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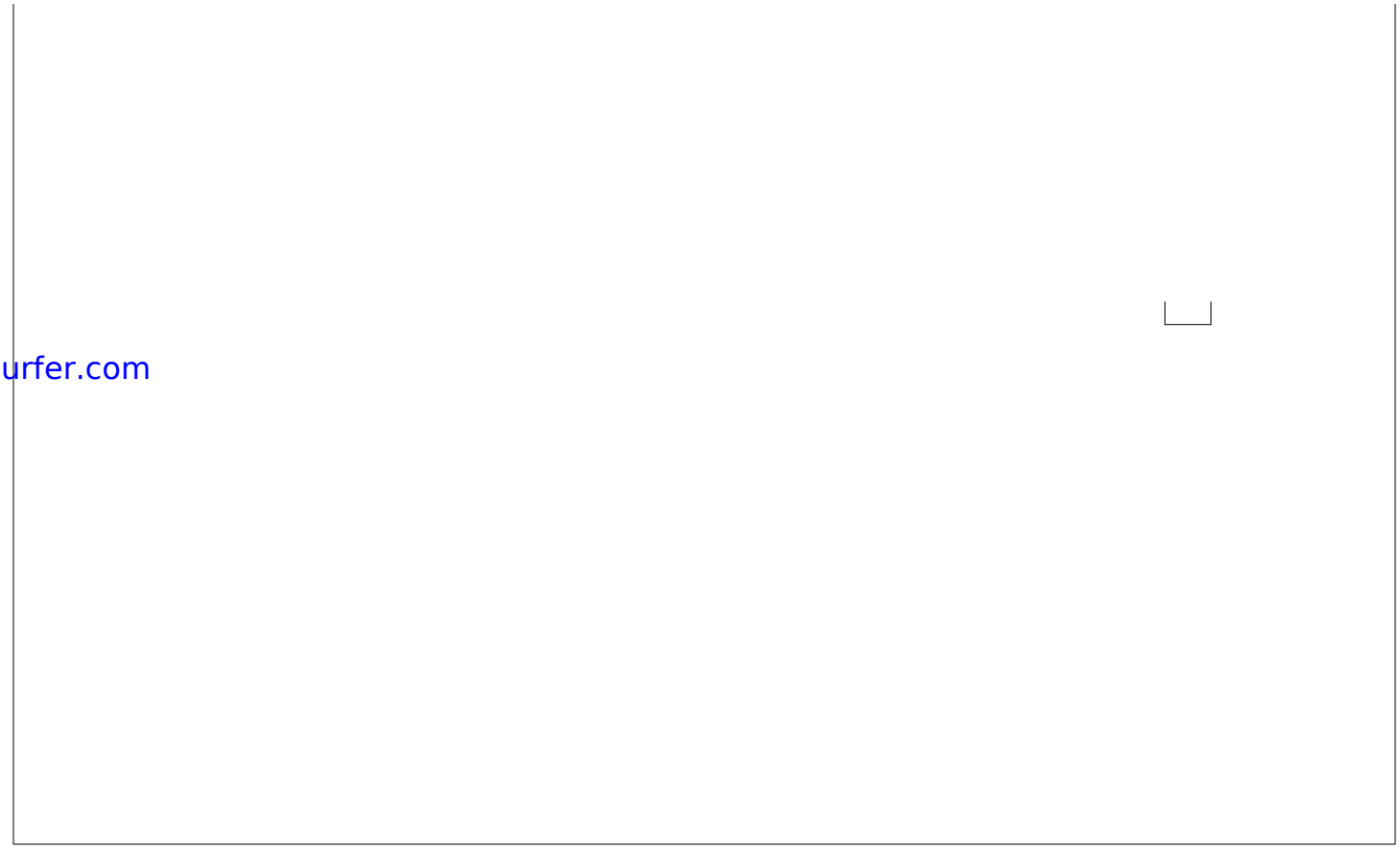

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Surfing the Wave

What is a wave? What can you do within a wave?

A wave is a collection of information, such as text, photos and videos, within a hosted conversation that is shared among those who are invited in the conversation. It's kind of like email and IM on steroids.

Some of the cool features are listed below:

First of all, everything is real time.

The text that a person types will be available for others in the wave to see as the person types it. In the same way, a photo uploaded by a person will be available for others to see as soon as it is uploaded.

There is no need for refreshing the browser to see changes within a wave. In the real world, no one waits for others to completely finish his or her sentence before replying, while people must wait for others to finish typing in an IM conversation to reply. Google wave eliminates the need to wait for others in IM conversations, bridging the gap between IM and actual, audible conversations.

You can share pictures and videos through wave.

Through this nifty feature, users can create photo albums and share funny Youtube videos together. The best thing about this feature is the lack of difficulty it takes to post the pictures and videos. To share the photos, all you have to do is drag and drop onto the wave, or search a desired photo online through the wave. To share videos, a user only has to copy and paste a url of the site, i.e. Youtube, or copy and paste the embed codes.

You can edit and comment on any text within a wave.

This is one of the components that truly make Google wave the ultimate collaboration tool. Unlike in an email, anyone within a wave can edit text within the wave. So students can critique and edit each other's papers with ease. Employers can draw out a schedule for the month while the employees comment on when they would like to work. Colleagues can go over the same document and edit what needs to be edited, and comment on what needs to be commented on. There are infinite amounts of ways you can use wave: It all depends on your

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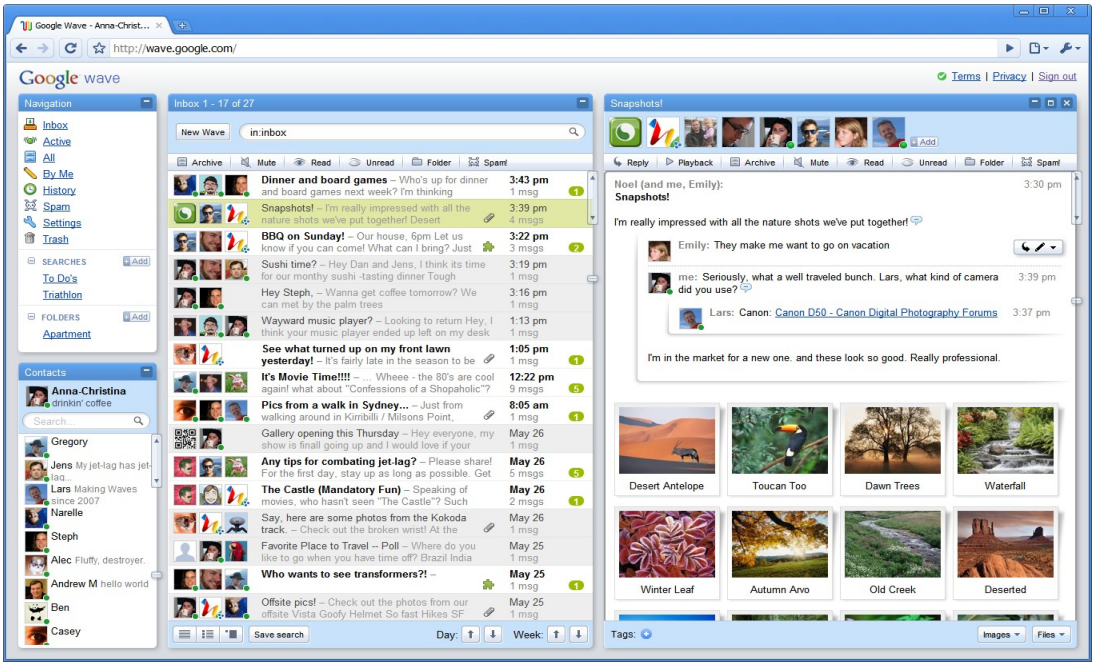
creativity.

The playback feature adds the icing on the wave.

You may be asking yourself, “Well, what if I don’t like what others changed in the wave?” The playback feature silences this question. Through playback, one can not only see the progress of the changes made within the wave, but can also see who made these changes.



Open Source

What does open source mean, and how will it shape the future of Google Wave?

According to OpenSouce.org, open source is “a development method for software that harnesses the power of distributed peer review and transparency of process. The promise of open source is better quality, higher reliability, more flexibility, lower cost, and an end to predatory vendor lock-in." This basically means that anyone can contribute to and critique open source software.

With Google Wave being open source, possibilities are endless. The way the creators of Google Wave, Lars Rasmussen, Jens Rasmussen, and Stephanie Hannon, developed Google Wave allows for developers all around the world to contribute to the software.

Some of the advantages of Google Wave being open source are:

Just like email, developers can recreate various services for the waves.

There are many different services for webmail, such as Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail, and Gmail. In the same way, because Google Wave will be open

source, developers worldwide will be able to create their own webmail service as they wish. This will allow users to choose from their favorite, more suitable wave service.

Anyone can contribute to the wave protocol.

This is a given, but as people start using Google Wave for various reasons, there will be a need for changes and adjustments to Google Wave. Because Google Wave will be open source, Google will not be the only one responsible for these improvements. Being open source, Google Wave will continue to improve appropriately to the demands of users.

Endless opportunities with extensions.

I have elaborated on this below under the title Extensions. For now, just know that extensions make Google Wave better, and the fact that developers all over the world can create their own extensions add to sensational quality of Google Wave.

Extensions

What are extensions and how does it affect Google Wave?

Extensions on Google Wave can be thought of like applications on

Facebook or Myspace. Extensions are devices that will enhance your Google Wave experiences by far. There are two major types of extensions: gadgets and robots.

Gadgets are extensions that act like individual appliances within a wave. A couple examples of gadgets include the search engine within the waves and games such as Sudoku and Chess.

Robots are extensions that are actively involved in the conversation within the wave. One example of an amazing robot which was demonstrated in the Google I/O 2009 is a translation robot. This robot can translate forty different languages, and the coolest thing about it is that it translates word by word, character by character in

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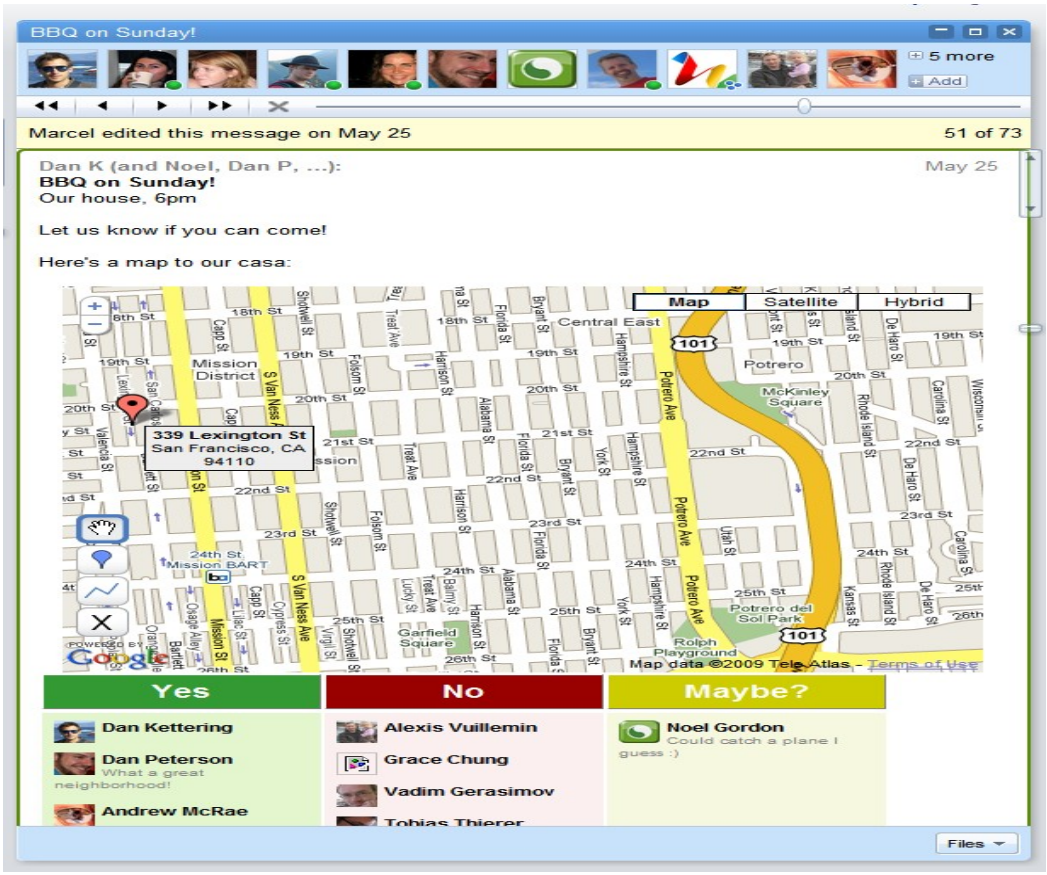
real time.

There are no limitations when considering variations of robots and gadgets. Since Google Wave is open source, as I've explained earlier, any developer from around the world can create their own robots and gadgets. In result, extensions will enhance the Google Wave experience in ways we cannot even begin to comprehend.



Embedding and Integration

Embedding and integration will eliminate the need to go to numerous sites just to check your updates.

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Waves will be capable of being embedded into websites through Google Wave, in the same way people embed videos and photos. This is truly remarkable because all of the same functions that are possible on Google Wave will also be possible on websites simply through embedding. Through this ability, a company can embed a wave and have a conversation with customers through their own company website. A family can create a blog, converse and post photos and videos at ease through embedding a wave into the blog.

Integration is a wonderful concept that the Google Wave team capitalized on. Through integration, users will be able to bridge the gap between various websites and Google Wave. One example of this is Twitter. Users will be able to see other people's tweets, search tweets, and simply tweet on Twitter through Google Wave.

Embedding and integration will be the key to bringing together all of your favorite websites into one. Soon, there will be no need to go to ten different websites just to check up on any updates or new posts. It will be all on your wave account.

To see some videos of the google wave in action go to

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