

Paul Danon

The biggest barriers to getting people in to new media are computers. They come with all sorts of extra junk and software you'll never use. In an online era, who needs word-processing to write letters they're going to print and send by conventional mail? With online banking, you don't need a spreadsheet to work out your balance from your cheque-stubs. And who do you know who, perhaps outside a professional business context, actually uses Access properly? What people want is email and the web, and many will be content with email on the web. In other words, they want a web-café at home. So give it to them. The old-style, 1990s word for this was a thin client. It scared the pants off the software and hard disk vendors. It's basically a keyboard and a screen connected to the net. The browser and email client can be freeware, and the telephone company can give it to us when we get broadband. It'll be hard on the software nerds and box shifters who'll still want to sell us a home-office when all we want is a medium of communication and entertainment, but they already made their millions from us last century.