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DoDots: The Web without a browser

From...
PC World

April 7, 2000
Web posted at: 9:40 a.m. EDT (1340 GMT)

by Chris Yurko

(IDG) -- "DoDots" may sound like some new kind of candy, but it's not. And it's not the latest kid-crazy, animated Japanese import.

DoDots is an application made up of small windows called dots. Through these windows, you can take advantage of the features and services offered by certain Web sites without actually visiting them through a browser.

Because the dots are small and operate outside the browser, they provide a faster, more direct link to content providers, according to representatives of DoDots, the new Internet company that makes the application. Each dot handles a specific task.

"Essentially, it's a little Web application on your desktop," says John Kembel, the company's chief technology officer.

"Anything you can do on the Web, you can do on a Dot," adds George Kembel, DoDots' chief executive officer (and John's twin brother).

Here's how it works. First you must download the DoDot "home dot," which sits in the top right-hand corner of your screen regardless of whether your Web browser is open. Then you can pick and choose among any of the other "dots" offered from the company's Web site partners.

Upon DoDots' launch this week, a handful of dots are available. The partners include AnyDay, an online calendar; eHow, a Q&A site; Merriam-Webster, a dictionary and thesaurus; MySimon, a price comparison site; PhotoPoint, a site for posting photographs; Work.com, a business information site; and ZDNet, for

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news and information on the computer industry. Other dots let you download MP3s or get the current time.

All of the dots appear in your home dot menu; you simply click on one to open it. Choosing, say, the Merriam Webster dot opens a 1-by-2-inch window where you can enter words you want defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary.

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The advantage of this is that if you're working in another application, such as writing a letter, you don't have to launch your Web browser to access a Web resource, George Kembel says. Sometimes, though, the search itself will launch your browser to display the results.

Dots can be bundled or be e-mailed to friends. Also, you can access your dots from any other Dot-enabled PC.

Dots are free of charge, but the beta 1 versions are now available only to users with Internet Explorer 4.0 or later versions of the browser. The application also requires Windows 98, NT, or 2000, although other versions are in development.

DoDots also plans to tackle devices other than the PC. "The desktop is just the start," George Kembel says.

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