



# TechCrunch

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## AllPeers Goes Open Source



AllPeers launched with a bang but then struggled along with a whimper. That's why today's news that they are taking their source code open source is both a surrender as well as a glimmer of hope for the struggling startup.

AllPeers is a great idea in theory. Users can create private P2P file sharing networks, away from the prying eyes of the RIAA and MPAA fascists. But a number of other startups that also allow private file sharing have launched in the last year as well, and all are fighting for user attention.

AllPeers does have many passionate users, and some of them will now contribute to the open source project. The first few comments to the announcement are very positive - hopefully this will help AllPeers gain momentum.

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## Google Grabs Friendster Ad Deal



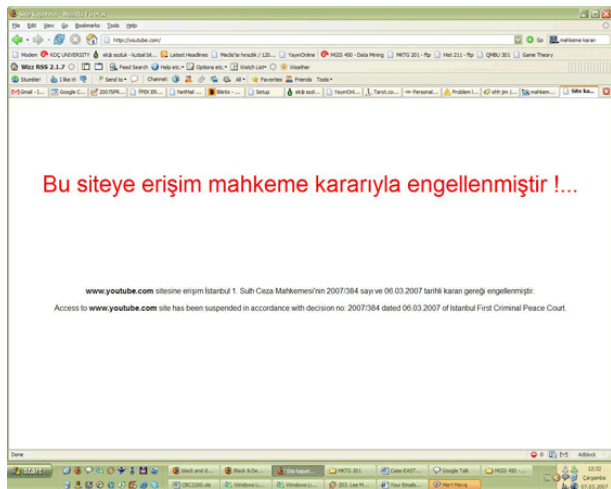
The big social networks continue to side with Advertising networks to help monetize their sites. MySpace signed a \$900 million deal with Google in August 2006, and Facebook countered by choosing Microsoft a couple of weeks later. This morning, Friendster announced a multi-year exclusive deal to work with Google on both search and keyword-targeted advertising.

The financial terms are not being disclosed. Friendster is not in the same league as MySpace and Facebook, but this is still a win for Google. Friendster generates 6 billion or so page views per month, about 1/6 of

MySpace.

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# Turkey Says “No More YouTube”



This is the site that appears when residents of Turkey attempt to go to YouTube, the popular video sharing site owned by Google. The text, translated to English, reads “Access to www.youtube.com site has been suspended in accordance with decision no: 2007/384 dated 06.03.2007 of Is-

tanbul First Criminal Peace Court.”

The reason for the ban: a video, which has now been taken down, showing Greeks criticizing Turkey and insulting Turkey's national flag and founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. A good background story is [here](#), and the news broke on this site (in Turkish only).

All public internet access in Turkey is provided by Turk Telecom via adsl, so the takedown is relatively simple.

A group of Turkish bloggers has said that they will try to fight this in Turkey, and get YouTube reinstated. See the Times for more information.

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## This Week in CrunchGear



Even with our team scattered to the four winds, CrunchGear is still pumping out the hits. Have a busted iPod? Matt Hickey has the cure. Want OS X Leopard? It's on its way. Want to know what happens when you're Tasered? Our Seth Porges offers a fascinating look at the litigious — and dangerous — world of stun



guns.

Finally, want to make yourself sound like Mickey Mouse or Sauron? Enter our Scramby contest.

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## Sharpcast Expands Sync Platform With Photos v1.0

If you work or play from multiple computing devices - laptops, desktops and/or mobile phones, Sharpcast can be a killer productivity tool and an excellent way of keeping all kinds of files synchronized. In a very basic sense, it's like IMAP for all your files.

Sharpcast came out of beta and released a 1.0 version of their photo synchronization application today. Sharpcast Photos syncs the photos you add and edits you make on your desktop, web, and mobile phone in real time.

The new version now allows you to collaboratively edit your photos and galleries, also in real time. Collaboration consists of the ability to share

files and read/write privileges in public or private folders along with real time chat built into the client.

The demo I saw of Sharpcast's real-time syncing is quite impressive, pushing file updates to all the platforms in under a second. Edit a photo in their application, on the web, or your desktop, and the changes are instantly pushed to each location. But Sharpcast isn't trying to be the next Flickr, rather, the photo syncing application really a demo for their file syncing API. In the specific case of photos, whole photos are stored in each location, with edits to the original photo represented as meta data directions on how to render the final version.

They currently have a broader file syncing application, Hummingbird, in the works. Hummingbird will handle syncing for all file types. It is essen-

tially the same animal as the photo sharing application, but with fewer bells and whistles. Hummingbird will note and push your updates to your other platforms, but won't carry out the same real-time updates of the photo product. To avoid the problem of two people making concurrent edits to a file, they will have to be saved, and then opened elsewhere to make changes. While Microsoft Word does support editing concurrency, Hummingbird does not currently support it.

Sharpcast took \$13.5 million in financing last March.

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## Apple iLaunch (humor)



In a jab at Apple CEO Steve Jobs' ability to capture the world's attention every time he announces a new product, the Onion reports the introduction of the new Apple iLaunch in an article titled "Apple Unveils New Product-Unveiling Product."

The iLaunch is a product that will "revolutionize the process of unveiling new products throughout the world."

This is, of course, a joke. The Onion has a history of taking shots at hot companies just when the hype is going overboard. See, for example, their previous article on Google Purge, a non-existent product that will “destroy all copyrighted materials that cannot be searched by Google” and which noted Google’s “buildup of a vast army of laser-equipped robots.”

The Onion says of iLaunch:

Described in its patent filing as a “hype-generating mechanism with fully integrated Mac compatibility,” the iLaunch is powered by Intel dual-core processors optimized to calculate a product’s gravitas. Apple claims the iLaunch can garner the same amount of press attention as a major sci-

entific discovery, high court ruling, celebrity meltdown, or natural disaster at 200 times the speed of a traditional media-fostered launch.

Just go read the article. . . I love the last paragraph about the Microsoft clone, called Launch-O.

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## Google Desktop 5 Released: Search Improved



The beta release of Google Desktop 5 was just announced on the main Google blog as well as the Desktop blog.

A complete overview of the new and existing Desktop features is here. The most important change is that users now have the ability to preview files in search results directly in the application or browser, which is a time saver. They've also upgraded security and redesigned the widget features.

We last covered version 3 of the product, which was released in



February 2006. That was the first time Google started (optionally) storing your hard drive index on Google's servers instead of locally on your own computer.

Yahoo, Microsoft and Copernic have competing products.

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## **The Much Needed Beer Calculator**

If you want to know exactly how many kegs of beer, pounds of ice and number of cups you need to get everyone at your party hammered, give Kegulator a whirl. Tell it how many guests you are having, use their Ajax slider to set how drunk everyone will get, and the site will spit out the supplies necessary to achieve your goal. If you're Canadian, use Beer Hunter afterwards to figure out where to buy all that stuff. Or use the open source beer recipe and make your own. Kegulator is the creation of Michigan's Steve Richert.



# The Kegulator

*Plug & Chug*

What is The Kegulator?

How many people will be drinking?

*Continue*

STEP 1

How many drinkers will be...

Tipsy (1 or 2 beers)



Buzzed (3-5 beers)



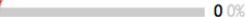
Drunk (6-9 beers)



Hammered (10+)



Randoms



STEP 2

## Kegulate

STEP 3

You need...

**Beer**

2 kegs  
1 case



+/- 0 random beers.  
Includes 15% spillage.

**Ice**

104 pounds



Assumes room temperature.

**Cups**

30 cups



Assumes 20% breakage.  
Excluding drinking games.

RESULTS

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# Google Answers to Rise From Dead?



Yahoo Answers is the undisputed leader in the Q&A space, vanquishing Google Answers to the Deadpool late in 2006.

But now, a number of researchers who previously worked on Google Answers have started their own new service: Uclue. The team has also posted on the TechCrunch Forums looking for people to help out with the project.

Like Google Answers, people asking questions are charged. The model is a little different, though. Google charged 50 cents to post. Uclue will be free to post. Google

had answer fees between \$2-200 by credit card upon the question's answer. Uclue will be in the range of \$5-250 paid in advance by PayPal. Whereas Google was English only, Uclue will also support question in Spanish and German.

The site is in a rough beta form right now, with PayPal payments temporarily going to an oddly named account "Everything Eiffel". To get your question answered, you post it to their board along with the bounty you're willing to pay. Your question will be answered by a Uclue researcher, who receives 75% of your question price (the uclue service receives the remaining 25%). Questions can be canceled and refunded if you find the answer unsatisfactory or if they go unanswered for 30 days.

J Philip asks the question we're

all wondering, "How does Uclue compare with Google Answers?". Uclue responds by saying the smaller startup will put more effort into the product than Google did with Answers, the tangentially related product of a multi billion dollar conglomerate. There are some differences in the business plan as well.

Apart from Uclue's highly motivated staff, it doesn't seem like Uclue will offer anything radically different from Google's model that failed after 4 years. Uclue seems doomed to follow down GA's path, while other services like Ether and Bitwine have at least differentiated themselves by enabling pay-per-call consulting. We already saw another paid answers service, Tinbag, launch last month. Tinbag is a distributed answers service, relying on self-promoting re-

searchers to drum up business on their own Tinbag powered sites.

We've covered other answers services before. See our coverage of Live QnA, Yedda, Guruza, Answerbag, and Amazon's Askville.

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# GeoSign Raises \$ 160 Million For Content Acquisitions



In one of the largest private equity financings for an Internet company in recent history, Web publisher GeoSign, located outside of Toronto, has raised US\$ 160 million from American Capital. The money will be used primarily for acquisitions, and the founders are taking some money off the table. RBC Capital Markets acted as the private placement agent for the deal.

The company joins Demand Media, which has raised \$200 million over two rounds of financing, in the hunt for good content companies.

GeoSign plans to making three to five "sizeable" business acquisitions in

the near future, while also continuing to build out their own properties. Their portfolio of sites covers over 20 verticals and reach more than 35 million unique visitors per month.

Geosign was started in 2000 when founder and CEO Tim Nye, frustrated with the results while searching for new home plans, started homeplan-info.com to capitalize on an underserved niche. Since then Geosign has been building out their publishing network by acquiring/investing in properties and monetizing them through advertising.

The company has 230 employees, with over 100 of them generating content for the sites in the publishing department. Past investments from Geosign include local search engine TrueLocal, mobile search engine go2, outdoors enthusiast site No-

madik, DietNation, ThinkFashion, CosmeticSurgeryInsider, and AllSafeTravels. They are also building basic social networks around these sites - see restaurantica for an example.

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FOOA - The Future of Online Advertising is a conference happening out in New York June 7th and 8th. The conference features speakers such as Digg's Jay Adelson, Brightcove's Jeremy Allaire, Federated Media's Chas Edwards, Feedburner's Steve Olechowski, Micropersuasion's Steve Rubel, RightMedia's Michael Walrath. The full list is [here](#). The schedule also includes a ton of case studies about advertising, covering salient topics for advertisers such as ad networks, search ads, video ads, and click fraud prevention. If you sign up

now you will save \$100 off admission.

Edgeio - Classified listings are hidden all over the web, Edgeio brings them all together. They have 100 million items, from 16,258 cities, in 162 countries. They let you search by category and geography. Check out these PlayStation 3's for sale.

Compete - Looking to see how your site stacks up on the web? Check out compete statistics for your rank, page views, and average stay. Compete snapshots also cover website deals for sites like these deals on Yahoo.

Text Link Ads - If you're looking to monetize your site, or for new advertising opportunities, check out Text Link Ads. TLA helps improve your site's ranking and target 10,000 niche communities, all at a flat rate. Still scratching your head? Read their simple

guide to link buying.

Omnidrive - It's not only storage, it's also file synchronization. Files stored on your Omnidrive account reflect the changes you make using online editors or offline, letting you easily update photos you serve on your blog from your desktop. They also have a new API ideal for web applications looking for a home for their data. Go here to sign up.

Zoho - Zoho has been turning out a long list of quality web apps over the past year. Use Zoho for your own document editing, spreadsheets, planning, and presentations, or for their collaborative wikis, notebooks, and project management.

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## Scribd “YouTube for Documents” Gets \$ 300K



Scribd, a site for sharing documents, is coming out of private beta this morning with a fresh Angel investment of \$300K on top of their original Y Combinator nest egg of \$12,000. Scribd is most easily described as a text version of YouTube. It is a social network that lets you tag, share, and comment on uploaded documents (.doc, .pdf, .txt, .ppt, .xls, .ps, .lit).

Scribd is not just a carbon copy of YouTube. They borrowed a lot of the basic design principles, but also took advantage of the written format by including flexible file formats

for download and upload along with some interesting analytics tracking. Documents can be displayed and embedded as html or the underutilized, and faster-than-a-pdf, Flash paper format. They can be downloaded as .pdf's, .docs, .txt, and even .mp3 files. The mp3 version is created by Scribd's text-to-speech package (powered by Nuance) that lets you listen to the text of your document in a quivering British accent (downloadable example here). People have uploaded all sorts of documents for the private beta, like this guide to dating and seduction for dummies, or this less than legal copy of Visual C in 21 days. Scribd also lets you "geek out" on all the analytics generated by documents you post, such as how many votes and views your piece gets, as well as ge-



ographic location and http referrer that brought the reader there.

We've seen a lot of different social networks pop up around different mediums, photos, video, and even audio, but dominating a medium is no guarantee of an easy business model, as the "For Sale" sign on audio-focussed Odeo reminds us. So far social sites around the written word have dealt with books, rather than user generated, or at least user-uploaded content. Scribd lets people do something new, we just need to wait and see how far people go with it.

See our coverage of SlideShare as well.

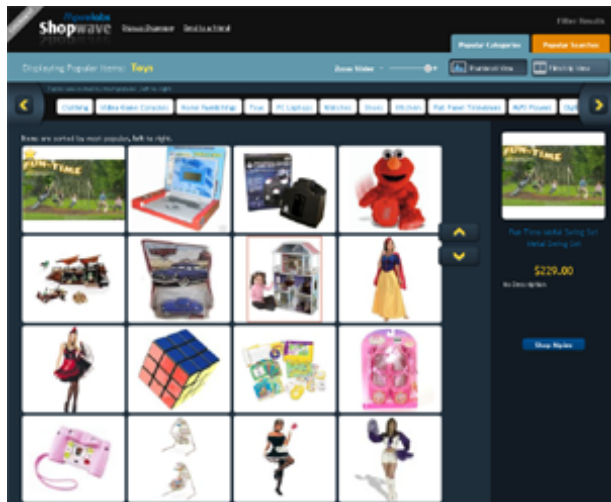
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## Mpire Upgrades and Launches Shopwave Shopping Visualization



When shopping meta-search engine Mpire launched their Firefox shopping plugin last year we felt it was one of the best shopping tools to come out in a while. Today, Mpire is offering the plugin for IE7, upgraded their site and launched the newly established Mpire Lab's first product, a visual shopping site called Shopwave. **Mpire is also working with Electric Sheep and Linden Lab to integrate their shopping experience into SecondLife and on an Apollo version that will carry out automated shopping**

# searches.



The revamped site features a cleaner layout along with the same Farecast-style price tracking of the old one, but now includes Amazon and Epinion reviews along with coupons and deals embedded in the search results. The new Shopwave site is a work in progress that

tackles the lack of innovation going on in online shopping visualization. We've talked about a couple new visualization ideas before. Mpire's Shopwave doesn't have as extreme a layout as BrowseGood's treemap visualization, or as customizable as Like.com's color and shape driven engine. It instead takes a window shopping approach, where you know what category you want, but maybe not the exact product. If you don't know exactly how to describe what you're looking for, Mpire's new image previews may be worth the thousand words you can't find.

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## Just Launched: AuctionAds Ebay Advertising Widget



Here's another tool that launches today for bloggers and other website owners looking for different ways to monetize their site: AuctionAds. Like booBox and other services, website publishers create an account, add descriptive tags relevant to their content, and place an embed code on their site. The AuctionAds widget will then show eBay auctions relevant to the tags. See their demo page for more information.

AuctionAds says they'll pass 100% of eBay affiliate fees (paid on new

eBay user registrations and a percentage of sales) on to publishers for an interim period. Since eBay pays sliding fees based on the total business generated by the affiliate (which in this case is AuctionAds), eventually AuctionAds will be able to skim some fees off the top while still promising to pay sites at least as much as they'd earn as a direct affiliate. See this page for current eBay affiliate fees.

It's a good idea, although it isn't clear if site owners would be better off with AuctionAds v. using the screen real estate for Google ads or other advertisements. I'm sure some sites will be testing this and will publicize their results (we're considering it for CrunchGear and MobileCrunch).

The service is majority owned by ShoeMoney Media, which recently waged a PR battle against

MyBlogLog. MediaWhiz is also a partial owner (disclosure: TextLinkAds, which is owned by MediaWhiz, is a TechCrunch Sponsor).

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# MyNetscape to Launch Today: More Ajaxy Muck



**My.Netscape is undergoing changes!**

MyNetscape (which is down as of 3 am PST) officially relaunches today as a customizable Ajax homepage for it's users. The Netscape blog has details.

Like Netvibes, Pageflakes, GoogleIG, MyYahoo, Live.com and many, many others (who am I missing?), users will have the ability to choose from "just under 100 modules" of customized content, and add RSS modules for favorite feeds.

Netscape's user base is not exactly cutting edge, and AOL is clearly taking good ideas from new startups



and seeing if their users will consume them. Netscape became a Digg clone in mid-2006, and now my.netscape is to jump on the Ajax homepage bandwagon. It's nothing to criticize them for, but it's nothing to get excited about, either. The long, slow decline of this once great company continues.

See ReadWriteWeb for more, which asks "Can Netscape's user base handle yet another web 2.0 overhaul?"

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