14 生活時尚 STYLE The London Evening Standard's former KGB agent become a billionaire new space insists that he is not become a billionaire new space insists that he is not space propriet the is not space propriet the is not space.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2009 • TAIPEI TIMES

4 4

Features

擂

圌





Citic Contraction of the state BY STEVE BUSFIELD THE GUARDIAN, LONDON

> he new owner of the London Evening Standard is a very unusual sort of billionaire, for he seems to care little for money. It might just be that I don't know enough billionaires and that having that sort of money makes you very casual about it. But, still, Alexander Lebedev seems remarkably easy come, easy go about his fortune. His new possession is in a financially parlous state and in the middle of a crippling circulation war with News International's the London Paper freesheet, not to mention the problems caused by its rival, the London Lite, launched by the Standard's former owners the Daily Mail and General Trust, as a "defense mechanism." Admittedly he bought the paper for the token sum of US\$1.43, but he says he is willing to plough US\$42 million into it over the next three years.

> The *Standard* is but one part of his expanding media empire. Lebedev is already a large stakeholder, along with his friend Mikhail Gorbachev, in the independent Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta, which employed Anna Politkovskaya until she was gunned down outside her Moscow flat in 2006. He is now planning to open two radio stations in Moscow, having bought two FM licenses. One will be an English-language service. The other aims to be a public service station. Neither will be music-based because he says, perhaps improbably, that he has no interest in making money: "Murdoch has three music stations. This is how you make money. I am about spending money on good causes," he says.

Lebedev became friends with Gorbachev through his support of the former Russian leader's special "good cause," the Raisa Gorbachev Foundation. The two have also used their profile, and their support for Novaya Gazeta, to give voice to criticism of the current Russian regime. Lebedev, while admitting that Vladimir Putin is a charismatic leader with much popular support, is highly critical of the Russian prime minister, particularly of his ability to guide the country out of the global economic crisis.

And Lebedev gives a clear sense that his acquisition of the *Standard* is part of this thread: both a good cause (he is eloquent on the virtues of the "free press" in Britain), and also by raising his profile giving greater weight to his opinions. While he says that he does not plan to interfere with the Standard's editorial line ("It is not polite for a Russian to interfere in British politics"), he admits that it does give his viewpoint greater prominence. Having said that the *Standard* is unlikely to cover Russian politics often, he then suggests, perhaps mischievously, that the paper



Russian tycoon Alexander Lebedev bought a controlling 75.1-percent stake in the venerable but money-losing Evening Standard newspaper for a "nominal sum," widely reported to be US\$1.43. PHOTOS: AP AND AF

[TECHNOLOGY REVIEWS]

could even be sold in Moscow.

Lebedev — who is dressed in a style described by fashion journalists as part 19th-century landowner, part Take That member when he visited us last week to be interviewed in various formats, including this one - may not directly interfere with the Standard's politics, but it was impossible not to notice last week that a new era had dawned with the publication of an interview with Ken Livingstone, the veteran left-wing politician it so relentlessly hounded during the London mayoral election last year.

What else will the new era bring for the Standard? Rather as football supporters welcome wealthy new benefactors when they take over their team — the obvious parallel being Roman Abramovich at Chelsea - Lebedev has mostly been greeted with open arms. Staff at the *Standard* have been looking at a grim future for some time. Now their publication seems secure. But reality is starting to bite already. It is understood that about 18 journalists are being made redundant. After a battle, the redundancy terms have at least been improved from the ones that were on offer when the *Standard* sale first went through. More redundancies are expected later in the year. The new editor-in-chief, Tatler's Geordie Greig, is rumored to be on a US\$700,000-plus salary.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

By squeezing two cameras, a music player and a hand-held game system into one device, the thirdgeneration Nintendo DSi is aiming for a spot in your pocket next to your smartphone. It will be in stores in the US and available online at Amazon.com on April 5 for US\$170.

The first thing you will notice are the two 0.3-megapixel cameras, one facing away from you and one for selfportraits. These new electronic eyes can be used to enable a new generation of video-conferencing features, or they can be used to capture images and beam them to a friend's DSi.

 $-\oplus$



PHOTO: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE

The third-generation Nintendo DSi.

overdue. You can swap games or play music when the lid is closed, and an audio mixer lets you mash up sounds for a new ring tone. The speakers are louder, the screens brighter and the case made thinner by shedding the Game Boy Advance port. Don't worry, all 850 DS cartridges still work. And don't overlook the SD card slot, a new digital bridge for storing downloaded games. If you want to call your mother for a ride, though, you're out of luck.

Some changes are subtle, but

POINT-AND-SHOOT AND BELLS AND WHISTLES

Canon's SX1 IS, announced for sale in the US last week and set to ship in April, is a bit of a trendsetter. The 10-megapixel compact uses a complementary metal oxide semiconductor, or CMOS, sensor, which is the kind found in higher-performance digital single-lens reflex cameras.

Other point-and-shoots use older charged coupled device, or CCD, sensors. The SX1 IS also employs its CMOS sensor to shoot HD video.

Though relatively small at 3.5 inches by 3.5 by 5 inches and 620g, there are quite a few tricks inside the SX1 IS. The self-timer starts when a new face is added to a group, and exposure and



Canon's SX1 IS. PHOTO: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE

color balance can be keyed to faces. In addition to standard JPEG images, uncompressed RAW images can be shot simultaneously, so you can have a larger file to tweak for higher-quality final results.

The RAW format availability — along with HD video, a hot shoe for external flash units that uses street-available AA batteries — could make the SX1 IS, at US\$599, a good traveling companion for a more-than-casual photographer.

DATA BACKUP? A DISK DRIVE **OFFERS MORE THAN ENOUGH**

As disk drives get larger and larger, you would expect them to be harder to use.



The Western Digital MyBook World Edition.

PHOTO: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Not so with the Western Digital MyBook World Edition. This huge drive — it can hold up to 2 terabytes of data — simply sits on your home network and backs up all of your computers continuously with no muss or fuss.

The drive has a built-in Ethernet

port, and Windows and Mac computers can immediately start backing up to the drives without intervention. The drive also supports Digital Living Network Alliance networking and can connect to game consoles like the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 to stream music, movies and photos. You can also access your files over the Internet using a passwordprotected account.

The drive costs US\$229 for the 1-terabyte model and US\$450 for the 2-terabyte model. You can also expand your storage by connecting another USB hard drive to MyBook. An illuminated capacity gauge on the front of the drive tells you when you're running low on space. Both are available now online and in retail stores.

Considering that a few years ago drive capacity used to be measured in megabytes, less than US\$500 for 2 terabytes of no-brainer backup space seems like a space age miracle.

PICTURES OF THE KIDS? HERE'S A SLIDESHOW

Digital photo frames are great if you're sitting in the den, but what if you want to show pictures of your loved ones on the bus or at a restaurant? Digital Foci's Photo Book lets you show images in 800pixel-by-600-pixel resolution in a package about as big as a paperback book.

The Photo Book displays RAW and JPEG images and has 4 gigabytes of internal storage as well as support for SD, Memory Stick and xD flash memory cards. You can also drag images via USB from your computer or copy data from memory cards to the book's onboard memory for backing up images on the go.

The device can play MPEG videos and has a built-in speaker for viewing slideshows with music. It lasts two and a half hours on one charge, and it will cost US\$189 when it is available in May. With enough storage to keep thousands of pictures in your bag or purse, the Digital Foci Photo Book makes it easy to share your favorite photos with anyone, including complete strangers.



Digital Foci's Photo Book. PHOTO: NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE