

WEDNESDAY MORNING: PLACE YOUR BETS



[image: gchampeau via Flickr]

About 11:00 a.m. EST today President Obama will announce his nominee to the Supreme Court to fill Antonin Scalia's seat on the bench.

Apart from Sri Srinivasan, widely mentioned as the likely nominee, who is a possible candidate? Share your guess and then place your bets on Most-Likely Nominee and offer odds on a recess appointment.

Heads up: Your browsing could put you at risk of ransomware

I suppose the news that really big and popular sites were afflicted by ransomware within the last week explains why I had yet another Adobe-brand update pushed at me. Sites affected included The New York Times, the BBC, MSN, and AOL, along with others running a compromised ad network serving ransomware.

PSA: Make sure all your data files are backed up off your PC, and have access to software to rebuild your machine, in case your device is held for ransom.

#AppleVsFBI: Apple filing in California yesterday

Funny how different the characterizations of the 26-page filing. Here's two:

- The Guardian (emphasis mine):

Apple's lawyers tried to lower the temperature in the company's fight with the US government on Tuesday, telling a federal judge that America's Justice Department is well-meaning but wrong in its privacy standoff with the iPhone maker.

- Forensic scientist Jonathan Zdziarski: "Here, Apple is saying, 'If it pleases the court, tell the FBI to go fuck themselves.'"

Zika virus: even uglier than expected

- Sexual Transmission of Zika More Common Than Previously Believed (Scientific American) – Florida's new restrictions on abortion and birth control are going to look really horrid in this light.
- Evidence grows for Zika virus as pregnancy danger (Science mag)
- See also: Likely biological link found between Zika virus, microcephaly (Johns Hopkins Medicine)
- Covering Zika in Hushed-Up Venezuela (NYT) – Just because you haven't heard about Zika, birth defects,

and Guillain-Barré syndrome in a particular country doesn't mean the country is safe from the virus' spread.

Stray cats, rounded up...

- DARPA appeals to Maker/DIY/geek-nerd types, asks them to weaponize everyday devices (IEEE Spectrum) – I find this incredibly creepy; why is DARPA doing this, if the point is to prevent harm to the public from consumer products? Why not FTC/FCC/DOE instead of the military? And what happens to the feckless DIYer who accidentally hurts someone in the course of trying this stuff at home? Will DARPA indemnify them? Or are these informal adjuncts supposed to assume liability though they are doing military and law enforcement research? And what about the participants – will their identities be “harvested” for unspecified use in the future? So much stupid.
- US transport secretary Anthony Foxx says, “It’s not a surprise that at some point there would be a crash of any technology that’s on

the road,” (The Guardian) – in regards to the recent crash of a Google self-driving car with a bus. If it’s not a surprise, why are these on the road so soon? Don’t argue humans crash; these driverless vehicles are supposed to be BETTER than humans, and the public’s roadways shouldn’t be corporate laboratories.

- PA man charged with phishing celeb women to gain access to their personal photos and videos (The Guardian) – Oddly, he’s not charged with distribution of the celebs’ pics in what became known as ‘The Fappening.’ A perfect example of the kind of crime which would be made easier and more widespread if Apple’s security was weakened – and law enforcement struggles with tackling it now.

That’s a wrap, for now, furballs all cleaned out of the holding bins. See you tomorrow morning!