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ARTICLES PUBLISHED BY

AATEKAH AHMAD MIR, WALL STREET JOURNAL CONTRIBUTOR

AND DANIEL PEARL FELLOW

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Cover Story

September 7, 2011

One woman's political awakening

BY AATEKAH A. MIR-KHAN

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Sept. 11 is partly responsible for my choice of career. In 2001, I was an architecture student, even if a disillusioned one, completely uninterested in politics and affairs of the world.

9/11 changed that.

Sept. 11, 2001, was just another lazy evening for me in Lahore. I had my cup of tea and was chatting about something totally mundane with a family friend. That is when my aunt — who got a call from her daughter in New York — told us, “Turn on CNN. A plane has crashed into the World Trade Center.”



That “crash” turned out to be much more than an accidental collision. I think I realized that along with the rest of the world — when the second plane hit the South Tower.

I did not move from in front of the TV all night.

Back then, Pakistan did not have the voracious private media that it does now. I was among the lucky ones who had satellite TV at home, and so we relied on CNN, with the occasional flip to the BBC, for information.

I refused to believe CNN when they said the towers would collapse. But they did. For some bizarre reason, I remember the shade of lipstick worn by a woman who had just run to safety. Maybe it is not that strange: In all the ugliness, that lipstick shade was the only beautiful thing.

From what I remember, the first reaction among my circle of friends and family was very similar to that of the rest of the world. I remember we were stunned by what happened. We cried when we heard the phone calls people had placed to their families when they knew they were about to die. We gasped with horror when we saw people choosing to jump to their deaths.

Why would they choose to do that? Maybe it was a less painful death. Perhaps it was that in those minutes of absolute chaos and helplessness, making that decision gave them a sense of still being in control of their life. Or maybe for some it was a way of defying the terrorists: “You don’t decide how we go. We do.” Someone might have jumped believing, or hoping, for a miracle.

I think the whole world stood together in experiencing the initial shock and disbelief. Wanting to make sense of what had happened, how and why was also a shared experience. It was when we got to the actual “making sense” that the narratives became different. And from that moment on, it was, “Either you are with us or against us.”

I don’t remember anyone in Pakistan celebrating the attacks. There was the occasional, “It was bound to happen sometime because of the U.S. policies.” There were conspiracy theories, like, “The United States carried out the attacks itself,” or, “All the Jews who worked in the towers had taken the day off,” but that came a few days later. Then we heard that President Bush was ready to invade Iraq. That fueled the theory that 9/11 had been staged, that not only was the invasion of Iraq personal, but also it was driven by America’s wish to secure control over oil.

When Gen. Pervez Musharraf decided to take a U-turn on our years-old policy toward the Taliban, we became involved in America’s war. But 10 years later, with the highest number of civilian and military casualties and daily terrorist attacks, it has become our war. To me, anyone who doesn’t see that lives in denial.

During the time that I have been in the United States, I have been asked who's wrong and who's right. I wish there were a simple answer, but there isn't. Neither country bears the entire blame. Both of us have been guilty of playing hide-and-seek.

"Do you think we are so naïve as to believe that you did not know where Osama bin Laden was?" I didn't say that. My government did. I don't expect you to believe that, because I don't either. Someone had to know. I've also been asked, "What can we do to improve the perception of Americans?" Better P.R. Own up to the good that you do. And avoid any more episodes like that of CIA contractor Raymond Davis, I suppose.

But the Pakistani government also needs to share that burden. It needs to be upfront with its people and stop denying that the United States does not have its blessings for carrying out drone strikes. We also need to give the U.S. credit where it's due for various civilian projects.

Any solution that is reached for the region — whether it's a deal with the Taliban or something else — needs to take into consideration both Afghanistan and Pakistan, too, and not just America's self-interest. Pakistan, for its part, needs to realize that if and when America leaves the region, it needs to work together with Afghanistan.

Ignoring the intricacies and reducing the complexities to a black-and-white approach is the worst mistake that either of us can make, and yet it is the most common one that both of us do make.

I was in the United States when Osama bin Laden was killed. I saw the people celebrating outside the White House and in Times Square, but I also met and spoke with people who thought that there was nothing to "celebrate." I know that many who were celebrating were not rejoicing in his death, but in the sense of justice and closure. There were others who believed that he should have been captured and tried, not killed. Which images and opinion do you think made it into the Pakistani media?

But then again, after bin Laden was killed, people in Pakistan weren't exactly heartbroken. Yes, they were upset about the violation of their airspace and, hence, sovereignty. But what did the U.S. media decide to focus on? One crazy group, the leader of which broke down while offering bin Laden's funeral prayers in absentia. I have heard as many Americans as Pakistanis question whether bin Laden was really killed this summer, and as many Pakistanis as Americans wanting to see photos as proof.

Regardless of what we might have been led to believe, we aren't that different, you and I. Because of what happened 10 years ago, your country will never be the same. Neither will mine. Your life changed. So did mine.

We have a choice now: We can take the easy way out. Believe that we are right and the other is wrong. "We" being defined by ourselves as good, and the other personifying evil. Or we can refuse to believe that and challenge it, through dialogue and trying to reach out. If you do not know any other Pakistanis, reach out to me. E-mail me and I will try to answer your questions.

One of my favorite quotes is from Michelle Obama, who said that all of us have a responsibility to strive for a world the way it should be. I think I owe it to myself, my country, you and the memory of Daniel Pearl — the man because of whom I was given this opportunity. Do you?

Aatekah A. Mir-Khan is a Daniel Pearl Fellow from Pakistan who worked with The Wall Street Journal in New York for five months. Back home she works for an English-language newspaper and can be contacted at aatekahm@gmail.com.

A version of this article appeared in print.

Sit, Stay, Ace the Interview

More Day Cares Ask Pups To Jump Through Hoops; Bad Dogs Get a Timeout

Article

Video

Slideshow

Comments (6)

By [AATEKAH MIR](#)

To get accepted at summer camp, it took a three-page application, a family interview and three hours of monitored playtime. The applicant: Cannoli, a dog.

Anyone who thinks elite preschools are rigorous enough may want to take a look at doggie day cares. They, too, are submitting prospective charges to exhaustive screenings.

On a recent summer morning, Cannoli, a seven-pound Maltese, had to wow evaluators at Camp Bow Wow in Long Island City, N.Y., in hopes of making the cut. First came a series of tough questions on the application, including: "Has your dog ever growled at or bitten another person or dog?" and "Will your dog share toys with other dogs?"

Next was the evaluation. Owner Karen Serafinko and her son, John, watched on a TV monitor as Cannoli interacted with other dogs in a yard for dogs smaller than 10 pounds.

Cannoli's evaluator came in after half an hour with a progress report. "He's doing great. He's having a lot of fun."

Finally, the family left Cannoli at the day care for another three hours to make sure he would adjust to the new environment and playmates.

Through it all, Mrs. Serafinko, a 60-year-old fourth-grade teacher, was confident. "Our first dog, Skittles, was the nervous one. He would have definitely failed the interview," she said. "I'm not worried about Cannoli at all."

She was right. Cannoli passed, becoming the newest "camper," as they're called at Camp Bow Wow.

Interviewing and evaluating campers is one way to lower risk in a dog-eat-dog world, says Heidi Ganahl, founder and chief executive of Camp Bow Wow, with 110 camps in the U.S. "Screening the pups assures us the dogs are good candidates for our all-day play environment and [that they] will be able to play safely," she said.

At Camp Bow Wow, dogs are separated by size. Some day cares, such as Virginia Woof in Portland, Ore., and Wagville in Los Angeles, consider temperament and activity level in addition to the dogs' sizes. "We generally don't put dogs smaller than under 25 pounds with the bigger dogs. But sometimes we put big dogs that are old or timid with the little ones," says Julie Shine, owner of Wagville, which has an eight-page application form.

"We usually introduce campers of the same sex first to judge if a dog is aggressive," says Stephen Neagus, a former financial trader who now owns the Long Island City franchise of Camp Bow Wow. "Just like humans, dogs can feel threatened and compete with members of the same sex."

Doggie day cares started popping up in the early 1990s, Ms. Ganahl said, and now number in the thousands. Many started out as kennels, boarding dogs when their owners were away.

The concept expanded with open yards and supervised playtime to appeal to busy owners who didn't want their dogs cooped up all day while they were at work. (In Cannoli's case, the family was undertaking a bathroom renovation and didn't want to cause unnecessary stress for him.)

A full, eight-hour day of day care usually costs between \$25 and \$32, while overnight boarding can range from \$35 to \$55.

Only a small fraction of dogs—from 5% to 10%—are rejected from day care, usually because they're aggressive, territorial or very uncomfortable interacting with other dogs, day-care operators say. "When we reject aggressive dogs, the owners normally say, 'We figured,' Mr. Neagus says. Also, most day cares require that dogs older than six months be spayed or neutered.

After only one week at day care, Henry, a pointer, in Naples, Fla., was told not to come back. "They said that he did not know how to play with other dogs because he had not socialized with other dogs," Henry's owner, Brad Sprowls, says. "There were complaints about growling, barking and lunging."

Shortly afterward, however, Henry was accepted at a Camp Bow Wow located in Naples. The camp counselors suggested that he be enrolled in a five- to six-week basic obedience-training class, advice that Mr. Sprowls and his wife, Robin, followed. They also started walking him every day and took him to outdoor fairs and dog parks. Henry still goes to camp at least twice a week.

"Now, he plays just fine with other dogs," Mr. Sprowls says.

Timidity, nervousness and stress kept Rita, a 13-year-old Papillon, out of Virginia Woof, the Portland, Ore., day care. Complicating the process: Lorraine Smith, Rita's owner, is the manager of Virginia Woof.

"She doesn't attack dogs. But she just doesn't enjoy being in a group," Ms. Smith says. Rita "doesn't like it when other dogs come over and sniff around her or try and play with her."

Many day cares allow dogs that appear to be too timid or nervous during the evaluation period to come back once or twice to see if they fare any better. Some centers recommend that the dogs try smaller day cares or dog parks, where they can interact in smaller groups in order to get used to hanging around in a pack.

Christine Anderson, owner of Wag the Dog, another Portland, Ore., day care, believes in giving "bad dogs" some leeway. Each dog can get three timeouts—a three-minute period in which dogs are taken out of the play area and put into single kennels. "Everyone can have a bad day. Sometimes the poor behavior—like playing too rough—can be because the dog is too tired or not quite understanding what his friends want," she says. After three strikes, they're kicked out of day care.

"Outside training can help, but aggression is something that can be managed, not cured," Ms. Anderson says.

The owners' personality has a lot to do with a dog's behavior, day-care owners say.

"If the owner encourages them to interact with other dogs, they are going to be social," says Ms. Ganahl of Camp Bow Wow. "If the owners themselves are holed up or nervous, the dogs will mirror that behavior."

Hotel Plans Face Protests

Displaced Tenants Await Compensation After Construction Forces Evacuations

Article

Comments

By [AATEKAH MIR](#)

Plans by Wyndham Hotels & Resorts to open Chinatown's largest hotel face a possible community protest tied to the demolition of a neighboring apartment building and the evacuation of its tenants.

A venture that includes developer William Su has been building a 108-room hotel at the corner of Bowery and Hester Street. The national chain Wyndham Garden plans to open an 18-story facility next year.



But the construction caused unsafe conditions that in 2009 forced the evacuation and demolition of a neighboring 11-unit apartment building in which about 50 low- and moderate-income residents were living. Mr. Su also owns an interest in 128 Hester St., according to his attorney, Stuart Klein. Mr. Klein declined to comment on the size of Mr. Su's stake in either property.

Last year, the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal ordered the owner of 128 Hester to pay relocation benefits to nine tenants who brought an action against him. The owner, who hasn't paid any compensation, is appealing that ruling. John Gorman, the attorney representing the tenants, estimates that each tenant is entitled to compensation of \$60,000 and \$90,000 each. Mr. Klein declined to comment on the figure.

A community group that has aligned itself with the tenants is warning that it will try to block the hotel opening if the tenants aren't compensated. "That is morally wrong," says Christopher Kui, executive director of Asian Americans for Equality, an advocacy group. "We will mobilize community opposition and hold protests," he warns.

Mr. Su, who also developed the Windsor Hotel in Chinatown, didn't respond to requests for comment. Mr. Klein, his attorney, said 128 Hester's owner spent \$200,000 on repairs and that "we do not believe we caused the deterioration of 128 Hester." Mr. Klein also says that there was a settlement offer made to the tenants that was "rejected." Mr. Gorman, the tenants' lawyer, says he knows of no such offer.

Evy Apostolatos, a spokeswoman for Wyndham, declined to comment on tenants' demands, noting that Mr. Su and not Wyndham is its developer and owner. Wyndham will be the operator, she said.

The Wyndham is one of the largest projects under way in Chinatown at a time when the community is dealing with growth pressures. Groups are fighting over whether the area should create a business improvement district, an issue that is expected to be voted on this summer by the City Council. Proponents say that it will support economic development. Opponents warn that small businesses will be hurt by the special assessment fee that the district would charge.

Some developers are pressing the city to make zoning changes to permit high-rise offices and apartments on Canal Street, Chinatown's main thoroughfare. But other groups are concerned that development efforts might damage Chinatown's economy and heritage.

The site of the Wyndham Gardens hotel used to be a Chinese movie theater that shut in 2000. Mr. Su purchased the property, 91-93 Bowery, in 2005. A couple of years later, 128 Hester St. was purchased.

Last year, the city Buildings Department determined that the construction of the hotel "was directly responsible" for the unsafe condition of 128 Hester St. The Buildings Department also issued "multiple hazardous violations" at 128 Hester that "were never cured," according to the state ruling.

Supporters of rezoning Canal Street say the area can handle more development. "Rezoning within an appropriate context, relative to the needs of the Chinese community should help to bring new investment, business and growth to Chinatown and further help to revitalize the area, attract new businesses, residents and visitors, " says Gregg Schenker, a co-managing partner at ABS Partners Real Estate, which owns property in the area.

Ms. Apostolatos, the Wyndham spokeswoman, said in an email that the hotel chain is eager to be part of this growth.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304803104576426052926859330.html>

Trump Entertainment Puts Jersey Shore Landmark For Sale

Article

Stock Quotes

Comments (1)

By [AATEKAH MIR](#)

Just a few months after selling the Trump Marina casino, Trump Entertainment Resorts is putting Atlantic City's storied Steel Pier amusement park on the block.

The New Jersey beachfront landmark, which dates back to 1898 and is often compared to New York's Coney Island, has been known for showcasing attractions like the Diving Horse and the Human Cannonball, along with thrill rides and other entertainment.



Trump Entertainment Resorts

Atlantic City's Steel Pier, with 24 rides and other attractions, is for sale. Trump Entertainment said it doesn't fit in with the gambling company.

But in the latest move by Trump Entertainment to sell assets, the company has hired [CB Richard Ellis](#), a real-estate services firm, to auction the 9.7-acre home to 24 rides, games and prize wheels. The minimum bid for the historic pier will be \$2.5 million, according to CB Richard Ellis.

"We believe selling the Pier through auction is the best course of action for the company to increase the equity value for our shareholders," said Brian Cahill, a spokesman for Trump Entertainment. "We are a gaming company, and Steel Pier is not part of the casino." Steel Pier is operated by Atlantic Pier Amusements Inc., whose lease will expire in 2016.

At one point, Trump Entertainment was planning to transform the pier, possibly by adding a hotel, casino, spa and luxury condominiums. The development permits that the company has obtained wouldn't be transferable to the winning bidder, according to Douglas Johnson, a managing director of CBRE Auction Services.

The potential sale comes as Atlantic City is struggling with a poor economy and increased competition from new casinos that have cropped up in surrounding states. As a result, property values have been falling.

Donald Trump's name used to be synonymous with Atlantic City, but over recent years he has faded from the scene. In the late 1980s, he developed three casinos there. But as the fortunes of Atlantic City declined, they went in and out of bankruptcy three times, and Mr. Trump's stake diminished.

Today, Mr. Trump owns a 5% to 10% stake in Trump Entertainment Resorts, which owns the Steel Pier as well as the Trump Taj Mahal and Trump Plaza. The rest of the company is owned by former creditors. In February, the company sold Trump Marina for \$38 million to Landry's Inc., the company that operates Golden Nugget in Las Vegas.

Trump Entertainment has no direct ties with Trump Organization, Mr. Trump's company that is involved in a wide range of real-estate developments throughout the world.

In past years, Steel Pier showcased some of the biggest names in show business, including Guy Lombardo, Benny Goodman, Mae West, Charlie Chaplin, the Three Stooges and Frank Sinatra. But it also has had its share of trouble. In 1904, a storm washed away part of it and fires in 1969 and 1982 destroyed what was left of the original structure. The current structure was built in 1993 by Trump Hotels & Casino Resorts, a predecessor to Trump Entertainment.

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Proposal for Superfund Site

Article

Comments



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Text



BY AATEKAH MIR

A community group is proposing a new boathouse at an unlikely site: an estuary so badly polluted it was designated as a Superfund site.



Aatekah Mir/The Wall Street Journal

Newtown Creek near the proposed bulkhead site for a new boathouse

Newtown Creek, which runs between Brooklyn and Queens, was contaminated by decades of heavy industry along its banks and a major oil spill in the 1970s. The Environmental Protection Agency gave it Superfund status in September.

The Greenpoint Waterfront Association for Parks & Planning has proposed using \$3 million from the Newtown Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant mitigation fund to construct the boathouse. The money comes from some \$10 million in fines levied against the city for failing to meet deadlines in constructing a new treatment plant and in lowering the level of pollutants in the water.

The boathouse is being proposed at the mouth of Newton Creek as it feeds into the East River. Dewey Thompson, co-chairman of the waterfront association, said he thought it was unlikely that the mouth of the creek was as seriously contaminated as the "dead ends" where the creek has no outlet.

Mr. Thompson has kayaked the length of the creek several times. He said there are some really foul-smelling areas and some where you can see the sheen of oil on water. "But then here are days when the water's quite clean and you can see the crabs and the fish swimming," he said. "You'll be amazed at the wildlife."

City officials aren't on board, however. Farrell Sklerov, the communications director for the city Department of Environmental Protection, said the city had "a number of concerns about the feasibility of building a boathouse along Newtown Creek." In addition to poor water quality, he said the city was concerned about planned dredging work in the creek and that the creek has heavy maritime traffic. All that could pose hazards to boaters, he said.

The final decision on the boathouse rests with the state Department of Environmental Conservation. The department said it doesn't need city approval, but would take the city's objections into account. "We expect to have a decision in a month or two," a state official said.

Katie Schmid, executive director of Newtown Creek Alliance, a group that pushed for the Superfund designation, said the alliance had no objection to the boathouse. She said her group supported reclaiming access to waterways.

An EPA sampling of Newton Creek in December 2009 detected the presence of pesticides, metals and other pollutants at the creek. According to the study, the results were true "throughout the Creek-English Kills to East River." The EPA called it a preliminary study, and said it still needed to conduct a study in detail.

Mr. Thompson said that boaters and kayakists won't necessarily have to go into the Newtown Creek merely because the boathouse would be situated at the mouth of the creek. "They can choose to go into the East River," he said.

The proposed boathouse, to be completed in three years, would be housed at the basement level of the Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center on Manhattan Avenue in Brooklyn. The currently unoccupied floor space would be used as an environmental education center and training and boat-storage facility. People in the community would be able to store their own canoes and boats there, or rent boats.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303936704576395683595767612.html>

In This Class, Scratching Is on the Curriculum

Article

Comments

By [AATEKAH MIR](#)

This summer at New York University, students will earn credits in some tough courses: organic chemistry and laboratory, research cell biology, multivariable calculus.

And then there's the DJ class.

For the second year in a row, NYU's Tisch School of Arts is offering "DJ History, Culture and Technique," the successful completion of which means four undergraduate credits in the bank.

All students need to sign up is a high school diploma and their parents' permission to set them back about \$5,200.



Daniella Zalcmán for The Wall Street Journal

DJ Shiftee (a.k.a. Samuel Zornow), left, offers students instruction on some of what it takes to be a DJ.

"It is the first class where I am able to pay full attention," said Alex Margolick, a Spanish major from Tulane University who is at NYU summer school to make up for short credits.

And who can blame him? It is a class where the instructors are not bookish academics but star spinners: Rekha Malhotra, known for her affinity for the South-Asian dance and music style known as Bhangra, and Samuel Zornow, a.k.a. DJ Shiftee, the only American DJ to have won the Disco Mix Club Battle for World Supremacy.

NYU is among a handful of U.S. colleges offering hands-on training in being a DJ. Others include the University of Michigan and Clemson University.

Mahin Salman, a 25-year-old geology student, came from Malaysia to attend the course, but it took a lot of negotiating. "My dad wouldn't let me, but I struck a deal with him. I told him I would go to Sweden for another master's in geology if he gave me the permission and the money to attend," she said.

Each class in the six-week course is divided into culture and technique sections. DJ Rekha teaches the culture component. Students also hear lectures from people like Grand Wizzard Theodore, the Bronx DJ who is widely credited as the inventor of scratching.

The technique part is taught at DubSpot, an electronic-music production school. It is where the students learn how to scratch vinyl records in different ways. Typical instructions are, "Go back to your turntables, pick two songs that have different BPM's [beats per minute] and mix them."

The classroom is oddly silent. The students move vinyl records back and forth on turntables with headsets on. As the instructors check how their charges are faring with the music, their feet tap and heads move in sync with the students'.

The homework: Work on the mix, which will be played in the next class. Final words of advice as the clock signals the end of a class range from "YouTube Grandmaster Flash and Kool Herc videos" to the inside dope on which DJ is playing where.

Jon Wiener, a senior at the NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, was a DJ for seven years before he joined the course last summer. "When I heard about the course, I knew I had to take it," he said. "It was like a basketball player getting an opportunity of being coached by Magic Johnson."

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304259304576377360816381084.html>

Life Without Air Conditioning Can Be a Steamy Affair

Article

Comments

By [RICHARD AUTRY](#) And [AATEKAH MIR](#)

As the temperature climbed to 97 degrees Thursday, much of New York went about its day in near ignorance of the late-spring swelter.

New Yorkers went from air-conditioned apartment to air-conditioned subway to air-conditioned office and back again, with only brief walks through the furnace-like heat in between.

Then there was Henry Horne, a disabled 62-year-old who lives near Madison Square Park. He has an air conditioner, but his landlord wouldn't let him use it because it's too powerful. That put him among the thousands of New Yorkers who sweat out the summer at home because they can't afford an air-conditioner, don't want to hurt the environment by using extra energy or just haven't gotten around to buying one.

A spokesman for Consolidated Edison Inc., the electric company in New York City, said about 7% of households in its service area didn't have air conditioning in 2010.

The majority of those who have air conditioning have room air conditioners, not central air.

Mr. Horne is one of the New Yorkers with room air conditioners. "My building told me I couldn't use my air conditioner because it had 12,000 BTUs," Mr. Horne said, referring to the units that measure an air conditioner's strength. "They said to get anything from 10,000 to 11,000 BTUs."

So Mr. Horne went to the P.C. Richard & Son on 23rd Street to look for help. He was hoping that the store would buy back his old unit so he could afford a new one. No such luck.

"I'm trying to find something affordable because the economy is bad right now and I don't have extra funds," Mr. Horne said.

The city opens up air-conditioned buildings for people like Mr. Horne. He seeks them out, along with a cool place to eat and extra water for his dog, Snow, who often has to stay outside.

Money isn't the issue for Julie Russell, a 32-year-old editor. She just doesn't mind the heat—though a few more days like Thursday could make her reconsider.

"I don't have plans on purchasing an AC at the moment," Ms. Russell said.

There hadn't been an uptick in heat-related admissions to city hospitals by Thursday afternoon, said Evelyn Hernandez, a spokeswoman for the Health and Hospitals Corp. But it often takes a few days of heat before high temperatures take their toll.

This week's heat wave, while early in the season, will be relatively short. It started Wednesday and could end Thursday evening, when a cold front was expected to move into the region, forecasters said.

That's what Carlos Kayaso, a retired laborer, was hoping for as he sat in an East Village community garden in shorts and a sleeveless Michael Jordan shirt, sipping cold Gatorade and eating a tuna sandwich. He can't afford an air conditioner, but he has done without one for the past 40 years.

But all that time hasn't made sleeping in the heat any easier. He spent most of Wednesday night wide awake, watching late-night television. "Even though I have the fans running and windows open, it doesn't help," he said. "Let me tell you, there are a lot of advertisements and not-so-funny comedy shows on late- night television."

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304259304576375831894529842.html>

NEW YORK | JUNE 8, 2011

Suddenly, It's Summer Heat

Article

Video

Comments

By [ANDREW GROSSMAN](#) and [AATEKAH MIR](#)

New York City will fast boil into summer temperatures Wednesday and Thursday.

After only a brief dalliance with spring, New York City will fast boil into summer temperatures Wednesday and Thursday.

High temperatures in Central Park on both days could hit records set in 1933—95 on Wednesday, 97 on Thursday—the National Weather Service said. Humidity could make the it feel like more than 100 degrees outside on Thursday.

If the thermometer climbs above 100, as it might Thursday, it would mark the first time on record that temperatures reached that milestone before the start of summer, which is more than a week and a half away. The earliest 100-degree day in Central Park previously was June 26, 1962.



The early-summer heat wave will strain the region's electrical grid as millions of air conditioners are cranked up. It will put pressure on the mass transportation system, causing overhead wires to droop and rails to expand. The city's Office of Emergency Management, meanwhile, said it would open cooling centers around the city.

Some New Yorkers Tuesday laid plans to get out of the heat.

Will Joseph, a 29-year-old filmmaker, said that he would be hitting the gym instead of jogging in the park.

"If I have the option, I might head upstate," he said. "If not, I'll go to the movies because the city sucks when it's too hot." He said he avoids the beach on especially hot days "because everyone's trying to be there."

Others planned to largely ignore the swelter. Folt Charlotte, a 30-year-old Pilates instructor visiting from Paris, won't be sunbathing in the park, but she won't be cooped up next to her air conditioner either.

"I like high temperatures," she said. But she, too, was planning on a few concessions to the heat. She said would drink extra juice and eat lots of fresh fruit.

Relief will come when cold air moves in late Thursday or early Friday, possibly bringing with it thunderstorms and rain, the weather service said.

—*Eric Holthaus contributed to this article.*

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Weiner Upends Mayoral Field

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By MICHAEL HOWARD SAUL

Rep. Anthony Weiner's admission that he exchanged lewd online messages with numerous women and then repeatedly lied about it has dramatically altered the landscape of the race for New York City mayor.

Mr. Weiner, a Democrat whose pugilistic style and frequent cable-television appearances propelled him to the national stage, was long considered a front-runner in the 2013 contest to succeed Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Now, political observers say, there's little chance the embattled congressman will pursue Gracie Mansion, upending the field of hopefuls looking to replace Mr. Bloomberg.



Rep. Anthony Weiner, while admitting to sending lewd photos to an online acquaintance, now faces possible ethics-violation charges brought by House Minority Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi. Photo: Andrew Burton/Getty Images

"This was a seismic movement," said George Arzt, a longtime political consultant who served as press secretary under Mayor Ed Koch. "This was extraordinarily dramatic for any race."

In an NY1-Marist poll conducted in the hours after Mr. Weiner's confession on Monday, 51% of city voters said they believe Mr. Weiner shouldn't resign from Congress; 30% said he should step down; and 18% were unsure. As for the mayoral race, 56% said they don't want him to run, including a majority of Democrats; 25% said they hope he runs, and 19% were unsure. The poll had a margin of error of 4.5 percentage points.

Journal Community

While the race for mayor won't begin in earnest until after next year's presidential election, Mr. Weiner has led the pack of potential candidates in fund raising, with roughly \$4 million cash on hand, according to the latest campaign finance reports. And in a recent public poll, Mr. Weiner was at the top of the heap among potential Democratic contenders.

"It is now truly a wide-open Democratic primary race," said a Democratic strategist who is connected to one of the potential candidates. "Every single one of the candidates who is not Anthony Weiner can make a plausible case that this [situation with Mr. Weiner] is helpful to them, and I don't think anyone would be wrong in doing that."

Front-Page Coverage



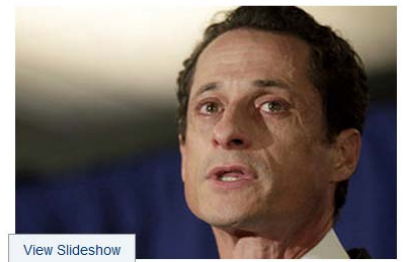
Observers differed on which possible candidate stood to benefit the most from the fallout.

Some said Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, who like Mr. Weiner is Jewish and white, might be most poised to benefit because he could assume Mr. Weiner's progressive mantle. Others pointed to former city Comptroller Bill Thompson, because much of his support comes from the boroughs outside Manhattan, specifically Brooklyn. And still others made the case that Council Speaker Christine Quinn could be a prime beneficiary, because Mr. Weiner showed enormous strength in Manhattan, Ms. Quinn's home base, during his failed mayoral run in 2005.

In that race, Mr. Weiner rose in the polls during the final weeks of the campaign and came in second during the Democratic primary. The congressman considered running for mayor in 2009, but ultimately chose to skip the race after Mr. Bloomberg launched a bid for a third term.

On Monday, in a tearful appearance at a Midtown Manhattan hotel, Mr. Weiner said he wouldn't resign, and when asked about his longtime dream of becoming mayor, he said elections were the "last thing" on his mind.

Monday's Press Conference



Brendan McDermid/Reuters
Congressman Anthony Weiner (D., N.Y.) spoke at a press conference Monday in New York.

Robert Turner, a Republican who won roughly 40% of the vote in a bid to unseat Mr. Weiner last year, said Tuesday he believes Mr. Weiner should resign. Mr. Weiner, a 46-year-old Brooklyn native and former member of the City Council, has represented a swath of Brooklyn and Queens in Congress since 1999. If Mr. Weiner were to resign and the governor called a special election, Mr. Turner said he planned to run. But if the congressman hangs onto his seat, political experts said it's very likely Mr. Weiner's congressional district will be decimated as part of redistricting following the 2010 Census.

New York lost two congressional seats, and people familiar with the matter said Mr. Weiner, who is now politically weakened, will likely find his district altered substantially.

Voter Alexander Katchaloff, 51, said he is more concerned by the damage done to Mr. Weiner's political prospects as a result of the scandal than by the conduct itself. "I want him to be the mayor, I like the guy," said Mr. Katchaloff, who said he would still vote for him. "He shouldn't have lied. It hurts him politically."

"I absolutely don't agree with what he did," he added.

Sean Anderson, a 21-year old accounting student who lives in Forest Hills in Queens, said he wouldn't support Mr. Weiner running for mayor. Still, he said, "I hear he is very good at what he does."

—Alison Fox and Aatekah Mir contributed to this article.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304432304576372050141441200.html?mod=googlenews_wsj#

Digits

Technology News and Insights

MAY 23, 2011, 12:05 PM ET

Tool Links Facebook Friends, Travel Plans

Article

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By Aatekah Mir

If you are one of those people who update their Facebook status asking for advice before traveling to a new city, you now have more options. [Gtrot](#), a new social travel network that officially launched on Monday, promises to do that and more.

Here's how it works: You log in to gtrot using your Facebook account and enter information about your travel itinerary. Gtrot then finds your Facebook friends who live in the city to which you're traveling, as well as who has been there before and who has an upcoming trip to the same city.



Gtrot

Gtrot finds Facebook friends that match your travel destination.

Gtrot has been available in a "beta" version since 2009, when it was launched by Harvard undergraduates Zachary Smith and Robert Corty. The official launch comes after gtrot received funding from venture-capital firm Lightbank.

The social travel start-up is the latest company to build its business on a network like Facebook. The social-networking giant has become a platform for things like marketing, gaming and job searches, just to name a few.

Other travel sites, like TripAdvisor, allow users to sign in to Facebook to see which friends have traveled where. But gtrot's founders say their service is more tailored to social networking and offers additional ways to interact with and get advice from friends.

"There are tons of travel sites that offer recommendations, reviews, and travel Q&A," Mr. Smith, who is now gtrot's CEO, said in a press release.

"But we believe the most trusted advice comes from people you know."

Paul Lee, a partner at Lightbank, described his experience with the service this way: "I am going to travel to San Francisco in the next few weeks. I registered my trip on gtrot and I received an email notifying me which of my Facebook friends will be there. A similar email was sent to them and I have already made plans to have lunch with one of friends while I am there," he said. "It is a refreshing approach to travel."

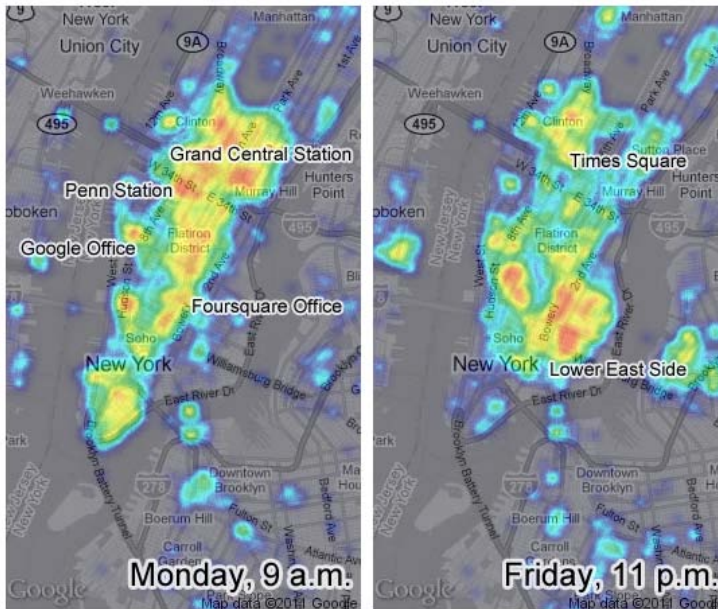
As the website steps out of its beta version, it has added a number of new features, including a new look and special deals for your destination. Through a partnership with Local Offer Network, gtrot searches hundreds of deals sites like Groupon and LivingSocial to offer these deals, said Brittany Laughlin, another gtrot co-founder. These deals, however, are limited to 100 cities within the U.S. for now.

Right now gtrot is integrated with Facebook and Fourquare but Mr. Smith and Ms. Laughlin said they plan on integrating gtrot with Twitter and LinkedIn by the end of the year.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2011/05/23/tool-links-facebook-friends-travel-plans/?KEYWORDS=AATEKAH+MIR>

MAY 19, 2011, 9:00 AM ET

Where the Young and Tech-Savvy Go



What can Foursquare tell us about how people live?

The location-based social network, which lets people “check in” to places using their mobile phones, has about 8 million users and is used more than 1.5 million times a day world-wide.

To learn about where people go and what they do on Foursquare, Digits collected every check-in on the service [for a week](#) earlier this year, via the Foursquare “firehose.” And what did we find?

Broadly: The top individual spots are places like malls, airports and train stations, because so many people filter through those locations. But the top categories are homes, offices, coffee shops and bars, even though each of the individual locations in those categories gets a very small number of check-ins.

It’s unclear from the Foursquare check-ins themselves how old users are, or what their other demographic characteristics might be (except for gender, which we discuss [separately](#)). But Foursquare users tend to be young, tech-savvy and socially active, said Naveen Selvadurai, one of the co-founders of Foursquare Labs Inc.

A [survey last year](#) showed that fewer than 5% of Americans had ever used Foursquare or its rivals, and only about 1% used such a location-based service on a daily basis.

Mr. Selvadurai said Foursquare's user base has been determined in large part by the people who first developed the company, which is headquartered in New York City. "In the early days it was a reflection of us and who we hung out with," he said. "It spreads from friend to friend, from that inner circle to that outer layer."

For this reason, we focused our analysis on New York and San Francisco, two cities that had some of the first early Foursquare users.

Looking at New York, it's easy to see trends that set Foursquare users apart. Most inhabitants of New York don't actually live in Manhattan, but that's where the vast majority of check-ins take place, no matter the time of day.

On weekdays, offices and lunch spots in Midtown and the Financial District light up with check-ins, while on Friday and Saturday nights, Foursquare users migrate to the nightlife of the Lower East Side. Except in the dead of night, transit hubs like Grand Central Terminal are consistently popular points. (Times Square also gets quite a few check-ins, but we assume those people are tourists.)

"There's a lot more density and things to do in Manhattan, and you're kind of seeing that," Mr. Selvadurai said.

Still, the top categories for Foursquare users each day paint a pretty good picture of life for a certain demographic in New York and San Francisco.

A Tuesday in New York looks like so: People are at home from midnight to 5 a.m., then at the gym until 8 a.m., when they head to work. They're at the office until 6 in the evening, when they go to the gym again before heading back home at 8. A New York Saturday, by contrast, goes this way: bars until 4 a.m., home and some trips to the airport until 10 a.m., gym or coffee shop until 5 p.m., and then back to the bar.

For San Franciscans, the weekday looks fairly similar — except for an astonishing number of trips to the coffee shop. On a Tuesday, San Franciscans are at home until they make a 4 a.m. coffee-shop run. They go to the gym until 7 a.m., then back to the coffee shop. At 9 in the morning, they head to work — until 3 p.m. when it's time for *another* coffee-shop break. San Franciscans work until 5 p.m. and head to the gym until 8 p.m., when like New Yorkers they go home.

On Saturday, San Franciscans are at the bar, but only until 2 a.m. They too head home or to the airport for early morning travel, but they hit the coffee shop early — starting at 7 a.m. Aside from a brief midafternoon trip to a park, the coffee shop is where they stay. They do their grocery shopping on weekends from 5 to 7, have a nice American-food dinner, and then get to the bar at 9 p.m.

So why do people check where they do? Mr. Selvadurai says he sees two overwhelming patterns — people checking in at big events to share the experience, and people checking in when they're traveling, to announce to other people where they are.

Businesses have been trying to use Foursquare to entice visitors as well, offering deals if users check in. Brooklyn Bowl, the top New York nightlife spot in our survey, offers the Foursquare mayor the first drink on the house. That said, Chelsea Market and the Shake Shack, two of the top venues, don't offer such specials.

There are other reasons people might use Foursquare, said Judith Donath, a faculty fellow at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. These range from keeping track of activities like you'd keep a journal to creating "a trendy public persona for yourself," she said.

Ms. Donath also pointed to another possible reason that check-ins at airports and even doctor's offices are so popular: "There's a whole set of check-ins where you have time you're trying to kill," she said. "You might just be sitting there ... It's filling a physical space's void with something virtual."

Follow Jennifer Valentino-DeVries [@jenvaletino](#)

— *Aatekah Mir contributed to this article.*

Digits

Technology News and Insights

MAY 18, 2011, 3:00 PM ET

How Distracting Is Technology?

Article

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By Aatekah Mir

How much time do you spend each day being distracted by technology? According to one recent survey, 53% of people say they waste at least an hour at work every day, and most of their distractions are digital.

The survey of more than 500 employees showed that technology accounts for about 60% of workplace distractions — through email, social websites and even the time it takes to toggle between applications. About 45% of the respondents kept at least six items open at the same time and 65% said they used more than one device in addition to their main computer.



Ethan Miller/Getty Images

An attendee at the International CTIA Wireless convention in Las Vegas tries out a Golden-i head-mounted computer.

Searching for documents also drains productivity significantly; respondents spent at least 30 minutes daily to search for documents including emails. The cost of that searching comes to \$3,900 per employee per year, assuming an hourly wage of \$30.

Such distractions raise questions about whether the technology businesses use is as efficient as it could be.

The survey also calls attention to the effect of heavy tech usage on people's ability to concentrate. According to the study, two out of three people communicate digitally with someone else, at least sometimes, while attending an in-person meeting. A majority of the respondents also said that they sometimes stay connected after work hours, during vacation and while in bed.

But the vast increases in productivity brought by technology make the distractions and interruptions "worth it," some employers say.

"In my world, more often than not, they are productive and ultimately time saving interruptions," said Emily Ashworth, a vice president at utility company American Water.

The survey was commissioned by social email software provider harmon.ie, of Milpitas, Calif. David Lavenda, the vice president of Marketing and Product Strategy at harmon.ie, said the “survey results are the first steps toward building a story that tells businesses that they will have to take steps to reduce distractions.”

Readers, what do you think? What digital tools do you find most distracting at work, or at home?

<http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2011/05/18/how-distracting-is-technology/?KEYWORDS=AATEKAH+MIR>

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LIVE BLOGGING MAY 5, 2011, 11:56 AM ET

Recap: Obama's New York Memorial

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Agence France-Presse/Getty Images

President Barack Obama arrived in New York City Thursday morning for a day of somber ceremonies to mark the death of Osama bin Laden and to honor those lost in al Qaeda's attack on Sept. 11, 2001.

The president's itinerary on this quickly arranged event included a visit to a firehouse in Midtown, a wreath-laying ceremony at Ground Zero and a private meeting with some families of those who lost loved ones in the terrorist attacks.

"We don't forget," Obama told crowd at the World Trade Center site. He did not make a formal speech at the memorial.

Obama's visit to Ground Zero marked his first as president. He last came to the World Trade Center site in 2008, during the presidential campaign. At that time, the new tower under construction was not visible above street level. Today, it stands 64 stories high and rises about a floor a week.

A broad array of political figures from the New York participated, including New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, his predecessor Rudolph Giuliani, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie. Former President George W. Bush was invited but decline to participate. Former President Bill Clinton also was invited but had a scheduling conflict.

Reporters from The Wall Street Journal's New York and Washington bureaus followed the president and talked to spectators throughout the day. Read this recap for complete coverage.

8:58 am | The Security Scene | by Alison Fox

Increased security was visible inside Lower Manhattan's Fulton Street subway station by 10:40 a.m. The blocks leading up to Ground Zero also have a major security presence. Officers lined the path, some with dogs, directing the growing crowd and keeping an eye out for danger.

Photo: Security personnel keep watch over commuters in a PATH station underneath Ground Zero (AP)

9:01 am | Crowds Arrive Early | by Alison Fox

People lined Church Street hours before Obama's expected arrival at the World Trade Center site, holding signs and waving flags. Deanne McDonald, a Brooklyn resident, had waited since 6:30 a.m. to celebrate what she said is a very proud day for her. She chanted "Obama got Osama" while waving two small flags.

"I'm so proud of my president, he has delivered," McDonald said. Bin Laden, she said, "has brainwashed so many people to destruction, and we are glad he's dead, he's dead, he's dead."

9:07 am | Presidential Arrival | by Aaron Rutkoff

Air Force One landed at JFK Airport at 10:39 a.m., and a throng of spectators waiting on the tarmac to shake hands with President Obama. A helicopter then took the president to Manhattan.

White House spokesman Jay Carney took questions from the press pool traveling with the president. Today's visit, coming on the heels of the successful U.S. mission to kill Osama bin Laden, is meant to "recognize the terrible loss that New York suffered on 9/11 and to acknowledge the burden that families of the victims and the loved ones of the victims have been carrying with them since 9/11 -- almost 10 years," Carney said, according to the pool report.

The visit, he added, would "perhaps help New Yorkers and Americans everywhere to achieve a sense of closure."

Photo: President Barack Obama arrived at New York's JFK International Airport on Thursday morning. (Agence France-Presse/Getty Images)

9:09 am | 'The Lives We Lost' | by Michael Howard Saul

Outspoken World Trade Center family member Sally Regenhard -- who lost her son, Christian, a probationary firefighter, on Sept. 11, 2001 -- said she is not here to chat with the president but rather to represent her son.

"He was a beautiful, peace-loving person," Regenhard said, her voice choking with emotion as she held a flag in her hand. "He was someone who should never have been massacred by hate."

This day, she said, is "about the lives that were lost."

9:16 am | Wrong to Celebrate? | by Michael Howard Saul

Ryan Beckley, a 21-year-old student from Brooklyn, called the celebrations that took place following the announcement of bin Laden's death on Sunday night "appalling," "ignorant" and "naive." He wore a sign that read: "Any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind."

"It was the wrong thing to do -- to kill him," Beckley said, noting that Obama administration officials had confirmed that bin Laden was unarmed at the time he was killed. "We lost a lot to kill that one person," he said. "We're in economic shambles."

9:18 am | 'I Feel Closure' | by Michael Howard Saul

Virginia Pacheco held a photo of her son, Roland, who was on the 102nd floor of the North Tower when the terrorists attacked, as she waited for the president to arrive at the World Trade Center site. "I feel very happy that he's here supporting the 9/11 victims," she said in Spanish, as her daughter translated.

Obama's visit "shows he cares," said Pacheco, 55, of Brooklyn. "He's doing a very good job."

"I feel closure now that the man is dead," she said. "Justice has been served."

9:22 am | Death Photo Debate | by Alison Fox

Los Angeles area resident Courtney Custodio, 24 years old, lined up to see the president during her one week stay in New York. She said she would support Obama in whatever decision he made concerning the photos of bin Laden's body.

"I don't know if he necessarily should release that," Custodio said. "It's kind of a Catch-22. That's going to be out there for everyone -- kids on the Internet -- maybe only certain people should see it."

9:27 am | Obama's Remarks at Firehouse

President Barack Obama's remarks at the FDNY Engine 54 firehouse in Midtown:

Well, listen, the main reason I came here is because I heard the food is pretty good.

But to the Commissioner, to Mayor Giuliani -- who obviously performed heroic acts almost 10 years ago -- but most of all, to all of you, I wanted to just come up here to thank you.

This is a symbolic site of the extraordinary sacrifice that was made on that terrible day almost 10 years ago. Obviously we can't bring back your friends that were lost, and I know that each and every one of you not only grieve for them, but have also over the last 10 years dealt with their family, their children, trying to give them comfort, trying to give them support.

What happened on Sunday, because of the courage of our military and the outstanding work of our intelligence, sent a message around the world, but also sent a message here back home that when we say we will never forget, we mean what we say; that our commitment to making sure that justice is done is something that transcended politics, transcended party; it didn't matter which administration was in, it didn't matter who was in charge, we were going to make sure that the perpetrators of that horrible act -- that they received justice.

So it's some comfort, I hope, to all of you to know that when those guys took those extraordinary risks going into Pakistan, that they were doing it in part because of the sacrifices that were made in the States. They were doing it in the name of your brothers that were lost.

And finally, let me just say that, although 9/11 obviously was a high water mark of courage for the New York Fire Department and a symbol of the sacrifice, you guys are making sacrifices every single day. It doesn't get as much notoriety, it doesn't get as much attention, but every time you run into a burning building, every time that you are saving lives, you're making a difference. And that's part of what makes this city great and that's part of what makes this country great.

So I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart and on behalf of the American people for the sacrifices that you make every single day. And I just want to let you know that you're always going to have a President and an administration who's got your back the way you've got the backs of the people of New York over these last many years.

So God bless you. God bless the United States of America.

And with that, I'm going to try some of that food. All right? Appreciate you. Thank you.

Photo: President Barack Obama, followed by former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, arrived at a firehouse to meet with firefighters and first responders (AP)

9:39 am | Memorial Merchandise | by Alison Fox

Vendors near the World Trade Center site were offering American flags and "Mission Accomplished" buttons for \$2 -- discounted from their normal price of \$3 each due to the poor economy.

Vincent Stephenson, 58 years old, said he had made about \$100 since 6 a.m. The Bronx resident, an immigrant from Jamaica, said he thinks people want to celebrate the accomplishment. "Well I'm so very happy," the vendor said. "They are very happy. They think the U.S. will be good now."

Stephenson said he will be out selling his wares until about 3 p.m., or until he sells out of everything. He sold out of his supply of Obama watches Wednesday at his normal post on 32nd Street.

9:51 am | An Unusual Silence | by Michael Howard Saul

The most remarkable part about being here at Ground Zero is the silence. I have been here many, many times for events. This is the first time in a long time, absent the annual anniversary commemoration, that I can recall all work being stopped.

On Monday, for example, when Mayor Bloomberg and other elected officials came here, the cranes were moving, the horns were sounding, there was noise and commotion everywhere -- very typical for the largest construction site in noisy New York City. Today, however, the scene is quiet except for the rustling of the trees in the wind.

Elected officials and other key figures are already present at the memorial site, including Sen. Charles Schumer, New York Reps. Anthony Weiner and Charles Rangel, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, City Comptroller John Liu, New York Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, the presidents of the FDNY and NYPD unions, and World Trade Center developer Larry Silverstein.

10:00 am | At the Firehouse | by Laura Meckler

President Barack Obama told firefighters at an iconic Manhattan firehouse that the killing of Osama bin Laden was a sign to the world that the U.S. will never forget the horrific events of 9/11.

"What happened on Sunday, because of the courage of our military and the outstanding work of our intelligence, sent a message around the world, but also sent a message here back home that when we say we will never forget," the president told firefighters at the Pride of Midtown Firehouse, which lost 15 men on Sept. 11th. "We mean what we say -- that our commitment to making sure that justice is done is something that transcended politics, transcended party."

Obama made the stop before coming to Ground Zero, the sight of the former World Trade Center, where he will lay a wreath in memory of the victims of the worst attack ever to hit American soil. The president thanked the firefighters on behalf of the American people for their sacrifices.

"I just want to let you know that you're always going to have a president and an administration who's got your back the way you've got the backs of the people of New York over these last many years," he said.

After his remarks, a fire chief showed him a wall of plaques commemorating those who died on Sept. 11 from the Pride of Midtown firehouse.

He joined the firefighters for lunch and then headed to Manhattan police station in the first precinct, accompanied by former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

10:00 am | Obama Arrives at Ground Zero | by Aaron Rutkoff

The president's motorcade has arrived at the World Trade Center site. On the scene, officers can be seen holding the wreath.

Photo: The scene at the World Trade Center site just before President Obama's arrival for a memorial ceremony. (Rob Bennett for The Wall Street Journal)

10:02 am | White Gloves | by Michael Howard Saul

The officers taking part in the wreath-laying ceremony are all wearing white gloves, standing with their hands at their sides. President Obama is shaking every hand.

It is quiet here except for whirr of cameras.

10:04 am | Wreath Laid | by Aaron Rutkoff

President Obama has silently placed the wreath at the memorial site, then continued shaking hands with the NYPD and FDNY personnel taking part in the ceremony.

Photo: President Obama stood with his head bowed after placing a wreath at Ground Zero. He is flanked by first responders in formal uniforms. (European Pressephoto Agency)

10:07 am | 9/11 Families | by Aaron Rutkoff

Obama is now hugging the families of Sept. 11th victims.

10:08 am | Somber Occasion, Upbeat Mood | by Michael Howard Saul

People are smiling at they greet Obama. The mood is upbeat. He is hugging everyone.

10:13 am | 'I'm Crying' | by Mir Aatekah

Bill Hallam was visiting New York City from California with his wife on a scheduled vacation, and he said they came to the World Trade Center site to "pay our respects."

"I'm crying," he said. Wiping off tears, he said, "I'm not celebrating as much as I'm grieving what's been lost here."

"The visit today is befitting," Hallam said. "He should be here today."

10:25 am | Obama's Quote | by Michael Howard Saul

"We don't forget," Obama told crowd at the World Trade Center site. He is not expected to make a formal speech here.

10:27 am | Motorcade Moves | by Alison Fox

Flags waved and cameras were held high as a motorcade, complete with a limo, drove down Barclay Street.

10:32 am | NYPD Presence | by Alison Fox

NYPD officers from all over New York City are taking part in the day's events. An officer from the 78th Precinct in Brooklyn's Park Slope neighborhood stood monitoring the crowd near Ground Zero.

10:42 am | A Police Photographer | by Alison Fox

NYPD officers were not just on hand for safety. One officer took photos to help spectators commemorate the day and asked where people were from as they waited to catch a glimpse of the president.

"That's the type of person I am," said Officer Camiolo, who normally works at the nearby police headquarters. "I'm trying to be helpful." He said it was an exciting day for him too.

11:11 am | Where Is Obama? | by Alison Fox

With the wreath-laying ceremony completed, speculation about the president's whereabouts is running rampant around the edges of the World Trade Center site as people continued their long wait. But the crowd, unsure if Obama had left the area yet, seemed prepared to wait for the chance of seeing the president.

"Why would he leave if the trucks were still blocking the street? It doesn't make sense," said Richard, a 48-year-old Bronx resident who preferred not to give his last name.

Richard was willing to wager that Obama was still in the area. He said he was going to wait until at least 3:30 p.m. before calling it quits.

"You should stand and wait because it's important that I see him, I've never seen him before," he said.

11:20 am | A Dignified Day | by Mir Aatekah

Peter Kontos said he lost his friend's uncle and 20 clients in the attack on the World Trade Center nearly 10 years ago. The 40-year-old Nordstrom employee visited the site Thursday to place a bouquet of flowers at the memorial after the president left.

"If he had made a speech that would've made the event political," Kontos said, "but it was private and dignified."

"I visit the site periodically," he added. On Sept. 11, 2001, Kontos said he was driving on the highway from Long Island and saw the first tower crumble. "It's good to see the buildings are going up. It lifts the spirits. I still miss the old skyline. I'm happy I came."

11:40 am | The 'Real Deal' | by Alison Fox

Excitement bubbled when the motorcycles revved their engines again along Church Street, the crowd's roar reaching crescendo when the president's black limo drove by with flags waving.

"I saw him," said Fay Reynolds, 47, from Flatbush, Brooklyn. "I saw my president! I'm so proud."

Reynolds said she'd waited more than three hours to see the president.

"I'll do it again, absolutely," she said. "This was the real deal for me to be here."

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<http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2011/05/05/live-blog-obama-marks-bin-ladens-death-in-new-york/>

Bin Laden Gone, But City Feels Threat

Security Increased at Possible Targets

By [SEAN GARDINER](#)

As it has done repeatedly since 2001, New York again braced itself for the threat of terror.



Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, left foreground, and Mayor Bloomberg, right, during a news conference at the World Trade Center construction site Monday to address the news of Osama bin Laden's death.

Police Commissioner Ray Kelly, left foreground, and Mayor Bloomberg, right, during a news conference at the World Trade Center construction site Monday to address the news of Osama bin Laden's death.

The rituals—swiftly in place by Monday's morning rush—were familiar: heavily armed officers patrolling Times Square, Wall Street and Grand Central Terminal, helicopters thumping overhead, travelers slowed by bag checks at subway and commuter rail stations.

But it was less apparent whether the city, already accustomed to enduring a low hum of anxiety over its safety, is in the immediate crosshairs of al Qaeda operatives. There were no specific threats of a retaliatory attack against New York after Osama bin Laden's death was announced, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said.

Experts said that while other terrorists groups have reacted quickly to avenge "decapitation strikes," al Qaeda's evolution has made its movements difficult to predict. Nonetheless, New York Police Commissioner Ray Kelly said, the department "is not taking any chances."

"We have to assume that among bin Laden's disciples are those who would like nothing better than to avenge his death by striking New York City again," Mr. Kelly said at ground zero.

Mr. Kelly said in addition to the obvious signs of stepped-up security, "We are taking precautions in a less visible way, too."

As soon as news reached the NYPD that bin Laden had been killed, "we had analytic and cyber personnel flowing into headquarters and we set up a bin Laden watch team," a police official with knowledge of the situation said.

The team monitored online chatter at reliable al Qaeda websites such as one run by the group Ansar Al-Jihad, the official said.

In the past, al Qaeda has shown itself to be patient and deliberative, terrorism experts say. Bin Laden is not believed to have played a key operational role since shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, according to the official.

Still, law enforcement officials remained sensitive to bin Laden's role as a key ideological figurehead, experts agreed. One high-ranking NYPD Intelligence official the agency is concerned that bin Laden's death could inspire some followers to "demonstrate that his death wasn't in vain and that the movement still has some punch."

Michael Sheehan, who served as the NYPD's Deputy Commissioner for Counterterrorism from 2003 to 2006, said investigators will "ratchet up" their efforts by checking with informants, listening more closely to wiretaps and increasing monitoring of electronic communications, including emails, text messages, phone calls, and social networking websites.

He said there will also be an "uptick in the activity of the investigators who are looking at specific people and specific hot spots around the city to try to anticipate if there is some cell that might try to take action."

"In the short term, you have the possibility for some lone wolf being inspired to do something for revenge or retribution for what is absolutely a serious blow to al Qaeda," he said. "And secondly, you have the possibility of an operation that's already in the pipeline to be expedited. But I don't see this as a huge change [in policing]."

"It should not be a big difference because quite frankly, this is a 24/7, 365-a-day threat," Mr. Sheehan said.

"There's no reason for anyone to panic or overreact to the threat," he said. "It's real, it's there, but we can live with it."

Kevin Perham, a retired inspector who served for four years as the executive office at the NYPD's Intelligence Division, said what Osama bin Laden's death does is it make police officers "pay closer attention to the things you've been paying attention to. Things that two days ago wouldn't have gotten your attention now do."

He said that al Qaeda is so "franchised out" with groups all over the world that a retaliatory strike could happen anywhere and be a prime "opportunity for someone who is trying to gain credibility to step and get some notice."

"The only thing that changed between last week and this week is Osama bin Laden is dead," Mr. Perham said. "Now we're going to see what the fallout is and see who is going to fill that void."

Commuters on the PATH train from New Jersey to New York were sanguine about the effect bin Laden's death would have on their safety. They said they were somewhat more fearful of a quick retaliatory attack, but they did not believe they were in any more danger of terrorism than they had been over the past decade.

Michael Gibson, a restaurant manager who travels daily to Manhattan, said it was "reassuring" to see enhanced security in the trains.

"The head of the snake has been cut off but the tail is still flopping around," he said.

Printing business owner Joe Ferraro said he believed bin Laden's death was a "moral victory" that would have little practical effect on his commute.

"It doesn't really make a difference. He was just one man even if he was the terrorists' godfather," he said. "He might've started it, but now it's a whole lot bigger than him."

—*Michael Saul, Alison Fox, Devlin Barrett, Aatekah Mir contributed to this report.*

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704436004576299463704074984.html>

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MAY 2, 2011, 6:25 PM ET

With 'Bogeyman' Gone, New York Muslims Hope for Closure

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By Pervaiz Shallwani (Aatekah Mir contributed reporting)

On the day after Osama bin Laden's death, New York area Muslims stressed that they shared many of the same emotions as their non-Muslim neighbors. For many, it was a day to speak aloud the hope that they would no longer be associated with the al Qaeda leader in the minds of Americans.

Along Coney Island Avenue in the Little Pakistan section of Brooklyn, an enclave that bore much of local anger following the Sept. 11 attacks, residents said they hoped the news would bring closure to a long, difficult decade when thousands of people left the area.

Mohammad Razvi, a business owner who became a community leader following 9/11, said he spent much of Sunday night sleepless, overjoyed by the news.

"It helps the community," he said. "I think it's a closure. The bogeyman has been dealt with," said Razvi, executive director of the Council of Peoples Organization, a community outreach organization for local Pakistani immigrants.

On Monday morning, he pulled out a 30-foot American flag that he drapes over the front of his building "only for celebratory events" including "Pakistani independence day, the 4th of July and Osama got killed."

He had some fun with Kevin Smylie, who manages 72-year-old family business next door and who had put up a much smaller flag in his own store window.

"I told him, let me show you how we celebrate," Razvi said. "This is how we celebrate. Bring out the sweets."

Smylie, 28, said, "We put up the flag a lot, but I made sure of it this morning. It's a day of celebration and closure for those families. We knew a lot of people who lost a loved one."

In Journal Square in Jersey City, Muslim residents largely saw bin Laden's killing as a positive development, with some reservations.

"It's good for America that he was killed. I don't know whether he was killed now or long ago," said Saleem Sultan, a resident at afternoon prayers at Masjid As-Salam, a mosque on Kennedy Boulevard.

Did he think bin Laden deserved to be killed? "Well, if he did what they say he did, then that was wrong and he deserved to be punished," said Sultan, who came to the U.S. 27 years ago from Guyana. "But many people here don't think he was responsible for 9/11. The war is a trick."

Others echoed Sultan's sentiment. On his way out of the mosque, Kevin Hadd a regular prayer attendee, shrugged and said, "So what if he is dead now? Most people don't believe that story anyway."

On a stretch of Atlantic Avenue between Third and Fourth avenues, home to a decades-old Muslim community, residents appeared weary of the issue — and weary of being pressed for comment every time that news arises.

People there said they resented being associated with a terrorist leader who has little relevance in their lives and long-standing community in New York. A cobbler, who would not give his name, said he was concerned about his family and did not want to say anything that would anger others. As another business owner vehemently said: "He is not us."

Travel agent Mohamed Kassem, 26, said the death of bin Laden "is the same for us as it for you. He is a terrorist."

Kassem, who has spent most of his life in Brooklyn, was in high school when the terrorist attacks occurred. "I don't understand why people ask us" about bin Laden, he said. "If it was a Spanish terrorist, you wouldn't ask all the Spanish people."

"If he committed the crimes that they say he committed, than [his death is] good," said Ibrahim Abdul-Rahmaan who owns an Islamic bookstore on Atlantic Avenue. "It doesn't put a spotlight on Muslims. It's not Islam. It doesn't matter."

Said Ravzi, the Brooklyn resident: "This guy is not a Muslim. End of story. God bless our Navy Seals."

— *Aatekah Mir contributed reporting*

<http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2011/05/02/with-bogeyman-gone-new-york-muslims-hope-for-closure/>

Digits

Technology News and Insights

APRIL 28, 2011, 5:13 PM ET

App Watch: Apps for the Royal Wedding

Article

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By Aatekah Mir

Smartphone apps that deliver news about the royal wedding? These might not be the sort of apps that you'll use for months, but they're a booming business these days.

For a while now, there have been apps that cater to short-term events like sports tournaments. But the apps being created specifically for the one-day wedding show how media companies and developers are increasingly responding to very specific interests.



"The interest in these apps is understandable," said Carl D. Howe, the Director of Anywhere Consumer Research at research firm Yankee Group. "Even though the wedding will be telecast on television, channels will show only what they want to show. People who want specific information – about dresses everyone will wear or heraldry – can do that with apps."

On both Apple Inc.'s App Store and Google Inc.'s Android Market, royal wedding apps, especially the free ones, seem to be quite popular these days. More than 70 apps are available on both platforms that include games, trivia, countdown clocks as well as all news related to the wedding. Some news apps provide content that is generated by a single media outlet (like NBC or the BBC) and others aggregate content from different sources, including social media.

Although it can be tough to gauge the accuracy of reviews in app stores, users seem to have caught royal-wedding fever. One post on the AppBrain Android market site: "It's great to read the story of how Kate found her prince, I wish Prince William was marrying me!"

Some of the most popular apps are incredibly simple like the "**Royal Wedding Countdown**" developed for Android by EJC Labs in the U.K. The free app consists of a live countdown to the start of the wedding ceremony, with

graphics in the form of an official invitation from the queen. It had the highest number of downloads in the Android Market as of Wednesday afternoon.

Edward Cunningham, the CEO of EJC Labs, estimated the number of downloads to be about 5,000. The app was released a day after Prince William and Kate Middleton announced their engagement. Clicking the royal coat of arms plays a trumpet fanfare — something called the “Gordon Jacobs Fanfare” that will be played at the start of the wedding ceremony to mark the arrival of the queen.

What might come as a surprise is that 78.7% of users of the app are from the U.S., as compared with an average of 55% for other Android apps. But U.K. users show a boost too; 10.2% of users are from the U.K. compared with an average of 4.1% for Android apps overall.

On both platforms, **the app from NBC News** has been well received. It has between 1,000 and 5,000 downloads on Android, and although no figures are available for Apple's App Store, the app is featured in the “What's Hot” category there.

The NBC app aggregates all content produced by the broadcaster about the wedding: a countdown to the wedding, photos, reports and content from NBC News' royal commentators Camilla Tominey and TODAY.com's Windsor Knot blog. It also has the royal family tree, tools to share the content via Twitter and Facebook and opportunities to purchase royal wedding products from the Universal store.

Another favorite on both platforms, BBC America's **“Royal Wedding Insider”** has video, facts about the royal family, advice and wishes for the couple and tips from Brides magazine about planning your own wedding.

Both the apps are free.

Although some of the apps try to capitalize on the event's popularity by charging, others are either supported by ads or intended simply to bolster a media outlet's coverage.

So will users pay for limited-time apps like this? One reviewer on Apple's App Store had an answer to that: “It's free so the price is right! I'm enjoying it right now. Will I care about in a year? I doubt it.”

Messrs. Cunningham and Howe also agreed that the apps would become outdated soon after the wedding. “I imagine most users will uninstall the app within a couple of days [of the wedding],” said Mr. Cunningham.

But it's not just royal-wedding apps that are disposable. According to a Yankee Group research, users tend to forget about the apps they download. To Mr. Howe, “Apps are like People Magazine. You buy it, read it and throw it away.”

Still, until the countdown clock reads 00:00:00, the royal trumpets will continue to blare.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2011/04/28/app-watch-apps-for-the-royal-wedding/?mod=WSJBlog&mod>

APRIL 21, 2011, 9:45 AM ET

How Long Could You Go Without Facebook?

By Aatekah Mir

Article

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Which would you rather give up for a week — email, texting or Facebook?

If you chose Facebook, you're probably not alone. In a [small preliminary study](#) at the University of Pennsylvania in November, participants said email, texts and cellphone calls are more valuable than Facebook.

The survey of 84 students ages 18 to 22 found that they thought \$44 would be “fair compensation” for going without Facebook for a week — compared with \$99 for email, \$85 for texting and \$73 for cellphone calls. One tool — instant messaging — was identified as less valuable, coming in at \$27 for a week.



Agence France-Presse/Getty Images
Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg

In the study, the students were divided into groups and actually prevented from using one of those types of communication methods for a week. They were then asked what they had done to compensate for the ban, as well as what they thought of the different communication tools.

“The most surprising finding,” according to Richard Lurito, the undergraduate student who conducted the study, was that students banned from Facebook “barely compensated” for their loss. And although people banned from texting compensated by calling more frequently and vice versa, no other group used Facebook to make up for their banned tool.

Why was this? Mr. Lurito found that students preferred to communicate with their closest friends via phone or text. They preferred communicating with acquaintances through Facebook.

Another finding: Participants considered only 16% of their Facebook buddies to be their real friends.

To be sure, the sample for the study was small. Even though Mr. Lurito admitted that generalizing the findings beyond Penn students would be “scientifically questionable,” he said that they remained “statistically significant.”

And whatever the study results indicate, people are clearly getting value out of Facebook, which now has about 600 million users. About 250 million log on to the social networking website every day, according to statistics put online by Facebook.

The study doesn't show that Facebook lacks value, but it raises questions about how, and to some extent why, people use the social-networking site.

Facebook did not respond to a request for comment.

So which medium of communication would you more easily give up? Email, Facebook, instant messaging, phone calls or texting?

<http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2011/04/21/how-long-could-you-go-without-facebook/?KEYWORDS=AATEKAH+MIR>

Venture Capital Dispatch

An inside look from VentureWire at high-tech start-ups and their investors.

APRIL 20, 2011, 5:21 PM ET

A Look At iPad Users: More Than Just 'Fanboys'

Article

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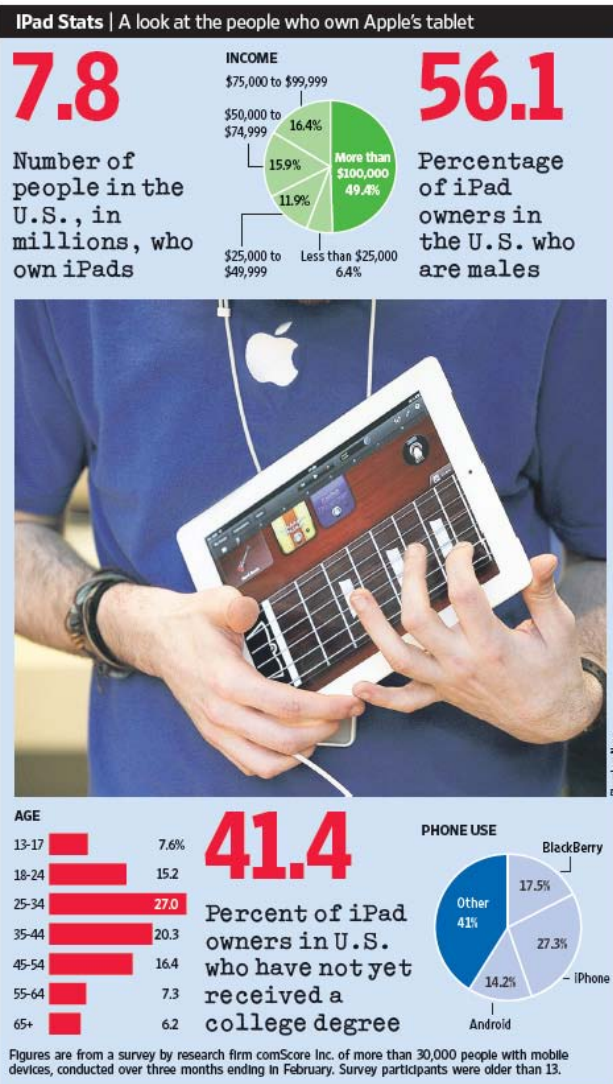
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By Aatekah Mir



Google Inc.'s Android might be the most popular smartphone platform, but if you add other mobile devices like tablets to the mix, Apple Inc.'s iOS beats Android in the U.S. by a wide margin — 59% to be exact.

That's according to new data being released Tuesday by measurement firm comScore, which surveyed 30,000 users of mobile devices for the three months ending in February to arrive at its estimates.

The research found that Apple's iOS platform — on iPhones, iPads and iPod Touches — reached 37.9 million people, while Android reached 23.8 million, on phones and tablets.

"The finding is incredible because it shows that Android being the most popular smartphone is not the whole story," said Mark Donovan, the senior vice president of mobile at comScore. "Publishers, developers and advertisers are trying to understand how to reach audiences, and the study shows that users are using a range of devices."

ComScore also looked at the demographics of iPad owners, finding that 56.1% of them are men, and 49.4% make more than \$100,000 a year. Ownership also skewed toward the younger set, with 27% of owners between the ages of 25 and 34.

The study also found that although iPad owners are more than Apple "fanboys," they're less likely to own BlackBerry or Android phones. Among iPad owners, 27.3% also have iPhones, while 17.5% have BlackBerry devices and 14.2% have Android phones. (The rest use other operating systems or have flip phones rather than smartphones.)

Among smartphone owners in general, 33% have Android phones, 28.9% have BlackBerrys and 25.2% have iPhones, according to comScore's latest numbers.

"It's difficult to say what that exactly means right now," Mr. Donovan said of the fact that BlackBerry and Android users aren't as likely to get iPads. "It can be that they are waiting for the [other tablets] or that they won't be buying a tablet at all. We will have to wait and see what the data tells us in a few months."

<http://blogs.wsj.com/venturecapital/2011/04/20/a-look-at-ipad-users-more-than-just-fanboys/?KEYWORDS=AATEKAH+MIR>

Digits

Technology News and Insights

APRIL 14, 2011, 10:45 AM ET

App Watch: Letting Doctors Diagnose On the Go

Article

Comments (2)

By Aatekah Mir

With new apps that let doctors monitor patients remotely, smartphones are redefining the house call.

Two recent apps — MIM Software's [Mobile MIM](#) and [AirStrip Technologies'](#) Cardiology — show how phones can help doctors get crucial patient information on the go, keeping track of anything from MRIs to heart scans.



The Mobile MIM iPad app

About 72% of physicians now own a smartphone, according to a 2010 study by Manhattan Research, so it's no surprise that more apps are being geared toward them. There are about 3,900 apps for healthcare professionals on Apple iOS, BlackBerry and Android devices, according to health-industry site MobiHealthNews.

Some of these apps provide things like reference information on prescription drugs or the ability to more easily take notes on patients. But among the most interesting new apps are those that allow for remote monitoring.

Mobile MIM, for example, will enable doctors to make medical diagnoses remotely after viewing PET, CT and MRI scans on their iPhone, iPod Touch or iPad. The app is set to hit the market in about a month but made headlines in February when it became the first-ever radiology application to be approved by the FDA, after a wait of three years. A test version of the app is available in the iTunes store now. The app itself is free, but MIM Software charges for storage and transmission of data.

The app targets radiologists in particular and lets them measure and make notes about areas of interest and share images with other doctors.

"If I am not in the hospital, normally it would take me 15 to 20 minutes on the computer to download the images sent to me but now I can do it in a minute or two," said Dr. Michael E. Spieth, a nuclear medicine specialist at Rochester General Hospital, who has been testing the application for four months. "I can zoom in and out very easily and measure, let's say, the size of a tumor."

This week, AirStrip Technologies announced its new Cardiology app, which will let health professionals see near real-time cardiac information called an EKG. AirStrip already has apps for monitoring fetal health and a patient's vital signs.

For the app, AirStrip teamed up with GE Healthcare, which already collects cardiology information for a system used at 3,000 hospitals world-wide. That information will now be sent to the AirStrip server, which will compress and encrypt the data so it can be sent to doctors' mobile devices.

The app is free for doctors after the hospital purchases the system and service. Four hospitals are already testing and evaluating the application.

Mark Peterman, a cardiologist at Texas Health Resources health system, called the application "very exciting." "Currently when a patient with chest pains comes into the ER, the doctor on duty conducts an EKG, but he then requires a cardiologist's opinion about what he should do next. Copies of the EKG are sent to cardiologists through fax or scanned copies, which not only have poor image quality but also get blurred if you zoom in. But with this software, a cardiologist can get rapid and accurate visuals of the patient's heart condition," he said.

"The goal would be to share the EKG results of a heart patient, who is on his way to the hospital, from the ambulance so that a cardiologist can decide what procedure needs to be performed before the patient reaches the hospital," Dr. Peterman added.

The Cardiology application took only nine months to develop, but the "real work" – building a platform that could handle data, encrypt it and send it – took the better part of a decade, said Cameron Powell, the president and chief medical officer at AirStrip Technologies.

David Ataide, vice president and general manager of patient solutions for GE Healthcare said the application was just the start of a new trend. "Such applications are taking down the geographic barrier that currently exists while making medical decisions," he said.

APRIL 13, 2011, 1:39 PM ET

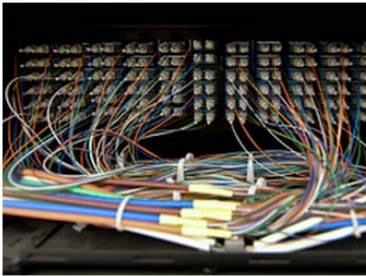
Taiwan, China Jump in Tech Ranking, While India Slips

Article

Comments (2)

By [AATEKAH MIR](#)

Taiwan is almost as technologically capable as the United States, according to [a report](#) released by the World Economic Forum and INSEAD on Tuesday in New York.



Bloomberg
Fiber-optic cables connect data servers

Taiwan jumped to the 6th ranked country in the 2010-2011 Global Information Technology Report, up from 11th in the prior year. The report measures economies' "preparedness" to use technology effectively.

Sweden and Singapore continued to dominate the list, followed by Finland, which jumped three places from its ranking last year to become No. 3. Switzerland and United States hold stable at positions four and five respectively.

China, which was at 59th position five years ago and is currently at position 36, has continued to move up. "It is making progress in areas like adult literacy and infrastructure," said Soumitra Dutta, a professor at INSEAD and co-author of the report. India, one of the largest economies in Asia, lost some ground and was ranked 48 on the index. "The penetration of technology is not very high in India," Dutta said, "It ranks 108 in the list of 138 countries when it comes to number of computers per household. The number of Internet users, broadband penetration and adult literacy is also low."

The countries are ranked by how conducive their economy is to information technology industries. Items such as business-friendly laws, education levels and penetration of technology are evaluated, among others. Each country is assigned a Networked Readiness Index (NRI).

Dutta said this year's findings were a testament to the efforts that the Nordic and Asian countries were putting into information and communication technology development.

When asked why the U.S. had not gained any ground, Dutta said that reasons included the increasing complexity of doing business, the low level of math and science education and spotty access to broadband.

"The U.S. has made a lot of progress especially in broadband penetration. But being the biggest economy, it can do better."