



Top Stories

Columbine High School evacuated following bomb scare

The Columbine High School has been evacuated following a bomb scare. Almost eight years ago the school was the location of America's most deadly school shooting.

Airbus announces job cuts of 10,000

Airbus, Europe's biggest aircraft manufacturer, has announced 10,000 job cuts over the next four years. The news comes as its parent company, EADS starts a major restructuring programme because the company is not efficient enough.

Featured story

NHL: Shorthand a success in Penguins win over Rangers

The Pittsburgh Penguins took on the New York Rangers in Madison Square Garden, New York. Jaromir Jagr struck first for New York, with Michael Nylander following suit in the final 2:30 to give the Rangers a comfortable 2-0 lead at the end of the second period. Staal's shorthanded goal came 76 seconds into the final period, with a soft forehand shot.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Cuban foreign minister Perez Roque claims Cuba leader Fidel Castro is recovering from his illness and could come back to lead Cuba again.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The Bush administration selects a design from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for a new generation of nuclear warheads that could replace the Trident missile on submarines by 2012.

- Prices at the New York Stock Exchange and Toronto Stock Exchange continue to plummet after a massive sell-off earlier in the week.

- The Parliament of Chechnya appoints Ramzan Kadyrov as the President of Chechnya after his nomination by the President of Russia Vladimir Putin.

- The United States Secretary of the Army Francis J. Harvey resigns over poor conditions at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. President Bush later orders a full review of health care available to returning soldiers.

- A bus carrying the baseball team of Bluffton University plunges off a ramp onto Interstate 75 in Atlanta, Georgia killing at least six.

- Puerto Rico institutes a smoking ban in all public places. Smoking will only be allowed in homes, places dedicated to tobacco sales, and open and ventilated places.

- A bomb explodes near a car carrying a judge of the Pakistani anti-terrorist court, Mian Bashir Bhatti, wounding him and killing at least three others.

- Indonesia declares the deaths of the Balibo Five to be a closed case

Wikipedia Current Events

despite a New South Wales coronial inquest into their deaths in Balibo, East Timor in 1975.

- The Communist Party of China expels nine senior officials and business leaders over a Shanghai corruption scandal related to misuse of Government pension funds. The nine people will also face criminal charges.

Sirius CEO visits congress

Sirius CEO Mel Karmazin appeared before a newly formed Antitrust Task Force, a sub-committee of the House Judiciary Committee, on Wednesday last week in Washington, D.C. to defend the proposed U.S. merger between XM and Sirius satellite radio services.

The hearing, carried live on C-SPAN, was attended by representatives from various competing broadcast companies. The representatives challenged the merger deal, and some speakers were openly hostile to Karmazin and to satellite radio in general, while other speakers were more civil.

Several times during the debate, the discussion centered on the failed merger deal between the two satellite television networks DirecTV and Echostar. The comparison between this proposed radio merger and the failed television merger was settled to some extent with an understanding that nearly all television viewers now use either cable or satellite to view available programming. Televised

programming content is now delivered mainly in the form of a subscription, rather than airwave transmissions.

Unlike television programming, most radio listeners use over the air receivers to listen to free programming content supported advertisers.

"We come to this hearing with an open mind, but we recognize that the companies have the obligation to convince the Congress, the regulators, and most importantly, the American People that this combination will improve the competitive playing field and benefit consumers," said John Conyers, the sub-committee chairman. To determine the legality of this merger, Congress first needs to decide whether a combined XM and Sirius would be a monopoly, as the only satellite radio provider in the United States, or whether the new company will actually be in competition with other forms of radio-like entertainment, according to Conyers. The hearing focused on alternatives such as Internet radio, terrestrial radio, portable audio devices, and emerging services, such as cell phone services and WiMax.

The Issue

At the heart of the debate is whether the two competing satellite services could drive each other to improve both of their services, or whether the proposed merger could result in end-user cost reductions by making more money available for Research & Development, new content, and subscription price reductions.

Highlights

David Rehr

David Rehr, president of the National Association of

Broadcasters, spoke first. In a speech riddled with loaded terms like "government sanctioned monopoly" and "government bailout", he laid out points: This merger would create a government sanctioned monopoly. This government sanctioned monopoly would violate FCC rules and precedent (DirectTV and Echostar), Congressional rules, and anti-trust principles. This government sanctioned monopoly would undermine competition. Both companies have a pattern of violating the terms of the FCC licenses and can't be trusted. XM and Sirius are not failing companies and should not receive a government bailout.

Rerh accused Sirius and XM of breaking promises and asserted that neither company can be trusted. To trust the new, combined company would be stupid, he alledged.

Gigi Sohn

Gigi Sohn of Public Knowledge presented a more balanced view. On one hand, consolidation will raise questions about price and choice. On the other hand, XM and Sirius have engaged in a spending war, harming both companies financially. She also proposed conditions to protect consumer choice, such as public radio and educational programming requirements. Touching on the Recording Industry Association of America lawsuit, she also stated that consumers should be allowed to record programming.

Mark Cooper

Mark Cooper spoke on behalf of the Consumer Federation of America. "We have not given up on competition," Cooper said. Like David Rehr, he pointed out the restriction by the Federal

Communications Commission (FCC) against merging the two licenses. He believed the distinction between satellite and terrestrial radio makes satellite a unique market, where satellite radio is mobile and nationwide, and is not content-regulated. He also touched on the conditions of entry into the FCC market, "Four is few and six is many, we only have two in this market."

Cooper also brought up "inter-modal competition" (competition between services that offer similar, but not the same products.) According to him, inter-modal competition has a poor track record of keeping down costs and increasing product quality.

Cooper was extremely outspoken against a "regulated monopoly", and said "consumers are better served by competition."

Charles Biggio

Charles Biggio has a history in anti-trust regulation. He advocating finding more facts regarding the merger. His argument focused around Section 7 of the Clayton Act (see section 18.) Unlike other speakers, he did not have an agenda to pursue, but rather spoke specifically on government regulations.

Mel Karmazin

Mel Karmazin spoke on behalf of both XM and Sirius. Karmazin made several points and promises: The price will not go up. At the beginning, that was implied, but by the end of the meeting, he made a promise that the price of the XM and Sirius service will not be raised over the current \$12.95 a month mark, and will probably go down as tiered products are introduced. The merger was willing to comply with any reasonable restrictions placed on the new company.

Consumers would not need to switch to new radios. A unified receiver has been developed, and he has one sitting in his office right now. This receiver can't be produced now because of the cost: no manufacturer wants to touch it because of the lack of subsidization by XM or Sirius; it would not be reasonable to expect one company to subsidize the manufacture a radio that might not result in a subscription to that company's product.

XM and Sirius satellite radio compete with the iPod, local stations, WiMax, cell phones, and Internet radio.

Sirius could provide tiered service, however the technology is not in place to allow customers to pick and choose individual channels.

Other monopolies

Howard Berman (D-California 28th District) made a profound remark: "As I listen to Mr. Rehr's testimony, and when he was talking about merged entities that controlled many radio markets, I thought for a second he was talking about ClearChannel." The media company ClearChannel holds a considerable stake in the broadcast bandwidth in the United States.

Diversity

House Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Texas) asked about diversity, wondering how the new company would create opportunities for minority ownership and minority involvement in the company's broadcasting?

Karmazin responded that Sirius and XM have several channels aimed at the African American community: music, entertainment, and talk channels. He noted that each network also carries Spanish-language channels.

To the impression that the

combined stations would provide for minority-oriented programming, Karmazin explained that news and talk feeds were simply picked up from existing TV and radio networks, which left Rep Lee apparently unconvinced that their interests would be served.

Conclusions

As a debate, this session did not resolve any issues. However, it did reveal some interesting facts and motivations:

The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) is going to fight this merger tooth and nail.

Sirius and XM will both operate as they do currently for the foreseeable future. Both XM and Sirius radios will continue to receive their existing channels, in addition to new content carried over from the other network.

If the merger does go through, there may be additional requirements, such as educational programming and price controls.

XM and Sirius can be said to compete with other media outlets, such as terrestrial radio and portable audio devices.

The NAB's presence at the meeting seems to contradict their monopoly claims. While the NAB claims that the merger would create a monopoly, they act as if it won't:

the satellite network will be competing with NAB stations.

Based on an Arbitron report, a satellite radio listener actually listens to more terrestrial radio than a non-satellite radio listener: 14 hours of terrestrial radio for 10 hours of satellite.

Emerging technologies exist that will increase the competition in the marketplace: cell phones can now download songs and news.

Podcasting is on the rise. Internet radio is more popular than ever.

At this point, most of the panel members did not want to hear "trust me" from Karmazin. They

wanted some other form of assurance.

If the companies do indeed form a monopoly, the cost of entry for new competitors is high.

Nobody knows whether approving or denying the merger will save or destroy satellite radio.

The merger faces more lobbying and politicizing of this issue as the proposal moves forward.

US: Several NFL stars released from their teams

Several players in the National Football League are packing their bags. Topping the list is Steelers linebacker Joey Porter. Porter was considering holding out of training camp for a new deal, and the Steelers needed breathing room to fit under the salary cap. Porter, called the "Most Feared Player in the NFL" by Sports Illustrated last fall, had a disappointing 2006 campaign, with only seven sacks.

The New Orleans Saints released Joe Horn by his own request. Horn was a fan favorite, standing up for the city following Hurricane Katrina forced the team to evacuate. Horn is also known for infamously pulling a cell phone out of a goal post in a post-touchdown celebration.

Drew Bledsoe in pre-game stretches.

As expected, the Dallas Cowboys cut quarterback Drew Bledsoe, although Cowboys owner Jerry Jones did not rule out Bledsoe returning at a lower salary, stating: "I spoke with Drew today and told him that this was primarily a cap decision and that the door was very much open for him being a part of our future." Bledsoe, a former first pick in the draft, was pushed out of his job by Tony Romo after a terrible first half in 2006.

The San Francisco 49ers released wide receiver Antonio Bryant, after Bryant had several clashes with the law, as well as 49ers head coach Mike Nolan. Bryant led San Francisco with 40 receptions for 733 yards. Bryant's short career with the 49ers ended in a four-game suspension to end the season.

San Diego Chargers wide receiver Keenan McCardell was among those released Thursday. The 37 year old receiver had 36 catches for the Chargers last year, his 15th NFL season. The Chargers also released safety Terrance Kiel and linebacker Steve Foley. Kiel had pleaded guilty last month to felony and misdemeanor drug charges. Foley had been shot this past year by a police officer.

Lille goal protests quelled again

Protests have continued after Manchester United defeated Lille in the Champions League round of 16. A free kick by Ryan Giggs in the second half of the game caused great controversy, as Lille was setting up their wall as the ball went into the back of the net. Lille players nearly walked off the pitch at the time, but they were goaded back onto the field, and the game ended 1 - 0 for Manchester United.

Lille made one protest to UEFA, asking for a replay of the match, but the appeal was turned down, and the decision of referee Eric Braamhaar stood for the time. Lille has made a second protest, claiming a technical error on the referees part, as the kick was taken without the whistle being blown. UEFA has rejected their appeal again, saying no proof of a technical error has been presented. Lille will have 3 days after receiving notice from UEFA to lodge another appeal to the Court of Arbitration

for Sport, or the claim will be dismissed in full.

The second leg game between United and Lille will take place next Wednesday at Old Trafford.

Parti Québécois leader slams radio host on homophobia

pratist Parti Québécois (PQ) leader André Boisclair commented on Louis Champagne, a Quebec radio host.

Champagne said the factory workers in Saguenay would never vote for a "tapette," a derogatory French slang word for homosexual.

Champagne was referring to a number of PQ candidates. In one interview with a candidate, Alexandre Cloutier, Champagne asks if it would be hard for people to vote for leader André Boisclair, who is homosexual. In another interview, Champagne talks of Sylvain Gaudreault, who is running in the riding of Jonquière. Gaudreault is homosexual. Champagne asks Cloutier, when talking about Gaudreault, if the PQ is a "fag club."

"When you show up with a homosexual, aren't you going to be asked the question, 'Listen, the PQ, isn't that a party of fags?'" the popular morning show radio host said to the candidate.

"You try promoting a homosexual to the boys at Alcan. Just try," said the host talking of Gaudreault.

Boisclair, who is struggling to get the vote of many Quebecers, showed his feelings by commenting to reporters in Quebec City yesterday.

"Is he saying on the radio that people in Saguenay-Lac Saint-Jean are more homophobic than other

people elsewhere in Quebec?" Boisclair said in response.

"Homophobia exists, but I feel these words are insulting for the people of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, and I have the support of millions of Quebecers behind me when I say so."

Meanwhile, Boisclair came to Quebec City as a campaign stop. He presented a new education system that could reduce the rate of high school dropouts. Boisclair also presented other ideas to University students.

A recent poll by Montreal based newspaper Le Devoir, on the 27 of February, shows the Parti Québécois at 28% and the governing party Parti libéral du Québec at 37%. If the Parti Québécois were to win, they could try to separate the province of Quebec from the rest of Canada.

Popeye's Vs Church's

United States fast-food chain Popeyes Chicken and Biscuits has filed a \$20 million dollar lawsuit against competitor Church's Chicken.

Popeyes Chicken says fast-food chain Church's Chicken was trying to steal customers.

AFC owned both companies for 12 years through 2004. It claims that Church bought all 10 of CVI's Popeyes restaurants. The sudden buy out which occurred in December 2006 led the restaurants to close in early January 2007.

"What Church's [Church's Chicken] chose to do, I do believe, was not honest competition," said Ken Keymer, CEO of AFC Enterprises Inc., the parent company of Popeyes.

Popeyes Chicken says the sale of

the 10 restaurants violated its franchise agreement with CVI.

Today in History

- 1776 - Samuel Nicholas and the Continental Marines successfully landed on New Providence and captured Nassau in the Bahamas.
- 1878 - The signing of the Treaty of San Stefano established Bulgaria as an autonomous principality in the Ottoman Empire.
- 1918 - Bolshevik Russia signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the Central Powers and exited from World War I.
- 1931 - "The Star-Spangled Banner" officially became the national anthem of the United States.
- 1958 - Nuri as-Said became the Prime Minister of Iraq for the 14th time.
- March 03 is Liberation Day in Bulgaria (1978); Hinamatsuri in Japan.

Quote of the Day

You cannot force ideas. Successful ideas are the result of slow growth. Ideas do not reach perfection in a day, no matter how much study is put upon them.

~ Alexander Graham Bell

Word of the Day

orthoepy; n

1. The correct pronunciation of words.
2. The study of correct pronunciation.

About Wikinews

(toll-free in the U.S.)
+1-202-742-5918
(outside the U.S.)
+44-871-218-6397
(U.K. / Europe)

License

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License. Articles published in this Print edition were created by Wikinewsies. Other content released under the GNU Free Documentation License.

To view a copy of the CC-BY license, visit:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>

or send a letter to

Creative Commons

543 Howard Street, 5th Floor

San Francisco, California, 94105, USA

To view a copy of the GFDL, visit:

<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>

Wikipedia Current Events

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Current_events

Today in History

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page

Quote of the Day

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page

Word of the Day

http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Main_Page

About Wikinews Print Edition

For more information about Wikinews

Print Edition visit:

<http://en.wikinews.org/wiki/Wikinews:Print>

About Wikinews

We are a group of volunteer journalists whose mission is to create a diverse community where citizens from around the globe (including **you**) can collaborate to report the news on a wide variety of current events. By making our content perpetually available for free redistribution and use, we hope to contribute to a global digital commons.

Got news and no computer?

Call the Wikinews Hotline

+1-866-653-4265