From: Thomas Reardon [thomasre]
Sent: Thursday, May 25, 1995 5:46 PM
To: Ben Slivka; John Ludwig; Barb Fox; Dan Rosen; James 'J' Allard; Warren Dent
Subject: W3C and Netscape meetings, 5/22

The meeting itself was a complete bore, but I spent time with Netscape people, and we have some followup actions to take. I will send a more general version of this to websquad. First, here's what happened at the meeting:

- The Library of Common Code has been released. The original 'libwww' that forms the core of just about every browser and server out there is not being maintained by W3C. This first release includes a port to Windows NT. The porting work was actually done by OSF and donated back to W3C.

- Rohit Khare is joining the W3C from CalTech, as the lead for Security issues. The guy is smart, personable, straight MS material. Philip Hallam-Baker has also joined W3C staff, though we was always very involved in WWW security. They would not say as much, but their goal is to do exactly what Terisa is doing, which is ship a merged SSL and S-HTTP SDK. Of course, the W3C implementation will only rely on RSARef due to well-known IP issues.

- I think W3C focusing on security is a huge waste of time. Still, I think we should use their activities as cover for our response to Terisa. Namely, our public stance ought to be that we did not join Terisa because we felt the W3C was undertaking the same effort, and we wanted a public forum for this stuff. We will support W3C standards are they mature, but will proceed with STT development regardless.

- IBM, HP, Digicash etc all presented (again) their differing payment protocols. 'Why isn't Microsoft here to talk to present?' was asked about a dozen times. Everyone is anxiously awaiting our entry here. IBM in particular appears very anxious to establish iKP. For those who don't know, iKP is a pretty weak design, no backend (merchant to acquirer) encryption for instance.

- Sun presented Java. The W3C is very interested in using Java as the component language for their Web-parts project. This is roughly the same thing as Apple's Cyberdog. This is all rather unfortunate, as until two weeks ago Dave Raggett was assuring me that he was gonna do this as VB control. The most important piece of this project was to be HTML3 viewer part.

- HTML futures. Dave Raggett talked about HTML3, reprioritized in the last few weeks. Top priority, thankfully, is to finish specs for tables. Also, there was a lot of support for not doing a real HTML3 at all, but rather writing a dozen or so mini-specs for: tables, stylesheets, math, backgrounds, internation support, etc. I strongly encouraged this before and at the meeting, and it looks like it will happen.

- New graphics format. Some dude from England RAL (some indie lab?) proposed adding CGM'92 as a standard graphics format for the W3C common code projects. This looked interesting to me, addresses something RobP and others raised previously, which is scalable graphics for such things as geographic maps, design drawings, etc. RAL would donate code for this if W3C endorsed. I will follow up with Consumer titles and Mediaview to see if their is interest here or in us proposing a different scalable format.

NETSCAPE

Spent several hours with Tom Paquin, Director of Client Development,

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and Taher Elgamal, crypto god. Taher is rather funny and generous person, he strikes me as rather honest and easy to read. Tom is far harder to deal with, but rather smart.

1. STT. This was very odd, Taher basically did not take the STT proposal very seriously, or rather, he thought that it came out of nowhere, and unfortunately the presentation the Barb made with Brian was probably at the wrong level. John&Ben, fyi, the proposal was that Netscape handle server-side rollout of STT, at least in the Unix environment.

ASAP, we need to engage engage Marc Andreesen, Mike Homer, and probably Jim Clark, they are the only ones who can move this forward. Taher is absolutely interested in doing STT, assuming the crypto is assuredly strong, but he can't move it forward. He does think that if we escalate, he can be an evangelist for an agreement. He is convinced that a deal between MS+Netscape would force Mastercard+VISA into line immediately.

So, I suggest Dan and Barb setup a followup meeting with Homer et all for next week, and reiterate our seriousness. The window for this is very very small, I think we've got about four weeks to open their minds on this deal.

2. SSL. Taher told me about a few more holes, in addtion to and in response to weaknesses that Alan Schiffman identified. Details separately. Also, Kipp is no longer working on SSL, Jeff Weinstein is now the dev god.

3. Protocol cooperation. As Ben and I agreed, I discussed an approach for exchanging protocol specs and design issues before product releases. I think we should lump this into any agreement for STT and future cooperation, it would really be a veiled effort on our part to move them off of the Windows client. They very clearly understand that we are not gonna ship a lowend client, despite what they've said publicly.

For now, Tom was going back and thinking about a structure for this, I need direction from Dan and others on what is the best thing to do: formal agreement, such as a system-beta agreement like we had with Novell; exchange of protocol specs at given intervals (quarterly, 4 weeks before product ship, etc?); agreement to co-develop client interfaces (DDE, OLE automation), so as to move them up out of the base client?

Tom and I, in good faith, banged out agreement on handling international HTTP/HTML, this is wonderful as we'll just implement now and let the IETF groups catch up to us. Details will go to websquad.

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