

Internet hoaxes launched for April Fools' gags

April 2 2009, By JAKE COYLE , AP Entertainment Writer

(AP) -- While the potentially dangerous Conficker worm was being tracked throughout April Fools' Day, more harmless hoaxes were being fired out across the Internet.

Everyone from [Google](#) to The Guardian were rolling out prank Web sites Wednesday. It's become an April 1 tradition on the Web to showcase absurd technological breakthroughs and silly pseudo-innovations.

New media mockery was everywhere.

Google unveiled "Gmail Autopilot." It alleges that it will help you weed through your inbox by replying to e-mails with automated responses, tailored to your preference for emoticons.

Google also claimed to have mastered [artificial intelligence](#) with an entity named "CADIE." That technology led Google to claim, among other things, that it could now "index your brain."

The 188-year-old British newspaper The Guardian said it would become a "Twitter-only publication," limiting its reports to 140 characters or less.

One example from 1927 read: "OMG first successful trans-Atlantic air flight wow, pretty cool!"

(The North Carolina alternative weekly Mountain Express announced a similar reconfiguration, calling itself "the nation's first Twaper.")

Yahoo created a new "Ideological Search" that filters results to fit your personal beliefs. On it, you can get either Republican or Democratic results to a query like "stimulus package."

A startup called Monetate launched a spoof of the photo-sharing site Flickr. With "smellr," the site claims it has brought scent to [social networking](#): "It's like Flickr, but for your nose."

YouTube offered its latest innovation in online video: upside-down viewing. To experience it, YouTube suggests turning your monitor upside down and tilting your head - or moving to Australia.

The online marketplace [Amazon.com](#) announced that it had brought cloud computing to the skies. Though "cloud computing" is simply a metaphor for a kind of interconnected computing, Amazon said it had used "the latest in airship technology" to put computers in the clouds (with blimps).

The travel booking site Expedia.com on Wednesday began offering flights to Mars. It's a steal, too, with flights for just \$99. "Save over \$3 Trillion!" read the spoof.

FunnyOrDie.com, the comedy video Web site co-founded by Will Ferrell, announced that it had been bought by country star Reba McEntire. The site was temporarily renamed "Reba or Die" and its home page was populated entirely with videos featuring McEntire.

"If you got to be bought by someone, at least it's Reba," said Ferrell.

There were countless fake press releases and news reports issued

Wednesday. But most of the most popular pranks were obvious and lighthearted.

If anything, what was evident Wednesday was the full breadth of media playing April Fools' gags.

Microsoft's Xbox unveiled a mock version of the popular video game Guitar Hero: "Alpine Legend." This version is for yodeling, rather than guitar playing.

On Facebook, various applications posted joke alerts like "Barack Obama confirmed you as a cousin."

The blog for How Stuff Works explained Willy Wonka-like inventions - like rechargeable gum and "permanent kittens."

Even Economist.com, the Web site for the serious magazine, said it was applying the roller-coaster ride of the economic collapse to a theme park, naturally dubbed Econoland.

On the Net:

Google: <http://mail.google.com/mail/help/autopilot/index.html>

YouTube: <http://tinyurl.com/d58wkg>

The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

Yahoo: <http://ycorpblog.com>

Amazon: <http://aws.typepad.com/aws/>

Expedia: <http://www.expedia.com/daily/mars/flights-to-mars/>

Smellr: <http://www.smellr.com/>

Xbox: <http://www.xbox.com/en-GB/games/a/alpinelegend/>

The Economist: <http://www.economist.com>

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