

Laboratories

By: eRin pheil, timeforcake creative media inc.

---

The world of technology is always growing, expanding, changing, and updating. Big and small companies alike are ceaselessly working to come up with more effective, more efficient, more useful applications and services that will (hopefully) make our lives that much better, easier, or more enjoyable. But OF COURSE you're aware of these obvious generalities!

What you may not have already been aware of, my friends, is that two of the leaders in Internet technologies allow us to test out and play with their latest unreleased projects. You can actually use, review, and even comment on technology projects these companies are working on to improve and eventually release for widespread public use.

Who are these big companies? None other than Microsoft and Google.

## **MICROSOFT**

The Microsoft Network (MSN) has what they call a "sandbox," located at <http://sandbox.msn.com>, where you can "play with the new MSN technologies, look at prototypes, and peek behind the scenes" at some of their latest ideas.

As of the beginning of September, 2004, there were a total of six different technologies showcased on MSN's sandbox site: the Lookout Email Search Tool, Newsbot, the MSN Toolbar (a direct competitor of the glorious Google's toolbar), 3Â°, Netscan, and TerraServer/TerraService.

The TerraServer/TerraService tools looked especially intriguing to me. The TerraServer-USA Web site, according to the MSN sandbox page, is "one of the world's largest online databases, providing free public access to a vast data store of maps and aerial photographs of the United States."

You can try any one of these experimental projects out for yourself at MSN's sandbox page. Take a look and see if any of these six technologies sounds appealing to you.

## **GOOGLE**

Google's equivalent to MSN's sandbox is called "Google Labs." Located at <http://labs.google.com>, the Google Labs page showcases what I believe to be some of the most interesting projects and useful up-and-coming technologies around.

At the Google Labs page, you can test out the Froogle Wireless service, which allows you to search for products from your cell phone. You can download and use Google Compute, which actually donates your computer's idle time to help scientific research!

Or perhaps the Google Deskbar sounds appealing to you: it gives you the power to search using Google--*without opening your browser*.

One of my personal favorites offered by Google Labs is the "Web Alerts" technology. Web Alerts provides you with notifications of new web pages on whatever specific topics of interest you define. Pretty cool.

Try out MSN's Sandbox and Google Labs. Experiment! Play! Take a look at some of the technologies of tomorrow! And of course, remember that this should all be fun.

Enjoy your weekend, everyone.

---

eRin pheil is the owner of timeforcake ([www.timeforcake.com](http://www.timeforcake.com)). Based in Frisco, timeforcake is Summit County's friendliest and most creative web and graphic design firm. eRin can be reached via phone at 970-668-0709 or email at [info@timeforcake.com](mailto:info@timeforcake.com).