102), quinoline yellow (E104) or Ponceau 4R (E124): these additives suspected of side effects or known to be dangerous for health soon hold no more secrets for them. "Initially, data entry proved laborious," says Pierre Slamich. We identified 100, then 1,000, then 10,000 products, starting with the most popular. Then, quite quickly, we created an app to scan the barcodes of items. » A Nutri-score made more visible Available on Android, from 2012, and on the App Store, a year later, the application was immediately designed in crowdsourcing, that is to say in participatory collection. "The principle is very "free": when the citizen scans the barcode of a product, it is automatically added to the database, the information obtained benefits everyone", he adds. The application is free and its data open. "We launched the project at the time of President Obama, our slogan "Yes, we scan". That was our philosophy: to give citizens the possibility to act and no longer suffer." In order to make the composition of products understandable for the general public, the developers of Open Food Facts are approaching two research units specialized in nutrition and food. That of the nutritional epidemiology research team, attached to Inserm and led by Professor Serge Hercberg, at the origin of the Nutri-score, and that of Professor Carlos Monteiro, creator of the Nova classification, providing information on the degree of transformation of the materials at the origin of a product. "We gave visibility to these classifications, in particular to Nutri-score, which was not yet recognized by citizens", continues Pierre Slamich. With success. In 2016, France adopted the Nutri-score, soon followed by Belgium and Spain in 2018. Although its use remains optional in these countries, more and more brands are adopting it on their packaging. Having long relied on volunteers, the Open Food Facts association was structured in 2019, thanks to a multi-year agreement signed with Santé publique France. "This is our first historic support. This partnership with the State has allowed us to work full-time on our project,” adds Pierre Slamich. Another alliance, formed with the interministerial digital department, provides them with 80,000 euros and helps finance a full-time position. The team now has eight employees. In addition to this public support, including Ademe, Open Food Facts benefits from the help of several foundations (including those of Google and Free) and donations from citizens. A little over ten years after its creation, the free database lists more than 2 million products. The application is consulted by 2.7 million visitors each month and is available in more than 180 countries. With its free and open data, the project has attracted imitators: Yuka, Foodvisor, Y'a quoi dedans and Scan Eat have all since used Open Food Facts data to launch their own projects. And Pierre Slamich concludes: "We are delighted to see so many tools available to citizens, this is what has made it possible to impose a public health score on manufacturers. This is our victory."