

Broadband Report: Dixie Chicks' new home

Being vocal against the Iraqi War and President Bush and subsequently having country music stations throughout the heartland ban their music, the Dixie Chicks are having a little trouble -- not with sales of their latest album, "Taking the Long Way," which debuted at No.1 -- but with selling tickets for their upcoming concert tour, which has already forced several cancellations.

And if you can't get radio stations to promote your gigs, what do you do? You turn to the Web and broadband video.

The Dixie Chicks will perform a show streamed live via an exclusive arrangement with MSN Thursday at 10 p.m. -- their first concert in more than two years. And if you miss the show, don't worry, it will be available for on-demand viewing for the next few weeks.

This will be the beginning of the Chicks' two-year deal with MSN, which will be their official online home for videos, chat sessions and more.

AOL's Black Voices Web site is getting a brand new television series. On June 20 and 21, users will get a sneak preview of the Sundance Channel's new eight-part reality series "House of Boateng." The show follows celebrity fashion designer Oswald Boateng as he launches his clothing line in America. The series will premiere on Sundance June 22 at 9 p.m.

MusicGremlin is the first WiFi-enabled MP3 player on the market that will enable you to completely bypass the PC. The device comes in with an 8 GB hard drive and can store up to 2,000 tracks and is completely MS Plays For Sure compatible, meaning it will work with subscription services like Napster, Rhapsody, URGE, etc. MG's own service is \$14 a month and claims to have 2 million songs available. The MG-1000 with embedded WiFi and up to 8 GB capacity retails for a pricy \$299.

WiFi almost never works in a steady, consistent manner, so this will probably mean that once a month, you'll have to find yourself a reliable hotspot and spend some quality time there to download your music. Although, I suppose you can connect into your home network via WiFi. Regardless, this is an idea whose time has come and hopefully will only get better with future versions. Maybe we'll eventually get a machine capable of direct downloading of video as well.

Ah, the folks at Netscape, the gang that simply can't seem to do anything right, are changing and going into another direction -- yet, again. This will be what -- their 10th direction change since the collapse of their browser? Netscape is beta testing their new Web site at beta.netscape.com. This time out they are going for a "news aggregator" theme, which is essentially what they've been doing for several years. But the new design has a weird "blog" style look to it and features the latest in Web 2.0 technologies, including poling, RSS feeds and more.

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Entertainment news fans have a new home they can go to -- theShowbuzz.com. CBS's new video-heavy broadband site is attempting to be the new E! of the web. The site features original video content that covers everything you ever wanted to know about the business called Show. It includes celebrity interviews, original news shows, movie trailers, music videos and more. At least that's what CBS promises. After taking a look at the site, I didn't find any video clips, so I'm guessing this "broadband" content is coming soon. In its current form, it's just another in a sea of hundreds of entertainment Web sites.

The New York Television Festival and MSN are announcing that MSN will drive online support and

awareness as an official signature sponsor for the 2006 NYTVF. The Festival, which will be held Sept. 12 to 17, 2006, in midtown Manhattan, is the first creative festival of its kind, offering aspiring television artists the opportunity to showcase their original, independently produced TV pilots directly to network executives and industry officials. MSN Video will have exclusive online rights to stream all NYTVF pilots submitted to the Festival's Independent Pilot Competition at tv.msn.com/NYTVF, beginning in July.

MSN Video will deliver an Internet Web cast of the Festival and on-demand video content of panel discussions and special events featured at the 2006 Festival.

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Broadband Report is a weekly look at the world of Broadband, covering business deals, content news and hardware. The report is a compilation of news releases, interviews and analysis. E-mail michellea@upi.com

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