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Dan **Harple** wants to prove that if at first you do succeed, you can still try again.

The Dillsburg software entrepreneur, who sold his first company, InSoft, to Netscape Communications last year for \$160 million, is preparing to launch a new Internet company with rock musician and Pennsylvania native Todd Rundgren.

"The idea is so simple it's sometimes hard to grasp," **Harple** said. "You inflict your individuality on the Web. You get what you want, when you want it."

ContextLabs, the name of his new company, will create and sell Java-based software to allow record companies, book publishers, movie studios, or anyone with a database of information to "repurpose" and sell over the Internet whatever portions of it a customer wants.

It will do on a much larger scale what Rundgren did with his 1993 "No World Order" interactive CD, which allowed a listener with a computer and CD-ROM drive to reshuffle parts of the 10 songs into a multitude of different versions.

**Harple** talks about bringing order to the chaos of the World Wide Web, if that's what people want some Internet fans value the Web for its chaos. ContextLabs hopes to provide "tuner" tools that people can use to define a very personal Internet experience.

For example, someone who wanted to hear pre-1965 Beatles songs, read newspaper reviews of early Beatles concerts, and see photos of the band performing at Shea Stadium could theoretically use ContextLabs software to have that delivered to his home computer at a convenient time.

"You can just review it and see what's there, listen to it, just for the heck of it," **Harple** said. "You don't have to pay anything. If you actually want to own it, click here, initiate download."

That initial download would be onto a computer hard drive. From there, the new owner could transfer it to a recordable compact disk with high quality CD sound. There would be a charge for ownership, much as when a CD is purchased in a store.

"It's almost like bringing the mall to your house," **Harple** said. "But in a completely articulated way, so you can define what you want."

One must call this theoretically possible at present because the software is still in development, with a beta version not expected until later this year. **Harple** is talking about it now to gain "mindshare," a Silicon Valley term that means getting people interested in what you propose to do.

In addition, content owners would have to make their music, film, books or whatever available in digital form, and they will be the first targets of ContextLabs' marketing efforts.

**Harple**, 37, began casting about for a new entrepreneurial adventure after discovering that he wasn't happy working for Netscape as a senior vice president. He had joined the company as part of the acquisition deal to help integrate InSoft's audio and video-conferencing software into the Mountainview, Calif. company's product line.

"Netscape was at a different stage," he said. "I fell into a nice role there. I reported to the CEO [Jim Barksdale, whom **Harple** refers to as J.B.]. He gave me the latitude to figure out what I wanted to do with my life."

Last November, he had an idea and severed his formal ties with Netscape. **Harple** began searching the Internet for potential competitors as well as software that would fill gaps in the structure he had sketched out.

One of the websites he discovered was that of Waking Dreams, which is Rundgren's company. He sent Rundgren an e-mail describing what he wanted to do, the musician e-mailed back, and over the next two to three months they studied each other for compatibility what **Harple** calls "a convoluted period of scratching and sniffing."

**Harple** had been a fan of Rundgren's music since high school in Rhode Island, but also was aware of his technical achievements. Rundgren, 48, was a computer video pioneer and accomplished hacker.

"The thing about him, he's not really into technology, per se. He'll create a tool because something doesn't exist," **Harple** said. "The thing is, for a software business, you have to take tools and initial ideas, productize and package them and everything else."

One of the divisions of ContextLabs is PatroNet, which will use the ContextLabs technology to create a sort of virtual marketplace for music, literature, film, or whatever. It will eliminate most distribution costs for the artist and provide a much better royalty than under traditional contracts.

Waking Dreams, the Rundgren company, will develop new art and artists for the Internet

ContextLabs will have some presence here, chiefly **Harple's** office as CEO, but its main operations will be in Cupertino, Calif., and Providence, R.I., close to the nation's two renowned technology Oz's, the Silicon Valley and Massachusetts' Route 128.

"There's just more people up there to draw from," he said. "Now here we have Penn State, and we have Shippensburg. They produce great people, but not enough. I think there's a certain personality characteristic that allows you to work for something like this."

To be taken seriously, he says, a company like ContextLabs has to have a presence in Silicon Valley. It's also more convenient for venture capital financing deals, and for tapping into the region's huge knowledge base.

Linking the far-flung ContextLabs sites together including Rundgren's home in Hawaii is, of course, the Internet. **Harple** finds some irony in the fact that the audio and video-conferencing software developed by InSoft make it possible for his new company to exist.

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