

The story of Kate and her friends

So you want to know more about Kate? We're not surprised – she's an outstanding employee and just an all-round great person.

A New York Times article published on February 20, 2007 covered the need for businesses to make their web sites more interactive and attractive to visitors. In the article a particular company, Goldfish Software, was mentioned for its use of animated human characters, called avatars. Of course, we wished that the Times reporter had found TechInfusion and featured us; oh well, we have get our publicist to work a bit harder. As it turns out, it appears that TechInfusion's "Kate" also works for Goldfish. She's moonlighting, and she's busted!

Don't worry about Kate, though. We're not going to take any action against her – in fact, many of us think it's kind of cool and also amazing. She's been highly productive at TechInfusion in the two years she's been with us, and we're in awe that she can juggle so many things at once. Those who are jealous of her success (and we have a few, as you might expect) just mutter "She should get a life." But it seems as though she's got everything going for her, so who are we to argue with success?

Anyway, here's what Erica Taub wrote about Kate in the New York Times:

"Goldfish incorporated an avatar — an animated human — that speaks whenever someone visits the site, goldfishsoftware.com. The company used VHost, a product from Oddcast, to create the avatar, whose face, clothing and speech can be changed by customers. "We called the character 'Kate,' but then our customers started calling it by the same name," said Judy Thornell, the company's customer-relations executive. "We didn't realize that they would develop a personal relationship with it." After "Kate" started telling customers about the "hot deals" listed under a tab on the site, sales for that section went up 50 percent. "Having the avatar on the site keeps customers there longer, as they listen to the character speaking," Ms. Thornell said."

If only we could figure out how Kate changes her hair and voice so quickly - perhaps she has a Broadway career in front of her! If you go to Oddcast on the web (www.oddcast.com) you can try out some characters and different voices for yourself. "Kate" is one of the female voices you can audition, if you want to use computer-generated speech rather than recording your own voice-overs. It can be fun, and when you want to put them to work on your company's web site, we'll be happy to help you with the marketing message and incorporating all the features available – and there are quite a few. So play with Oddcast characters as your newest hires, and remember TechInfusion!