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# MONEY

## PAIN CONTINUES

The major indexes slid more than 3 percent yesterday. The Dow is nearly 100 points from 7,000. **(M)**

Cost Change

Dow  
7,147.78  
-250.89

S&P 500  
743.33  
-26.72

Nasdaq  
1,387.72  
-53.51

GE  
\$8.85  
-\$0.53

Oil  
\$38.44  
-\$1.59

## 'Throwing in the towel' on Wall Street

Wall Street has turned the clock back to 1997.

Investors unable to extinguish their worries about a recession that has no end in sight dumped stocks again yesterday. The Dow Jones industrial average tumbled 251 points to its lowest close since Oct. 28, 1997, while the Standard & Poor's 500 index logged its lowest finish since April 11, 1997.

"People left and right are throwing in the towel," said Keith Springer, president of Capital Financial Advisory Services.

Investors pounded most financial stocks even as government agencies led by the Treasury Department said they would launch a revamped bank rescue plan this week. **(M)**

# Why lose your real shirt?

## Fantasy sites offer risk-free stock trading

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On fantasy Wall Street the trades are real but the money isn't.

If you blow \$100,000, just hit restart.

There are a number of Web sites that offer users a virtual trading experience, in which they compete with other traders.

A pioneer in the growing fantasy realm was Stock-Trak, which has teamed up with colleges for years to simulate the trading experience in classrooms. However, the company launched Wall



Wall Street Survivor offers users a chance to trade virtual stocks in real time.

Street Survivor two years ago, and "it was aimed at bringing fantasy stock market to the public," said CEO Rory Olson.

In two years, the site has grown to more than 100,000 players who con-

duct trades in real time, short stocks, trade options and have a full-blown Wall Street experience.

Fantasy trading is not just for big-shot investors. Olson said 80 percent of users at Survivor are

novices who want to learn about the market. That interest is up since Wall Street went haywire last fall, Olson said.

"What's happening is you've got people that are lining up to learn," he said.

"They don't understand, they've seen their 401(k)s get smashed quarter over quarter."

Survivor and other sites, such as TheSpartanTrader.com, which launched in November, offer users news, information and analysis on companies to base their fantasy stock picks on. Users build a portfolio, and the top performers are eligible for cash and prizes.

Spartan Traders do pay a fee — between \$19.95 and \$39.95, depending on the game. Wall Street Survivors play free.

"It's a good option for novice and experienced traders to get in there and test strategies before they risk real money," said Marcus Thorne, a partner at Spartan Trader.