

MARKET

THE WALL STREET

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PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY

By WALTER S. MOSSBERG

Two Tech Leaders Aim For Bold New Portable, But Miss the Mark

IN THE BORING WORLD of me-too personal computers, only a few companies are frequently bold enough to try something really new.

Apple and Sony are the usual suspects. Microsoft and Intel, which dominate the industry, rarely make the list of design risk-takers. So the latter two leaders deserve credit for cooking up a whole new type of Windows computer—a machine that's smaller than the smallest mainstream laptop—the Ultra Mobile PC, or UMPC. The first UMPC for the U.S. market, the Samsung Q1, goes on sale next week at Best Buy's Web site.

The idea behind the UMPC is that it's so small, yet so full-featured, it can replace a laptop. It's meant to fit in places a laptop won't, or simply to be held in your hands. It is also supposed to be a cool multi-media device for watching video or listening to music.

Unfortunately, the Samsung Q1 is so deeply flawed in key respects that it amounts to little more than a toy for techies. For everyone else, it's impractical and frustrating. Unless the UMPC can evolve significantly beyond this first effort, it may wind up as a footnote in the history of personal computers, rather than an exciting new category.

The Q1 is sleek and attractive. It's about the size of a hardcover book, only narrower, and is clad in shiny black plastic with silver accents. Most of the unit is occupied by a wide-angle color touch screen that measures 7 inches diagonally. Overall, it's about 9 inches long, 5.5 inches wide and just under an inch thick. It weighs a scant 1.7 pounds.

INSIDE, THE LITTLE machine runs a full version of the Tablet edition of Windows XP. In fact, the UMPC, which Microsoft had code-named Origami, is really just a small Tablet PC. That's a good thing, because many of the Tablets shipped so far have been too big and bulky to use comfortably as electronic notepads



With adCenter, Microsoft

By ROBERT A. GUTH
And KEVIN J. DELANEY

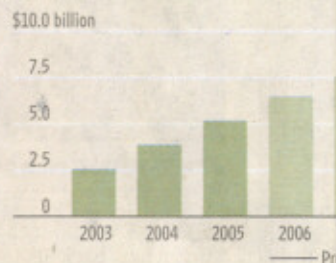
LET THE BIDDING wars begin. Microsoft Corp. today plans to show off the auction system it hopes to use to tap into the gusher of advertising dollars flowing online. The system, called adCenter, will be introduced at a conference the software maker is holding for hundreds of advertisers in Seattle. It's Microsoft's most ambitious effort yet to catch Google Inc., whose own system has been key to that company's runaway revenue growth.

The auction services let advertisers bid against each other online to have their ads displayed alongside search results. Each time an Internet user searches for specific keywords, such as "digital camera," the system displays a related ad for, say, a camera retailer. Advertisers pay if a consumer clicks on the ad, with prices per click averaging around 50 cents.

Companies spent \$5.1 billion on search-related ads in the U.S. last year, up 31% from the year before, according to the Interactive Advertising Bureau trade group and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

Click Costs

Spending on search advertising in the



Source: eMarketer

For Microsoft, adCenter is a fundamental shift in strategy as it tries to combine advertising with software business. AdCenter is "the new engine for the company," says general manager of adCenter and

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The Q1 uses a slow, low-end Intel processor, a Celeron running at 900 megahertz. But it was adequate for the common tasks I tested—Web surfing, email, playback of audio and video files. There's also a 40 gigabyte hard disk, 512 megabytes of memory, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth wireless networking, an Ethernet port, two USB ports and a slot for Compact Flash memory cards.

There's no embedded cellphone modem and no slot for adding an external one. The Q1 also lacks an internal DVD drive. An external drive can be added for \$219, but it's an extra piece to carry and plug in.

You operate the Q1 like a PDA—by manipulating icons on the screen and writing on the screen using either a simple plastic stylus or your fingers. It lacks a built-in keyboard and doesn't come with a mouse.

In my tests, the Wi-Fi and wired networking worked well and were fast. All the applications I tried launched fine and worked fine. Video clips looked pretty good on the screen, and the stereo speakers, though small, did a decent job.

So what are the Q1's big flaws? The first is price. Microsoft's designers set a target retail price of \$500, but Samsung is charging more than double that amount—\$1,099. That's more than many laptops cost, and much more than PDAs or smart phones. In fairness, the lightest laptops tend to cost more—\$1,500 to \$2,500. But \$1,099 is still a lot for a UMPC.

The second is battery life. In my harsh battery test, the Q1 lasted just two hours and two minutes. That means that, in normal use, it might approach three hours, if you're lucky. You can buy a larger battery for \$119, but it adds bulk to the computer and nudges the weight up to two pounds, almost as heavy as the lightest standard laptops.

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The 'Chilean Sea Bass' Craze Set Off a Seagoing Gold Rush, Tempting Toothfish Poachers

ON AUGUST 7, 2003, an Australian patrol boat spotted a fishing vessel near Heard Island, a barren scrap of land halfway between Australia and South Africa, 900 miles north of Antarctica.

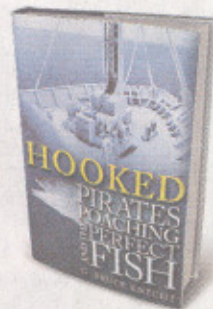
The Australians knew the boats that had permits to fish these waters, and this wasn't one of them. The chase that ensued became one of the longest pursuits in nautical history, the vessels sailing halfway around Antarctica through building-size waves and an obstacle course of icebergs in the dead of winter. The quarry was a single fishing boat, the Viarsa, loaded with Patagonian toothfish—better known to diners as Chilean Sea Bass—but the issue was much greater: the fate of a species.

Wall Street Journal reporter G. Bruce Knecht's new book "Hooked: A True Story of Pirates, Poaching and the Perfect Fish" recounts the chase and explains how a fish that was unknown not too many years ago set off a global gold rush. An adaptation:

In the fall of 1977, Lee Lantz, a young fish mer-

chant from Los Angeles, was climbing between the colorfully painted wooden fishing boats that had recently returned to Valparaiso, Chile. They had been tied to docks and then side by side, so Mr. Lantz could go from one to the next to examine the piles of fish lying on the docks. He was disappointed with what he saw. The fish were mostly Chilean Sea Bass, but he was, as it always had been, finding new species. He saw nothing but familiar species.

Then, just as he was about to leave, he did spot something new: an exceptionally large, fearsome-looking gray-black fish, separated from the others. Close to the dock, it looked as if it weighed more than 100 pounds. With its dark skin and b



Adapted from *Hooked: A True Story of Pirates, Poaching and the Perfect Fish* by G. Bruce Knecht. Published by HarperCollins Publishers. © 2006 by G. Bruce Knecht. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce this text.

'Merchant of Drumsticks' Aims to

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THE THIRD IS the lack of a keyboard. Without a keyboard, many standard tasks in Windows are simply a huge hassle. You can't really do word processing at speeds most people are used to. And email is a constant frustration. Yes, the Q1 has handwriting recognition, but it's cumbersome. And there's a semicircular on-screen keyboard, but it takes work to use it well.

Most Tablet PCs include a keyboard. Even the tiny OQO computer has a keyboard, as do Treos and BlackBerrys. How come the combined brains at Microsoft, Intel and Samsung couldn't build one into the Q1? You can plug in an external keyboard, but that makes the machine ungainly.

The fourth big flaw is the screen. Its resolution is too low to see much material at a glance. Often, you can't even see the OK button at the bottom of open Windows. There is a way to increase the resolution, but it results in distorted graphics and fuzzy text.

Finally, the navigation buttons and controls on the Q1 are awful. There's a control that moves the cursor, and another that acts like a Return key. But there are no direct equivalents of the left and right mouse buttons. To emulate a mouse button, you have to hold down two of the Q1 buttons simultaneously.

My advice is to skip the Q1, and hope that the next generation of the UMPC will be better.

Email me at mossberg@wsj.com.

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ON AUGUST 7, 2003, an Australian patrol boat spotted a fishing vessel near Heard Island, a barren scrap of land halfway between Australia and South Africa, 900 miles north of Antarctica.

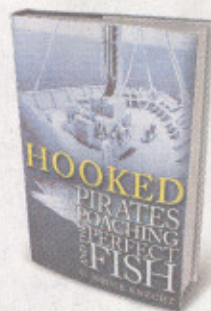
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WHEN RICHARD A. Lobb heard that Walt Disney Co.'s ABC television was planning a disaster thriller, "Fatal Contact: Bird Flu in America," for next week's "sweeps week," he went into crisis mode.

Mr. Lobb, spokesman for the National Chicken Council, which represents nearly all of the chicken producers and processors in the

ADVERTISING

By Jane Zhang

U.S., wrote to the network demanding that it change the word "bird" to "pandemic" in the title. He also insisted that the movie, to be aired Tuesday, carry disclaimers such as "This movie is fiction" and "Eating poultry is safe." Finally, he posted a video on his trade group's Web site featuring healthy-looking farm chickens and developed talking points stressing that the avian flu can't be contracted by eating fully cooked chickens.

"The virus has been in the wild since 1997, and it has not become a human pandemic virus," says Mr. Lobb. "We will not go unchallenged. We hope ABC is carrying out its own responsibilities."

Hope Hartman, a spokeswoman for ABC television, says the network has acted "very responsibly." Even before Mr. Lobb's letter, she says, ABC decided to show messages at the beginning of the movie saying it was fiction and at the end directing viewers to a government Web site on pandemic flu. But there are no plans to change the title, as Mr. Lobb would like, and "there are not any discus-



sions about chickens" in the movie says.

With all the talk of avian flu, Lobb is the ultimate anti-Chicken. He wants to convince the public that the disease is not as scary as TV movies, distorted reports and government warnings have made it seem. He has even headed to the U.S. (In the movie, a man calls "a reasonable worst-case scenario" a deadly H5N1 virus arrives on a Virginia businessman who contr-