



Weekend Update 05.15.10—The Privacy-Schmivacy Edition

by Drake Martinet

Posted on May 15, 2010 at 12:46 PM PT

It's been a rough week for a few tech companies, and all the hubbub seems to be centered around private data in public places. Facebook has taken more than a few on the chin this week, and they weren't even the only ones who committed privacy missteps. Weekend Update is seriously considering sealing all our personal data in a lead lined jar and burying it in the yard behind **AllThingsD** HQ. Maybe Kara and the crew can talk a little sense into us.

BoomTown began this week with a little D-gazing to get us all amped for the coming conference. She posted a [video of Steve Jobs](#) from way back in the days of D2 (we are about to enjoy D8 at the end of the month). Jobs has agreed to make an appearance at this year's D as well, so we can look forward to yet another savory interview. Kara followed with a post about [John Lilly, CEO of Mozilla](#), leaving the software world for Greylock Partners. Lilly will continue to serve on Mozilla's board, and is leaving at a time when Firefox, Mozilla's signature product, is enjoying an all-time high market share near 25%. Toward the end of the week, Kara revealed that semi-stealth start-up [Kakai, which is now called Kno](#), will debut their student-focused e-reader at the upcoming D Conference. Weekend Update wonders if this one will have legs, as you can basically draw a straight line between the new reader and the web's largest online textbook renter, Chegg.

Early in the week, Digital Daily brought readers another installment from Apple's (AAPL) "oh brother" file. It seems that [yet another prototype iPhone](#) made it out of grand master Steve's grasp, this time in Vietnam. The identity of this particular phone has not been confirmed, but it sure looks like the real thing, right down to the chips inside. Yep. This one got dismantled too. In other smartphone news, John reported later in the week that Google would be [closing their online Nexus One store](#), in favor of selling the phones through retailers like everyone else. We guess they should have put "Beta" up on that page too. That gets rid of some of the sting. On Friday, John closed things out with another tidbit to throw on the privacy concern pile. It came out that Google's (GOOG) famous Street View cars (yep, the ones that take all the pictures) have been collecting data on all the WiFi networks they drive past. That in itself isn't news. We knew they were doing that. What came out Friday was that they were inadvertently gathering "[payload data](#)," or the actual data being passed over unsecured networks while they drove past. This puts them in a tough spot of having data they don't want just when everyone is getting up in arms over privacy violations. We're curious to see what the "un-evil" response to this oversight will be.

Media Memo started things off early with coverage of [President Obama's comments](#) on electronic distraction. It seems the Pres. is a little concerned that the prevalence of iThings in the world today is going to distract the attention of the world's future problem solvers. He might have a point, but isn't this the President who was so attached to his Blackberry that he ordered a special, super-secret encrypted one made so he could keep using it after he'd been given the nuclear launch codes? Just saying. Later on in the week, we all got word that one of TV's longest running franchises, [Law and Order](#), would be cancelled after 20 years. While it may not mean much to the viewing audience, as we still have seemingly endless spinoffs to hold us (not to mention 20 years of reruns) it is big news for the countless actors who filled their down time playing junkies, murderers and victims. Peter rounded things out by bringing a little sense to the convoluted story of the [iPhone leak](#). The much-needed wrapup helped us sort out the whole sordid tale, and make sense of all the finger pointing.



Walt covered interesting new ground this week with some digital products to help you organize all the vital data in your life. Both [Orggit](#) and [InformationSafe](#) aim to help you keep track of important records with cloud and local storage solutions. Walt admitted that it was early days for these types of services, but sees promise in what they offer as life in the cloud gets more complicated. In the [Mailbox](#), Walt demystified the “n” and “g” differences in WiFi tech, and gave some advice on the new line of super-fast laptops on the way from Apple. Weekend Update will admit to being a confused more than once by all the wireless options, but no more, thanks to Walt. Katie rounded out our week of coverage with a review of the new [Sony \(SNE\) “Dash”](#), a passive counter-top web device that aims to bring another web-connected screen into the room. Katie was a little skeptical of the device, as it seemed to still have more than a few bugs, and even then doesn’t really have a niche to fit in.

We’re counting down to D8, and the numbers are getting pretty small now. Weekend Update can’t wait to see what Kara and Walt will drag out of the world’s tech leaders. We guess you’ll just have to stay tuned along with us.

Home | Kara Swisher | **Walt Mossberg** | Digital Daily | MediaMemo | Voices | Video | D8 Conference



Mossberg's Mailbox

from The Wall Street Journal

Using the Web-based Microsoft Office on the iPad

June 22, 2010
by Walter S. Mossberg

 Share |  |  Print

Q:

Can the new Web-based version of Microsoft Office be used on an iPad?

A:

In my tests, I was able to view documents, but not edit them, on both an iPad and an iPhone.

Q:

I am considering buying Sprint's HTC Evo 4G smart phone. My concerns about the Evo are twofold. I don't know anything about using the Android operating system and wonder how intuitive it is to learn, and I need to know if a user of the phone can look up info while on a cellular voice call.

-more

A:

In my experience, Android isn't difficult to master, though this will of course vary by person. I suggest you seek out a friend with an Android-based phone to see how easy you find it, or check it out in a store with a knowledgeable sales person. As for performing data tasks while on a phone call, it depends what network you're on. On Sprint's 3G network, which is widely deployed, you cannot access Internet data while on a call, though you could look up data, like a contact, stored on the phone itself. With Sprint's 4G network, which the EVO can access in some 30 U.S. cities, you can access Internet data while remaining on a call.

Q:

If I'm already using an online backup service, and want to start using InformationSafe to collect and store personal data, do I have to purchase the InformationSafe backup service?

A:

InformationSafe's backup service is optional. If your files were lost or corrupted, I presume you could recover them from the service you are currently using. However, be sure these files are in the set of files your current service backs up.

You can find Mossberg's Mailbox, and my other columns, online for free at the All Things Digital web site, <http://walt.allthingsd.com>.

Write to Walter S. Mossberg at walt.mossberg@wsj.com