



Bracing for the New York new-media shakeup.

CYBERSURFER'S SILLYCON ALLEY

BY JASON CALACANIS

The sudden shakeups at on-line anchor **Prodigy** and rumors of Time Warner's disenchantment with **Pathfinder** have many in the Alley wondering when (and not if) New York's new-media industry will have its bubble burst. The house that **Ed Bennett** built at Prodigy was recently given a stay of execution when Bennett convinced a group of Mexican billionaires in four short weeks to buy out Prodigy's previous owners, Sears and IBM. While **America Online** and **CompuServe** were busy adding millions of homes in '96, Prodigy reportedly lost 15 percent of its subscribers.



JAMIE LEVY
Jamie Levy has the last word.

The inside track is that in the long run no one can save Prodigy, due to a number of sweetheart contracts with ISPs (information providers) that were signed in the pre-Web 80's. The only assets Prodigy has right now are the remaining subscribers and Bennett. When the Surfer caught up with Bennett the night of the buyout, he said he was ready to "put the top down and have some fun!" Surfer's bottom line: Look for the remaining members to be sold — I'm sorry, "migrated" — to an Internet provider looking to jumpstart its numbers (i.e., **AT&T**, **MCI** or **GNN**). Señor Ed will then use the cash from the sale to fund his dream new-media studio in Silicon Alley. The new Prodigy will have a strong emphasis on international content (read: Web-based) and will be streamlined even further (90's speak for more layoffs).

Rumors of Pathfinder being sold have subsided since news broke that the service has signed a deal to have its content distributed on CompuServe. Insiders still say that the whole service is going to be offloaded if Time Warner can get the right price. Meanwhile, Pathfinder picked up the distribu-

tion of the Web-based soap opera **The East Village**. Reports are that the advertising is doing well, but the folks at **The East Village** would do well to examine Pathfinder's relationship with its old favorite son, **The Palace**, before celebrating at Avenue A Sushi.

It was only last January that **The Palace** was Pathfinder's pride and joy. It was the first interactive "virtual environment" to capture brain share on the Net, but the product stagnated due to a lack of support and funding from Pathfinder. Last month it was dealt a fatal blow when America Online released its **Virtual Places** software (www.ubique.com). Virtual Places takes the Palace concept to the next level. No longer confined to "Palace" rooms, Virtual Places allows users to place their avatars anywhere on the Web. You won't have to wonder who's hanging out at Papermag.com at 10 on a Friday night, you can just see their avatars there. Bottom line: The Palace collapses in six months.

The power move of the month goes to NYU ITP instructor and twentysomething powerhouse **Jamie Levy**. She has left her full-time position at **Word.com**, but will stay on as a consultant. She currently has three different contracts, all to create virtual environments. One is with Samsung, and another is an intriguing Web-TV project (more on this in July).

The bad career move of the month goes to **Farham Memon**, former editor of Prodigy's *Living Digital* 'zine and a contributor to the business section of the *Post*. Memon frequently bragged at cyberparties about pulling down "over six figures" before eating humble pie earlier last month. Right after handing in his resignation to take a high-level editorial position at **Discovery Channel Online**, the bottom fell out for Memon. Discovery pulled its offer a week before the starting date. Last time we saw him he was drinking his way to digital delirium at a **Pseudo** party. "Hey, Surfer! You know anyone who needs an editor? Hey, you're not going to write about this in *PAPER* are you?" Of course not. ;) Send comments to csurfer@interport.net *

Your guide to the World Wide Web.

HOT LIST

BY AVALANCHE



KEANUMANDU

The Society for Keanu Consciousness firmly believes that Keanu Reeves is the century's premier avatar of the Hindu deity Krishna. "All we ask is that you practice the No Way, watch Sri Keanu's films and read *Hamlet*." www.empirenet.com/~jahvah/skc/skc.html

THE MIKE ROSOFF NETWORK

With excerpts from the Unabomber's new book, *Most Fucked-Up Person Alive Tells All: The Autobiography of Being Pissed Off*. Also features Mike Rosoff's new operating system, 95 Doors, designed by 10,000 chimpanzees. www.c3f.com/mikrosoff.html

THE LAND OF THE LUNCHBOXES

These people are *really* into lunchboxes. If you're old enough to have had a metal lunchbox — not one of those cheesy plastic ones — you might wonder why they stopped making them in 1985. You'll find out here. www2.ari.net/home/kholcomb/lunch.html

NORTH COUNTRY

Very cool, atmospheric Web fiction. www.somewhere.org/Turb/turbsite/index.htm

CARMEN MADE ME SO

A "photo performance" with a tropical feel. A great escape. www.itp.tsoa.nyu.edu/~student/carmen/

VIRTUAL EVEREST

QuickTime virtual-reality images from the most recent expedition. No, it's not as good as actually being there, but maybe it's time to admit to yourself that it's not going to happen anytime soon. www.web.co.za/everest/qtrv.html

THE SURREALIST COMPLIMENT GENERATOR

"You blink thrice warned that I can but think of the eyebrows of Richard

Nixon covering a hostess of furry Twinkies," and other words of high praise. Reload the page until an "appropriate" one appears. pharmdec.wustl.edu/cgi-bin/jardin_scripts/SCG

NAKED DANCING LLAMA HOMEPAGE

"If llamas had the car keys, they would rule the world." How true it is.... Here, Naked Dancing Llama debunks some of the more vicious rumors about him that have been circulating recently: "William Shatner WILL NOT be appearing in *Naked Dancing Llama: The Movie*." Now that would be something. www.execcp.com/cfeyrer/ndl.html

HAIRNET BEAUTY NETWORK

You only *think* you know enough about hair. Don't leave without taking Robert Craig's Interactive Color Selector for a spin. www.hairnet.com

NRV8

Not your average Web 'zine. Featuring cyber-slanted political commentary, humor, poetry and more. The "Fresh Daily" section is particularly worth returning to. www.nrv8.com/

THE INTERNET JUKEBOX

Listen to entire songs on the Web, free. Not sure if you want the new Stereolab album? Sample it here first. www.interjuke.com/jukebox

EX-CULT ARCHIVE

How to deal with being a former member of any cult — including Amway (no joke). www.ex-cult.org/ROADKILLS-R-US

Make sure to check out the price list. Small dogs go for around \$40, while rabbits of any size are only worth a buck. Also, Roadkill Tacos. www.rru.com

FUTURATWOTHOUSAND

"Don't talk the talk if you can't walk the walk." Futuratwothousand's site is walking all over other sites on the Net with dope images shot with a Casio digital camera, and more links than a Gucci chain. You can check out the Tour de France, Stash or Lee Quinones, to name a few. From Kylon to acrylic to pixels, futuratwothousand has all medias on lock. home.dti.net/futura/index/htm *