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Diary of a mad surfer

(1/30/01)

I've faced many challenges in my life: the Pepsi Challenge (and the subsequent Maalox Moment), the ESPN Fantasy Games Challenge (I picked nude quoits), my lifelong struggle to part my hair on the right side (I failed).

But when the AOL 6.0 CD-ROM arrived in my mailbox one day, I paused. For here was a disc offering 700 free hours online! And all I had to do was use them in a single month! (Lessee, 31 days in a month, 24 hours in a day equals 744 hours. Seven hundred hours of online time. That leaves 1.41 hours per day for sleep. Now I know why the little man on the AOL 6.0 disc is running.)

Was I man enough for the AOL Challenge? Could I get by on 1.4 hours of sleep per day? I installed the disc, entered my secret password (PLAQUE-BLADDER) and was on my way.

Hour 1: Try to dial in.

Hour 2: Try to dial in.

Hour 3: Try to dial in.

Hour 4: Finally connect. Get CompuServe. Oops--wrong number.

Hour 5: Log on to AOL. Explore new Ad-o-Torium, where you can have personalized ads ("RLUHA--suffering from hot flashes??") delivered to your e-mail account, cell phone, PDA, pager, or microwave oven, 24 hours a day.

Hour 16: Send romantic e-mail to *her*. Accidentally also send Flore.dUH virus, which makes her PC reboot and count its RAM chips over and over, then stop without explanation.

Hour 44: Getting sleepy. Log on to Interior Secretary Norton's forum (Keyword: Stripmine). Wide awake now. Boss asks why I haven't edited anything for two days.

Hour 67: Check e-mail again. Still no reply from *her*. While away hours constructing free verse from spam subject lines:

Sony Cyber Shot DSC-P1 digital camera

Here's a digital camera that doesn't sacrifice form for function. Sleek, slim, and capable of taking quality images (and short video clips), Sony's DSC-P1 is a winner--and a CNET Editors' Choice.

[Sony camera](#)

Intel on the run?

Although the Pentium 4 rules the speed roost--at least with multimedia apps--AMD's Athlon line can be a better speed bargain for the buck. And new systems sporting double-throughput DDR SDRAM, such as Polywell's Poly 880KR-1100, could edge even closer.

[Polywell Poly 880KR-1100](#)

The fully configurable PC, v. 1.1

Before you lay down your cash, get the word on what you need--and what you don't--in that new PC. Here's an update from PC pro Stephen Bigelow on new CPUs, faster memory, and more.

[Configurable PC](#)

Time is running out
 RLUHA--are you the only without one?
 FIND that Long Lost Love***
 hey
 Porn Kings Fear Ashcroft
 Attract Men or Women FAST!
 hi
 Stop wasting your time
 CNET: Are you a computer crook?

Hour 128: What was I thinking? I hate AOL! I hate Windows! I hate this \$@#\$ column! What a stupid--

Hour 141: How do I measure up? AOL's got the answer! (Keyword: Test Yourself.) Run Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Screening Test over and over, then Fat Intake Calculator ("Enter your age in meters"; "Select gender: Male/Female/Editor".) Site's advice: Stop running these tests.

Hour 244: Create my own home [page](#) with AOL's cool 1-2-3 Publish tool. (Does Lotus know about this?) Create page in 15 minutes, then spend an hour trying to make changes appear.

Hour 313: Jittery. Did Jolt/espresso boilermakers at hour 298. Need help. (Keyword: Steve Case.) "AOL Time Warner will be both a laboratory of innovation and a leader in social responsibility..." Ahhhh. Sweet sleep at last.

Hour 313 1/4: Wake up! Must click dialog box to stay online! Send e-mail to *her* with saucy references to NyQuil, mustard plasters, Theraflu. Maybe I'm getting sick.

Hour 407: Bored bored bored. E-mail Pat Boone MP3 to friends after cleverly renaming it as their favorite band's. Death threats result.

Hour 419: Doze off. Dream that AOL Time Warner is stupidly moving *Health* magazine to Alabama.

Hour 419 1/3: Wake up and realize I wasn't dreaming. Visit new AOL forum (Keyword: Grits).

Hour 501: *Still* no e-mail from *her*. Try Keyword: Wildly Expensive Things That Might Win Her Over. No such forum. Damn. Go to Keyword: Flowers instead.

Hour 513: Trip over beard. Must remember to shave.

Hour 557: Hallucinations. See Steve Case in a tutu. See Desmond Tutu in a case. See *myself* in a tutu.

Hour 620: Set AOL's parental controls to block e-mail from "Gore in '04" campaign.

Hour 647: Download Mac software and try to run it on my PC, just to piss Windows off.

Hour 698: Still no e-mail from *her*, although a pallet of NyQuil arrived today. Is she trying to tell me something?

Hour 699: Run Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Screening Test again. Site's advice: Stop writing column.

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