



Alamo PC Organization

Alamo PC Organization is a non-profit organization whose mission is to increase its members knowledge and effective use of personal computers through presentations, instructional programs, other membership services and access to the expertise of other members.



To register for a Class, Study Group or Sr. Comp classes call:

Registration number **210.736.0080**

If you **didn't** receive your issue of *PC Alamo* or have questions about your membership e-mail:

Sandra Bloom at: membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

Learning Center number **210.736.0700**

If you have comments about classes call

John Gaddis **210.494.9449**

If you have questions about advertising call

Joseph de Leon **210.320.4828**
send e-mail to editor@alamopc.org

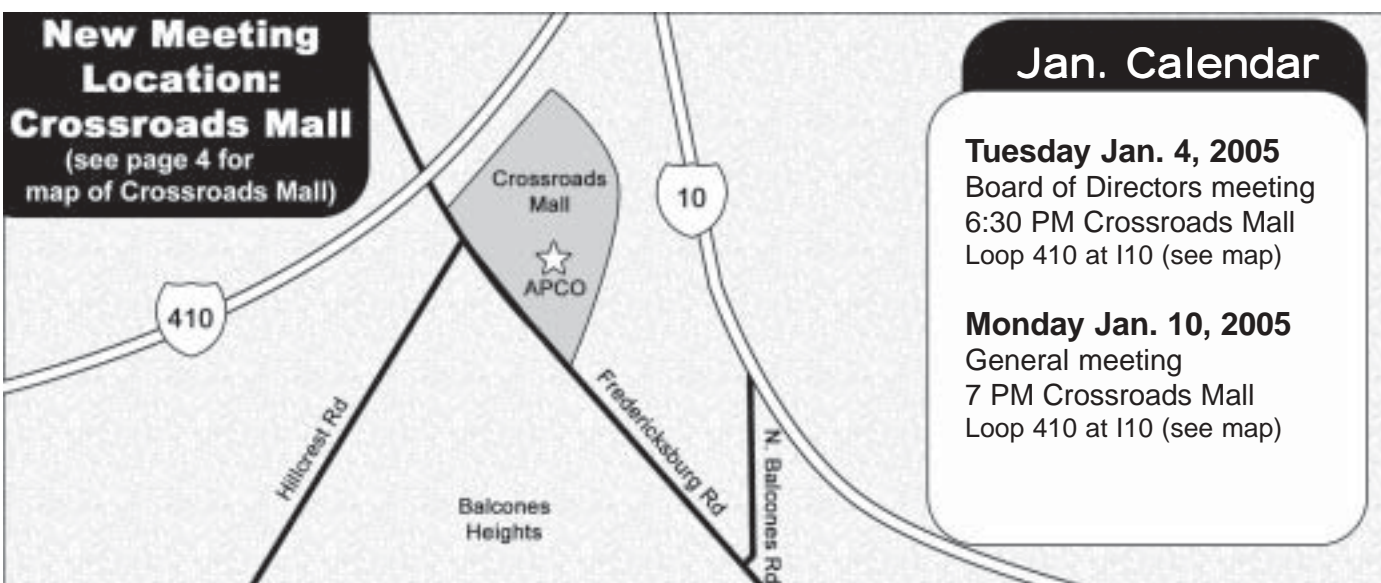
Please send change of address and other correspondence to:
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

Meetings

Monthly program meetings are normally held the second Monday of the month. Meetings are held at the Crossroads Convention Center (across from the Learning Center) located in the lower level of Crossroads Mall, Loop 410 at the intersection with I-10 starting at 7:00PM. Open to all members and the public.

The Board of Directors meets normally on the Tuesday prior to the monthly General Meeting. The BoD meets at the Alamo PC Learning Center located in the lower level of Crossroads Mall, Loop 410 at the intersection with I-10 starting at 6:30PM. Any changes will be announced via the Voice Mail/Hot Line (736-0700) and on the Calendar of Events. Open to all members.

New Meeting Location:
Crossroads Mall
(see page 4 for map of Crossroads Mall)



Jan. Calendar

Tuesday Jan. 4, 2005
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Jan. 10, 2005
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

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PC Alamode (ISSN 1065-3708) is published monthly by the Alamo PC Organization, Inc., 210 Brooks St, San Antonio, TX 78208, an independent association of personal computer users, founded in January 1983, and incorporated in January 1984 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. COPYRIGHT © 2005 by Alamo PC or the author. All rights reserved. No part of PC Alamode may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means — mechanical, electrical, or otherwise — including, but not limited to, photocopying, recording, or information storage/retrieval, without express written permission from Alamo PC. However, unless otherwise indicated, articles may be reprinted by other user and education groups provided the articles are reprinted unaltered and the publication acknowledges the author thereof and PC Alamode. Articles, programs, reviews, and advertisements are compiled without verification of accuracy or applicability to a specific task, computer, or other equipment. Comments or claims are made solely by the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of Alamo PC or of any other Alamo PC member. Trademarks have been used at random within the publication and are hereby recognized as such.

Periodical postage paid at San Antonio, TX and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PC Alamode, PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180.

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PUBLICATION SUBMISSIONS: Please check with the editor regarding submitting ads. Deadline for submissions is the first of the month preceding publication. e-mail to:

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Ad rates effective January 2005

Ad rates effective January 2005				
Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
		<u>Per insertion</u>		
Full pg. (7 1/4" w x 9 1/2" h)	\$274	\$260	\$246	\$238
Half pg. (7 1/4" w x 4 1/2" h)	144	138	130	121
Half pg. (3 1/2" w x 9 1/2" h)	144	138	130	121
Quarter pg. (3 1/2" w x 4 1/2" h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 1/2" w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37

*Consecutive months

**To be paid in advance

Alamo PC Directory

Learning Center
736-0700

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Member Records

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Public Relations

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Product Review Coordinator, Historian

VP Education, Study Groups Coord.

VP Member Retention/Services

VP Trade Shows

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Joe Barth

Mark Lauterbach

Donald Elliott

Preston McKinney

532-9122 (Home)

662-8606 (Home)

532-9122 (Home)

223-8743 (Home)

unlisted

694-4582 (Home)

226-2460 (Home)

531-8 388 (Office)

494-9449 (Office)

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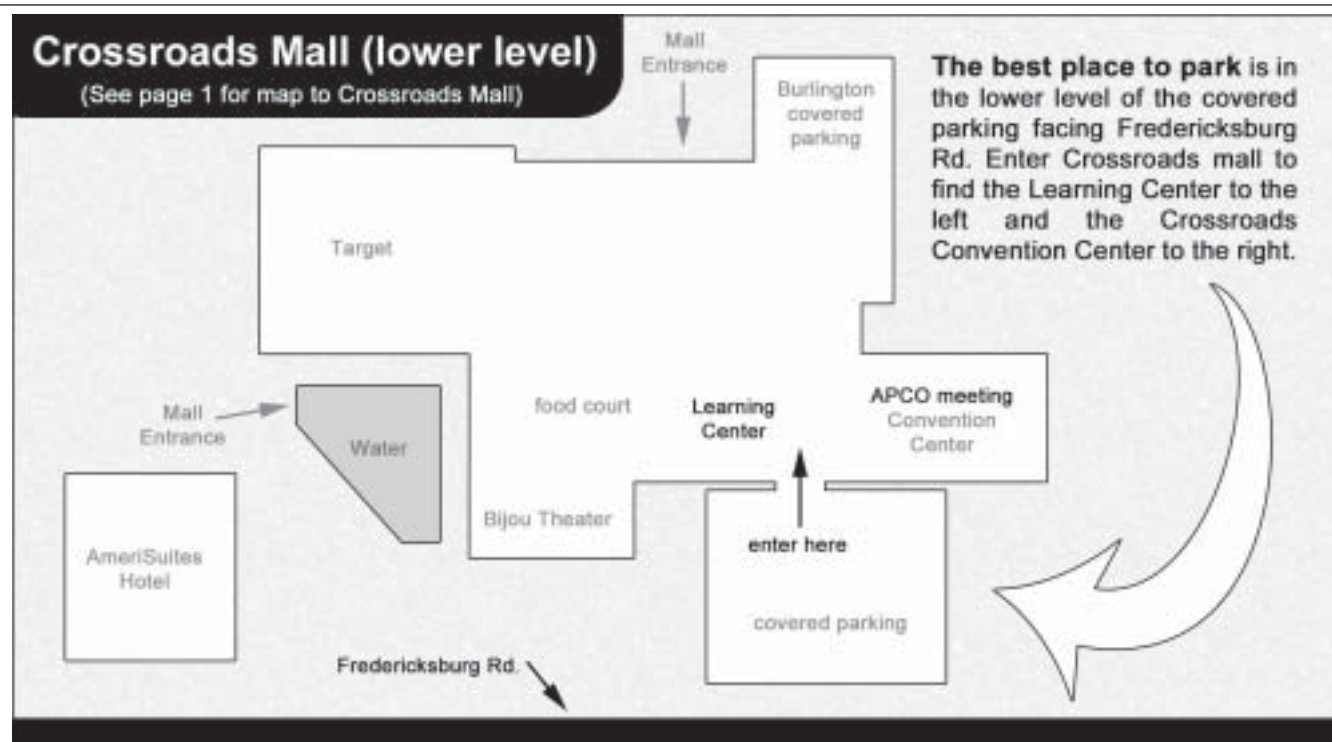
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PC Alamode Photo Contest

1st Place Winner! (cover)

"Hummers for Dinner"

Submitted by Rick Malone

The photo was shot at a friend's condo on top of the mountain at Ruidoso, New Mexico on July 15, 2004. The camera was a Canon EOS Digital Rebel using the Canon 18-55mm lens at f/8, 1/60 sec, using the built-in flash. ISO 400.

1st Runner Up "Surprise Guest"



Submitted by Wenda Gorman

"The Grackle and White Wing Doves don't seem to know what to do about this Parakeet on their feeder. Frankly I was amazed when the parakeet showed up too."

2nd Runner Up "Grandma's Helper"



Submitted by William Schaub

"I took this photo of my granddaughter helping Grandma decorate the tree. I took this picture with my first digital. It's an old Agfa PhotoWise."

PC Alamode Photo Contest Guidelines

1. Submit your JPG file by E-mail to <editor@alamopc.org>.
2. Each member may submit one entry per month.
3. Image will need to be cropped to 4.25" wide x 5.5" tall if selected for the cover.
4. Observe the due date – 10th of the month before publication date.
5. Only the first place winner will be notified.
6. Submit original images only.

← enter

You may have noticed a new layout on the front cover. This year, I will try to use a big theme-related image in the background. There will still be space for the monthly first place photo contest winner. You will also notice a price for the magazine and the theme will be printed on the cover as well. The text is also larger on the month and web address, by request from the Learning Center desk staff. Have any suggestions? E-mail me at <editor@alamopc.org>.

For January 2005 our theme is Home Improvement. Our contributors this month will make sure you know how to paint, landscape, and do some architectural drafting. Make sure you get insurance before you try this at home...

We have a new columnist this month. Alamo PC's very own Bruce Cramer will be doing a monthly column called Computer Defense Department. Bruce, who is a volunteer doctor at the Doctor is In clinic, will be writing about antivirus software, updates and other things that

you can do to keep your computer safe. Check out his column on page 16.

When does your membership expire?

It's right there on the label of your magazine! The first 4 numbers are the year, then the month, then the day. You should consider renewing as soon as possible. Don't wait until your membership has already expired. There is sometimes a lag in getting memberships processed and you may miss an issue of the PC Alamode. Call the Learning Center at 210.736.0700 if you have questions about renewing.



Joseph de Leon, Editor

<editor@alamopc.org>

Photo by Kelly Schroeder



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

Joseph has worked in the graphics industry for over 6 years and teaches graphics and web classes at San Antonio College and Palo Alto College. This is what he looks like after a new issue of PC Alamode is delivered to the printer.

STUDY GROUPS

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-61.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

New Year, New Resolutions, Same Old Challenges!

At last month's board meeting, it was decided to increase advertising rates by 10%, effective this month (2+ years since last raise). Also, since an annual membership increase was last made in 4/96 (\$25 to \$35), membership will increase to \$45, effective February 1st. (This increase brings us in line with most other similar organizations in the US, almost all offering their members much less, and allows 30 days to renew at the current.)

Since the last increase, we have more to offer now than almost any other similar organization in the US. 2 Computer Labs, numerous free classes, quality instructors, Senior Comp classes, "The Dr Is In" (Fri morning "hands on" computer diagnostics, fixes, answers, etc., as a service for members), the internet cafe, and much more, with no services having been dropped or reduced. Members of the BOD want to try to keep it that way.

Past BODs, and better membership numbers, have allowed a cash reserve that has been able to sustain us through some leaner times. Our thanks to them for this "gift."

During the last three "messages," I have tried to bring focus on the organization, the volunteers and the constant need for more, and the importance of members. For any organization, members are its "heart pump and life blood!" The "heart pump" is through the efforts of the many volunteers and the "life blood" is through the money each member contributes (memberships being the greatest percentage).

With overall membership declining and overall prices for goods and services continuing to rise, my appeals for more volunteers and more members have not produced the results I had hoped for. Volunteers have stayed about the same, but membership from 1 Oct to 1 Dec dropped from 2474 to 2340 (net loss of 134). New members added were 207 (Oct 116; Nov 91). That means we lost another 341 old members. That is about a 13.8% reduction. As I stated last month, "monthly funding must come directly from each membership in this organization. At \$35 per year, that is almost

\$3 per month. If one member is lost, and no replacement is made, it reflects the monthly decrease in funds available for member services and expenses." With just the net loss figure, we have lost another \$409 per month. In the last 15 months, only 4 months have shown an increase in membership over the previous month. To meet our current monthly expenses, we need approximately 3200 members. On Dec 1st we were approximately 860 short.

The BOD is focused on bringing income and expenses into alignment. We are pursuing a three-pronged strategy: Increase membership back to a level that can sustain our monthly obligations; Develop alternate revenue streams, such as paid classes (focusing on non-members) and providing services and computers to the mall and convention center (internet cafe, faxes, photocopying, etc), allowing others to compensate us for using our facilities when they are not in use by member activities; Applying for alternate sources of funds (grants and corporate funding).

Difficult decisions by members of the BOD are having to be made to help keep the "ship" afloat. A review of EVERY PENNY of expenditures is being made and anything considered "nonessential" to sustaining the organization is being eliminated. Also, at the December board meeting, the editorial review board assumed the task of trying to determine how to reduce costs associated with the editing, publication, printing and mailing of the PC Alamode magazine (our single biggest monthly expense).

We believe we are aware of many of our problems and are endeavoring to take forceful steps to make corrections. None of the board members wants to curtail the level of services currently available to members.

In that regard, each current member can make the greatest impact on helping to fix the financial problem through getting just one new member (As Soon As Possible), and helping convince other current members to remain a member. We are most thankful to those members who helped sign new members and especially to those who have made financial donations to the organization, some on a sustained monthly basis. This support is most appreciated.

We have implemented some procedures for contacting members with memberships that are about to expire, and members who have had their membership expire. These efforts have been somewhat successful in extending memberships and having "former" members become members again. We are continuing to improve this effort and hope, in a more timely manner, to make members aware of an impending expiration. In the interim, look on the front cover and see when your membership will expire. 2nd line of the address label of this magazine has an 8 digit number after "EXP" (as an example 20050630 indicates the end of June, 2005). If you are within 6 months of expiration, please consider renewing NOW!

I hope everyone will be present at next month's general meeting for an update on our progress. Remember, this is "OUR" organization, and we all have a share in making it better.

To those volunteers who sustain this organization, we owe you our gratitude, and hope you will continue to serve this organization. As always, we need more to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with you as we endeavor to go forward.

I hope everyone had a "Happy Holiday" time and that you will consider trying to get at least one new or former member to sign up ASAP. Tell them to use the website, or call the Learning Center at 736-0700 to provide information.

Study Group

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-61.

Microsoft PowerPoint

A new class is being formed to explore how to use MS PowerPoint. If you have an interest in making dynamic presentations, this is the class for you. Contact the Learning Center for class information and dates at 736-0700.

January Program

David Steward

Adobe Acrobat 7.0 Professional Demonstration

The January General Meeting will be hosted for one of our long time supporters, Adobe. The featured product of the presentation will be Adobe Acrobat 7.0. Mick Mason will be showing the attendees the power of Acrobat and how we can use it in our everyday lives.

Adobe® Acrobat® 7.0 Professional software is the advanced way to create, control, and deliver more secure, high-quality Adobe PDF documents. Assemble electronic or paper files—even Web sites, engineering drawings, and e-mail—into reliable PDF documents that are easy to

share with others using free Adobe Reader® 7.0 software.

Mr. Mason has 6 years of experience developing strategies and executing programs to help companies understand the benefits of PDF. Mick Mason worked for one of Adobe Systems top Corporate Resellers, Software Spectrum, first as an Adobe Partner Manager and then as the Adobe Acrobat Business Development Manager. Mr. Mason now focuses on promoting and education customers on Adobe Acrobat Solutions. He is an Adobe Certified Expert (A.C.E.) in Adobe Acrobat.

Of course, there will be door prizes and other goodies to the attendees.

The General Meeting will be held in the Crossroads Convention Center located at the Crossroads Mall, at 7:00 PM On January 10th. Plan to arrive a little early, so you can visit with the other members and see the changes that we have made over the years to the Learning Center located right across the hall from the convention center. Bring a friend and invite them to become a part of our Alamo PC family. I look forward to seeing everyone there.



The holidays are behind us for a while, so it's time to catch up with those chores around the house. The rainy, drizzly weather may keep us inside but those chores still can build a powerful hunger. Low temperatures practically demand a hot steaming bowl of homemade soup and a hot loaf of bread fresh from the oven.

If you have an extra beer the bread is easy.

Beer Bread

- 3 cups sifted self-rising flour
- 4 Tablespoons sugar
- 1 can warm beer

Mix well and pour into greased loaf pan. Bake 55 minutes at 400 degrees F. Quick and easy when friends drop by unexpectedly.

Cream of Peanut Soup

- 1 Tablespoon butter
- 3 Tablespoons peanut butter
- 1 teaspoon minced onion
- 2 Tablespoons flour
- 2 cups scalded milk
- 1 cup chicken stock
- salt and pepper to taste

Cook onions in butter and peanut butter for 5 minutes. Add flour and stir until smooth. Add scalded milk and stock. Season to taste. Cook in double boiler 20 minutes. Garnish with chopped peanuts.

If you have a favorite recipe send it to us at <gg@alamopc.org>. We'll enter your name in a drawing for some software. Enjoy the cold drizzly weather, it will be hot and dry soon enough.



Windows OS Shortcut to any Location

You can create a custom keyboard shortcut for any location on your computer. First, find the location you wish to open by keyboard shortcut. Next, right-click on the folder and choose properties. Click an insertion point into the **shortcut key** text input field. Hold down the Ctrl key and tap a letter on your keyboard. Be sure you choose a key that you do not normally use for another operation (Ctrl + C to copy, Ctrl + P to print, for example). Click okay in the Properties Dialogue Box. You can now access this location by using your new keyboard shortcut!





Significant Happenings...

John Gaddis, Education VP

DEPARTMENTS

If you will look over the list of our twenty-seven offerings you will see an interesting selection. Computer Literacy is an excellent place for new Apconian computer users to start and get a good foundation in computing. The course is designed for beginners and those who want to brush up their computer skills. Students learn about the parts of the computer, acquire keyboard and mouse skills used in many software programs, gain a basic understanding of surfing the Web and using e-mail. The course prepares students to enroll in a variety of second level courses.

A good class to move into after Computer Literacy is Windows XP, which helps you make the transition to this latest Microsoft operating system. The class covers new features and how to configure the system. This is also rec-

ommended for the people who transitioned themselves into XP, but never took the time to really delve into its new features.

Microsoft Word is another excellent class for the new computer user as well as the Apconian who wants to brush-up on word processor skills for business or pleasure. It starts at an introductory level to help the student become familiar with basic functionality, menus, toolbars and shortcut keys. Students should have a basic knowledge of Windows and be familiar with operating the mouse and keyboard.

The Internet Jumpstart Class is intended for people who have never seen the Internet, who have not been on the Internet or who are on the Internet but are just beginning to find their way around.

It is with mixed emotions that Alamo PC members who know Ted Ressler will be bidding him goodbye. Ted wrote, "I am sorry to advise you that I will not be able to teach either the Internet Jumpstart class or the Windows XP class after March of 2005. I intend to retire in the spring and we are planning to move closer to our children who are in Seattle. I thought I should let you know so you would have time to recruit another teacher."

Ted has been a longtime valuable volunteer instructor for the Internet Jumpstart Class and Windows XP and he will be difficult to replace. If you can help take Ted's place with either of these two classes please call 494-9449 as soon as possible so you can transition in as Ted teaches his last two classes in January and February.

Senior Comp Notes

Jane Montgomery



Winter Schedule of Classes:

Basic Introduction to Windows:

Donna Dudley, Andy Roca
Wednesdays 10am-12pm - Jan. 12 - Feb. 16

Beginning Windows

Audrey Henkin
Tuesdays 1:30pm-3:30pm - Jan. 11- Feb. 15

Beginning Windows

Jane Montgomery
Wednesdays 1pm-3pm - Jan. 26- Mar. 2

Beginning Windows (Enjoying your Computer)

Paul Sanche
Mondays 9am-1pm - Jan. 24 - Feb. 28

Microsoft Word

Mary Lou Dougherty
Wednesdays 1pm-3pm - Jan.12 - Feb. 16

E-mail & the World Wide Web

Bill Hudson
Tuesdays 10am - 12pm Jan. 11 - Feb.15

Turbo Tax class

Fridays 9am - 11am - Feb. 11 - March 18

Senior Comp Practice Lab

Sarah Thomas and Joe Gentry
Every Thursday 9am-12pm.

Spring Schedule of Classes

Basic Introduction to Windows:

Donna Dudley, Andy Roca
Wednesdays 10am-12pm Mar 16 -April 20

Beginning Windows

Audrey Henkin
Tuesdays 1:30pm-3:30pm Mar.15 -Apr. 19

Greeting Cards (Hallmark Studio 2004)

Jane Montgomery
Wednesdays 1pm-3pm - Mar.30 - May 4

Beginning Windows (Enjoying your Computer)

Paul Sanche
Mondays 9am-1pm - Mar. 28 - May 2

Intermediate Windows

Bill Hudson
Tuesdays 10am - 12pm - Mar.29 - May 3

Microsoft Word

Mary Lou Dougherty
Wednesdays 1pm-3pm - Mar.16 - Apr. 20

E-mail & the World Wide Web

Fridays 1pm - 3pm - Mar, 25 - Apr. 29

Senior Comp Practice Lab

Sarah Thomas and Joe Gentry
Every Thursday 9am-12pm.

This schedule is subject to change. Please check with the Alamo PC Registrar at 210-736-2700



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From the Deals Guy

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click <Bobclick@mindspring.com>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>> for past columns and some interesting articles.

Disappearing Rebates

I discovered a new problem concerning rebates. I've had good luck with OfficeMax rebates in the past, but the last two I sent in ended up with a follow-up phone call later by me only to be told that the check was sent on a certain date and cashed on a certain date; end of conversation. I gave them the benefit of the doubt for the first one, but when I got the same answer for the second one, I know I keep better records than that and we have no problem with mailboxes in our neighborhood. A \$10 rebate wasn't worth any further efforts, but that's making me more gun-shy of rebates.

Reminders

I talked to Rich Henf at Banner Badge <<http://www.bannerbadge.com>> and if you have not ordered one of these fun gadgets yet they will still honor the DealsGuy offer. Call 1-772-571-9944. If you had problems contacting them during Florida's vicious storms, they apologize and urge you to try again. Peet Bros. (weather station) may have had similar problems. I'm not sure but you may still be able to get that special on the Ultimeter Weather Station <<http://www.peetbros.com>> by calling 1-321-206-6214. When I ordered a Big Weather Picture for my weather station I found it was backordered, but I now have it.

How About Helping Microsoft?

My thanks to Joe Barth of Alamo PC Organization for sending this information. Joe says; "They are seeking people to participate in Microsoft product evaluations and get free software. Ever wanted to talk to Microsoft about that one feature you wished the company would change in a product, or on a Web site? The Usability Research Group at Microsoft is interested in talking to you! All participants will receive a software gift for participating in a study." Check <<http://www.microsoft.com/usability/jump1.htm>>.

Time Is Of The Essence

Here is a sophisticated time and data management software, C-Organizer Professional, which offers PC users a digital Planner, Event Scheduler, Calendar, Notebook, Address Book, Password and Bookmark managers, all packed up into one powerful and easy-to-use application. For further information, go to <<http://www.csoftlab.com>>.

User Group people can get it for \$25.00 rather than the usual \$35.00 price by downloading (4.15 MB) at <<https://secure.element5.com/shareit/checkout.html?productid=167248&language=English&COUPON1=248QH>> for the discounted price.

A Great Relational Database!

I called Alpha Software to order the new version of Alpha 5 on special, and while talking to the order-taker, he remembered me so we created a deal for my readers. Alpha Software has been offering their database for years and has continued to improve it. They have introduced Alpha 5 ver. 6 and user group members can get a deal on it. Remember that Alpha 5 is a relational database that has some exciting new features. Check their Web site at <<http://www.alphasoftware.com>> for full information. You can build Web-accessible database applications without any programming. You can access and work with your data no matter where it resides if you have an Internet Web Browser.

It offers action scripting with hundreds of predefined actions that can be used for building applications without writing one character of code. Alpha's Visual Report Writer will also impress you with its ease of use, and lets you accomplish custom layouts and many other tasks. As suggested above, it also works with HTML and supports Active X. Read more about it on their Web site and you will see that Alpha 5, ver. 6 is even more outstanding than ever. I've used Alpha Software's database for my own purposes for years and I'm no expert.

The retail price for Alpha 5 ver. 6 is \$349.00, but during January and February of 2005 you get a tremendous discount, just \$179.00 if you download it

(24 megs). To do that, e-mail Brett Johnston at <brett@alphasoftware.com> with the code "dealsguy" in the subject line to make arrangements for downloading. If you prefer to have it shipped, e-mail Brett with "dealsguy" in the subject line. You can also call Brett at 800-451-1018 Ext. 11. Shipping is \$12.00 in the US, \$30.00 to Canada.

Working On Your Icons?

I received this announcement from Roman Rudnik, Marketing Communications Mgr. of ArcticLine Software, which produces Bee Icons. He states: "Bee Icons is an icon customization tool that allows you to change over 250 system icons in Windows 95/98/Me/2000/XP, individually or using icon themes. I think you will find our software interesting. Designed for Windows 95/98/Me/2000/XP, the application allows changing over 250 standard icons separately, one after another, or all together using one of the many Bee Icons Themes. Along with Desktop, Drive and Folder icons, the program can successfully change icons on the Windows XP Start Panel. (DealsGuy note: Check the product page: <<http://www.beeicons.com/features.php>>.)

"We offer 15% discount for user group members. If you are interested, please e-mail me at <roman@beeicons.com> and I will send you a Discount coupon code. This code should be entered during registration process to get the discount."

Talk All Over The World

I was browsing a recent issue of Hewie's Favorites (his newsletter) and noticed something that might interest you. Information on their Web site is a bit vague so beware. Sounds like both parties must be on-line. Called "Free World Dialup (FWD)," it is located at <<http://www.pulver.com/fwd/>> and they claim you can make free phone calls over the Internet using your regular telephone and a computer program. I didn't try it. Maybe you could call your own phone with the computer and give your spouse hell, then hang up before they find out who is calling. Just a thought!



It's the Slammer for a Spammer!

John Brewer, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

John Brewer practices law in Oklahoma City, is a member of the Governor's and Legislative Task Force for E-Commerce, and enjoys issues relating to eBusiness and cyberspace.

Spam is a nuisance. The cretins that engage in this sort of advertising deserve a fate of solitary confinement without Internet access and with rap music playing constantly at a high volume. A recent Virginia case has sent a message to the spammer community that should not be ignored.

A jury in Leesburg, Virginia, AOL's home county, convicted two North Carolina spammers of sending spam through computers located in Virginia. A third defendant was acquitted.

An article at <Spamhaus.org> reported the convictions. "Jeremy Jaynes of Raleigh, North Carolina, a prolific spammer who operated using the alias 'Gaven Stubberfield' and was listed by Spamhaus' ROKSO database as being the 8th most prolific spammer in the world, has been convicted of spamming using deceptive routing information to hide the source. A Virginia court recommended Jaynes spend nine years in prison for sending hundreds of thousands of unwanted e-mail messages. Virginia Attorney General Jerry Kilgore said Jaynes was found guilty under a Virginia state law that prohibits e-mail marketers from sending more than a certain amount of spams within a given time frame and prohibits the use of fake e-mail addresses.

A Loudoun County jury decided that Jaynes, 30, and his sister, DeGroot, 28, flooded tens of thousands of AOL e-mail accounts with unsolicited e-mail. The jury recommended that Jaynes spend nine years in prison and that DeGroot pay \$7,500 in fines for violating Virginia's anti-spam law.

Although both Jaynes and DeGroot lived in North Carolina, Virginia asserted jurisdiction because they sent messages through server computers located in the state."

SecurityFocus.com has reported other developments reference criminal prosecutions for spamming.

"A Los Angeles man who used other people's wi-fi networks to send thousands of unsolicited adult-themed e-mails from his car pleaded guilty to a single felony Monday, in what prosecutors say is the first criminal conviction under the federal CAN-SPAM Act. [Note: the Virginia prosecutions were under Virginia state law, CAN-SPAM is federal law.] In a plea agreement with pros-

ecutors, Nicholas Tombros, 37, faces a likely sentencing range stretching from probation to six months in custody, assuming he has no prior criminal convictions. Sentencing is set for December 27th.

Tombros drove around the Los Angeles beachfront suburb of Venice with a laptop and a wi-fi antenna sniffing out unsecured residential access points, which he then used to send thousands of untraceable spam messages advertising pornography sites."

The CAN-SPAM Act, which took effect January 1, 2004, doesn't criminalize unsolicited bulk commercial e-mail, but it does prohibit most of the deceptive practices used by spammers. Tombros was charged under a provision that prohibits breaking into someone else's computer to send spam. Also outlawed is the practice of deliberately crafting spammy (Note: spammy?) messages to disguise the origin; materially falsifying the headers in spam; spamming from five or more e-mail accounts established under fake names; or hijacking five or more IP addresses and spamming from them.

A first-time violator faces up to one year in federal stir for a small-time operation -- three years if he or she meets one of several minimum standards of bad behavior, like leading a spam gang of at least three people, sending over 2,500 messages in one day, or using 10 or more falsely-registered domain names.

Assistant U.S. attorney Wesley Hsu, who prosecuted Tombros, says he believes the spammer is the first to be convicted under CAN SPAM. "It is my understanding that it is, in fact, the first," said Hsu.

The Tombros case is one of a handful of wireless hacking convictions federal prosecutors reeled in this year. In June, a Maryland man with a grudge against a Connecticut-based patent firm pleaded guilty to using unsecured wireless networks at homes and businesses in the Washington D.C. area to penetrate the company's computers and deliver anonymous threats and extortion demands.

The same month, two Michigan men, Brian Salcedo and Adam Botbyl, pleaded guilty to conspiracy charges stemming from a scheme to steal credit card numbers from the Lowe's home improvement chain through an unsecured wi-fi network at a suburban Detroit

store. A third man later pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor for using the same access point to check his e-mail."

Spamhaus is a company located in the United Kingdom. It offers an anti-spam service based on a database that collects information and evidence on known spammers and spam gangs, to assist ISP abuse desks and law enforcement agencies. Spamhaus states that approximately 200 spam operations account for 90% of all spam. The following information is found on the Spamhaus web site.

"90% of spam received by Internet users in North America and Europe can be traced via redirects, hosting locations of web sites, domains and aliases, to a hard-core group of around 200 known spam operations, almost all of whom are listed in the ROKSO database. These spam operations consist of an estimated 500-600 professional spammers loosely grouped into gangs ("spam gangs"), the vast majority of whom are operating illegally, and who move from network to network seeking out Internet Service Providers ("ISPs") known for lax enforcing of anti-spam policies. These are the spammers you definitely do NOT want on your network.

Many of these spam operations pretend to operate 'offshore' using servers in Asia and South America to disguise the origin. Those who don't pretend to be 'offshore' pretend to be small ISPs themselves, claiming to their providers the spam is being sent not by them but by their non-existent 'customers'. Some set up as fake networks, pirate or fraudulently obtain large IP allocations from ARIN/RIPE and use routing tricks to simulate a network, fooling real ISPs into supplying them connectivity. When caught, almost all use the age old tactic of lying to each ISP long enough to buy a few weeks more of spamming and when terminated simply move on to the next ISP already set up and waiting."

Unfortunately there is nothing simple about modern spamming operations. Hopefully, the criminal prosecutions will continue until the spammers get the message.



Freeware & Shareware

Tim Hoke, Alamo PC

Tim Hoke has lived in San Antonio for over 14 years where he is the pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church. He became a member of Alamo PC in the early 1990's.

Well, here it is January, 2005. Now that you have all the new computer goodies you got in December, it is time to start using them to their fullest. While there are plenty of great software programs on the shelves of computer stores, there is a plethora of excellent software programs that never make it to the commercial venue. My column is designed to track down and describe to you some interesting, useful, and affordable programs that will enhance your computing experience. I hope you find my January offerings to your liking.

Mozilla Firefox 1.0 is a fast, full-featured browser for Windows that makes browsing more efficient than ever before. Firefox includes pop-up blocking; a tab-browsing mode that lets you open several pages in a single window; integrated Google searching; simplified privacy controls that let you cover your tracks more effectively; a streamlined browser window that shows you more of the page than any other browser; and a number of additional features that work with you to help you get the most out of your time online. I've been using Firefox 1.0 for a few weeks and have pretty much switched from Internet Explorer (IE). For some reason IE became very slow and would not allow me to access certain things. I run Adaware regularly, but although

it finds spyware, this never fixed IE to my satisfaction. Mozilla firefox seems to run a little faster than IE, and it has given me absolutely no trouble to date. It is completely free and can be downloaded at <<http://www.mozilla.org/>>.

While I'm at it, I'll include another offering from Mozilla, **Thunderbird 1.0**. Thunderbird makes e-mailing safer, faster, and easier than ever before with the industry's best implementations of features, such as intelligent spam filters, a built-in RSS reader, and quick search. Thunderbird gives you a faster, safer, and more productive e-mail experience. Mozilla designed Thunderbird to prevent viruses and to stop junk mail so you can get back to reading your mail. Thunderbird provides the most effective tools for detecting junk mail. The tools analyze your e-mail and identify those that are most likely to be junk. You can automatically have your junk mail deleted or you can put it in a folder you specify, just in case you like reading junk mail. You can view your e-mail the way you want it by accessing it with Thunderbird's new three-column view. In addition, you can customize your toolbar, change its look with themes, and use Mail Views to quickly sort through your e-mail.

Thunderbird provides enterprise and government grade security features such as

S/MIME, digital signing, message encryption, support for certificates, and security devices. Thunderbird gives you IMAP/POP support, a built-in RSS reader, support for HTML mail, powerful quick search, saved-search folders, advanced-message filtering, message grouping, labels, return receipts, smart-address-book LDAP address completion, import tools, and the ability to manage multiple e-mail and newsgroup accounts. Thunderbird lets you add additional features as you need them through extensions. Extensions are a powerful tool to help you build a mail client that meets your specific needs. Thunderbird, like Mozilla Firefox, is entirely free at <<http://www.mozilla.org/>>.

CleanCenter 1.33.79 will find and delete temporary files and clean up a lot of space on your hard drive. It is a user-friendly application developed to free up disk space by deleting junk files that are no longer used by any software on your system. Even the least-experienced user can easily remove junk files with this tool. Just select the drives to be cleaned, scan the system for more than 50 types of junk files, and click the Clean Now button. While your system is being scanned for useless data, you can see how much space you will gain. It's free to try for 45 days, after which you must fork over \$30 to keep it. You'll find this one at <www.miniwish.com>.



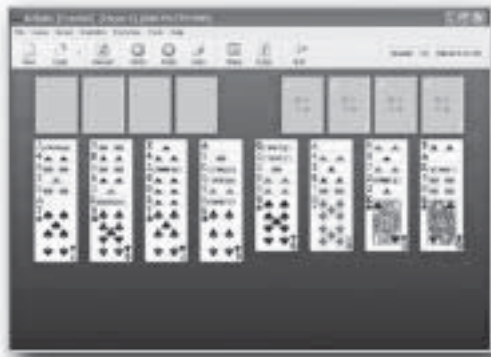
Mozilla Firefox 1.0 rivals Microsoft Internet Explorer.



Mozilla Thunderbird is an e-mail utility that is gaining popularity.



CleanCenter frees up disk space by deleting unneeded files.



Solitaire games are popular with players of all ages.

123 Free Solitaire 2004 Card Games Collection 5.30 includes 12 solitaire card games: Spider Solitaire One Suit, Spider Solitaire Two Suits, FreeCell, Klondike, Carpet, Eighteens, Travelers, Grandfather's Clock, La Belle Lucie, Pyramid, Spider and Royal Rendezvous. 123 Free Solitaire 2004 features a pleasant layout, fast game play, rich sounds, extensive options, and quality help. Each solitaire has more than 9 trillion possible games to play, so the game remains fresh no matter how many times you play. Under Windows XP, 123 Free Solitaire 2004 is fully skinnable with XP themes and visual styles. Version 5.3 adds a new game: Flower Garden. This is a freebie from <www.treecardgames.com>.

Yahoo Messenger 6.0 is a free service that allows you to see when friends come online and send them instant messages. It also can alert you to new e-mail in your Yahoo Mail or Yahoo Personals account, or when you have upcoming events recorded in Yahoo Calendar. Yahoo Messenger offers firewall support, a standby mode that minimizes the program until an Internet connection is made, the ability to save and print your conversations, and a tabbed interface that provides quick access to your favorite stocks, news, and sports scores.

Other features include the ability to create a chat room automatically, stock price

alerts, the ability to send messages to friends (even if they're not online when you are), a Quick Compact mode that hides the Messenger tools to maximize your viewing area, Messenger Themes, and voice chat, which allows you to talk for free to anybody else on the Internet. Using a Webcam, you can see who you're chatting with or view the Webcam of any Yahoo member who has granted you access. The latest version adds Launchcast Radio, Yahoo Games, Yahoo Audibles, and stealth settings. You can download this one free from <www.yahoo.com>.



Yahoo! Instant Messenger is one of the most popular messaging programs. YIM comes packed with features like games, LaunchCast (Internet radio), and voice chat.



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Protecting that Holiday Computer

Preventive Maintenance

Russell James, Alamo PC

Russell is General Manager at **BJ Associates of San Antonio, The Laptop Specialist**. They are an authorized service center for Toshiba and Sony systems. They are the laptop specialist and also handle system builds and parts for desktops. They take care of any IBM compatible hardware or software problem that you have. e-mail <russell@bjassociates.com> or visit them on the web at <<http://bjassociates.com>>.

Now that you have invested the money to get that new computer that you have been wanting for so long, you need to look at what it is going to take from you to keep it in tiptop working order. This month we will concentrate on the physical protection and cleaning of the computer system as well as some software items that you may not be aware of. There are a number of things that you can do to protect your computer that do not take a lot of computer knowledge but fall into the category of good common sense.

The first physical item on the list is the source of power, the electricity. Every computer system has to be plugged into some sort of power protection. There are different levels of protection depending on what you need. If you want to protect the equipment from damage then you need a surge protector. If you need to make sure that the system continues to run in case of loss of power then you will need an Uninterruptible Power Supply or UPS.

A surge suppressor is going to be the choice for most of the computers that we deal with. Make sure that the suppressor you choose is UL listed and has a plug for your phone line from the wall and to the modem. The modem is usually the first item that we forget about when it comes to surges. We tend to forget that there is low voltage running through the phone lines and neglect to protect the modem. Most of the new surge suppressors on the market now come with a warranty to protect the equipment that is plugged into it from damage due to electrical spikes and surges. A good suppressor will cost about \$35 and is available at most any store that sells computer supplies.

If you have a system that needs to be on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, then you will need to get a UPS. You need to first calculate how much power your system uses and then how long it needs to run while the power is out. Most of the systems do not have to be on so the

UPS is simply a tool to protect the components and with software to shut the computer down if the power does not come on within a specified time. Depending on how much power the system uses and how long you need it to run without power, a good UPS will cost anywhere from \$150 to \$600. American Power Conversion or APC, is a manufacturer of surge suppressors and UPS systems. They have an excellent section on their web site that will help you to select the right UPS for your system. The address of the selector is <<http://www.apc.com/sizing/>>.

The next item that you need to keep up with is the cooling of the system. The computer has a number of fans inside the box to help to keep it cool. You need to be sure to place the computer in a location that will allow the fans to do their job. Try to keep the front and rear of the computer free of books, papers and any other debris that would block the airflow in or out of the holes in the box. This will allow the fans to circulate the air as much as possible to keep the system cool. Do not forget about the monitor. Those little holes in the top and sides of the monitor are not for you to hang notes on. They are to let the air circulate also.

Dust will also hinder the cooling process. No matter how clean a home or office you keep, you will not be able to keep the dust away from your computer. There seems to be a dust magnet that is built into all the computer systems in the world. Every six months you should turn the computer off, pull the box out and vacuum the dust from the holes in the outside. Inside the box will need to be cleaned out at the same time. Be sure to turn the system off before opening the box. You can use a can of compressed air to blow the dust out of the cracks and crevices inside the box. I like to use the compressed air and the vacuum at the same time. The air will dislodge the dust and the vacuum will pick it up so that it will not make a mess in the house. The very best way is to unplug all of the cords and take the box onto the patio outside for its bi-

annual cleaning. Pay attention to the areas near the fans, as this is where most of the dust will accumulate. The fan on the CPU will also cause you the most problems if the dust is so heavy that it effects the cooling of the CPU.

Now that you have all of the physical issues out of the way, let's take a quick look at the software that came with your system. You want to be sure that you have Antivirus software installed. Some of the new systems will come with a 3-month copy of virus protection in hopes that you will subscribe for the next year with them. Be sure that the version that is installed is the most current version. If it is not, then do not renew the software. Go to your favorite computer store and buy a copy of the latest version, which will include the one-year subscription. The newer versions do a much better job of finding and eliminating bugs that try to get into your system.

The next step is to set your system up to download and install the latest critical updates automatically. With Windows XP there is a Control Panel icon that will allow you to set this up. If you will follow these steps you will be on your way to a very uneventful computer experience. And in the land of computers, that is a good thing.

Free Class

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-61.

DotNetNuke

This is a class on using the DotNetNuke portal software for hosting your website. For more information, contact Joe Brazell at <ejbrazell@satx.rr.com> or by phone 345-2207.



Whatsup.Doc

At Home with Tivo and a Used Cat Litter Box

K. Joyce McDonald, Alamo PC

Joyce is a contract technical writer specializing in Internet/intranet infrastructure documentation. Visit her Internet domains at <www.jbmcdonaldandson.com> and <www.taichi-interactive.com>. E-mail her at <kjoycemcdonald@satx.rr.com>.

ALAMODE COLUMNS

I'll wager that this is the only column in a PC related magazine that deals with the issue of kitty litter boxes. Perhaps, rightly so. However this is not the first column I have devoted to this topic. A little over a year ago, I wrote a column in which I referred to the Litterfree cat litter box. (November, 2003: "Is Anybody Home?") My discussion covered a very fine invention with a very bad website (www.litterfree.com) on which any customer activity was rewarded with script errors rather than information or order confirmations.

The litter box had electronic controls, hooked into the plumbing, and required no effort from the owner besides pushing a button (if the box wasn't pre-programmed for automatic cleaning) and occasional replacement of the plastic semi-permanent litter and cleaning solution bottle. Except for a lot of noise, the box was a miracle of modern engineering, and it had won several awards for design.

I owned one of these boxes myself, and when it came time to replace the cleaning solution, I couldn't find it in stores. I went to <www.litterfree.com> to reorder, however, the site's ordering system and customer service links didn't work. I wondered then whether the buggy site took the company down, and if the company execs ever knew why they didn't get any orders over the Internet. I still don't know. Now if you go to the site you'll get the message, "Sorry this site is temporarily unavailable. Please check back later."

This issue would be history except for the fact that I recently sold my Litterfree box to one of my readers. A couple of months after I wrote the article, my cats decided that they didn't care for the box, mostly because of the noise and their distaste for my makeshift cleaning solution. I dismantled and cleaned the box and stuck it in a closet until I decided what to do with it.

In November I got an e-mail from a reader in Reno (hi Jill), wanting to know if I ever found out anything more about

this company. It seems Jill has been using a Litterfree box successfully for quite some time but was concerned about what she was going to do when her box wore out. I offered to sell her a gently used one at a steep discount if she would pay the postage (that contraption is big and heavy!)

She agreed, so I mailed the box then billed her via e-mail. She put the payment and postage money into my PayPal account and received the box by standard mail in about a week. What a trip! This magazine may be better than eBay! By the way, is anyone in the market for gently used birdcages or Nokia cell phones?

An item in my house that is not for sale is my new satellite TV box that features Tivo. We haven't had it long enough to determine whether Tivo is a blessing or a curse (in terms of time usage) but thus far, we've had a lot of fun with it. I can talk about Tivo only in the broadest terms because I'm just the consumer. My husband is the TV / Stereo hacker in our house, which means that I'm lucky to be able to turn on the TV set and make it work without pressing five or six buttons on four different remotes, holding my breath and praying a lot. One would think that the last thing I would want is another piece of technology to complicate my relationship with my TV set. However my husband knows my weak spots. All he has to do is mention "Star Trek." In 1978 we paid a cool grand for a videocassette recorder and \$25 for our first videotape. I agreed to the purchase because I pictured myself recording Star Trek reruns and watching them at 5 AM before the kids were up. This time I agreed to Tivo so that I can enjoy dinner with the kids and grandkids on Friday nights and not worry that I'm missing "Enterprise."

We have had Tivo for a couple of weeks now, and I have discovered other beauties in this little box. Now instead of channel surfing, we go through Tivo's list of programs and movies, selecting the ones we want and telling it to record them. The little set top box (which doubles as our satellite receiver) goes on and off at odd hours doing its duty.

When we have time to sit down and watch TV (which usually amounts to Saturday night and Sunday afternoon) we can go through the list of recorded programs, determine how much time we can waste, and select something to watch from the list of recorded programs. We have found that we like Tivo better than renting DVDs because we can record anything that appears on TV, not just movies, and because we can record everything that sounds interesting. We don't have to keep track of rental fees and we don't have to return tapes or DVDs. And we don't get a down feeling when we rent or buy a DVD and realize we hate it. On Sunday, for instance, we started watching "One Christmas" and after 20 minutes realized we didn't have a clue to what was going on, and didn't care. We deleted the movie and went on to watch "Love, Actually", which we saved because we enjoyed it so much. Sometime this weekend I hope to see my first episode of "Desperate Housewives."

Today (December 7) in the Wall Street Journal a piece about Tivo hinted at other conveniences. If I learn about a program I want to record and am not at home, I can set my Tivo from any Internet-enabled PC by going to <www.tivo.com/tco>.

A feature we did not care for was one that set Tivo to record its own recommended programs. The shows it originally recorded were duds, and we had to do some work to delete those programs. Luckily, Tivo places an icon next to the entries it recommended, so it was easy enough to get rid of them and to turn off the "recommend programs" feature. We did like the "thumbs up, thumbs down" feature that allows us to rate the programs we watch. By indicating what we like or dislike, Tivo can learn our tastes and perhaps in the future select programs that we might actually want to watch.



Computer Defense Department

Keep your computer running smooth and Trouble Free in the New Year!

Bruce Cramer, Alamo PC

A+, Network+, Microsoft Certified Professional (Windows XP). Bruce is retired from the Army. He is the owner/operator of PC Pro Computer Services <www.pcpro4u.com> where he provides in-home/on-site computer services. He is a regular at the Doctors Is In on Friday mornings, at the Learning Center and has never met a piece of malware that he couldn't get rid of. Bruce can be reached by e-mail at <service@pcpro4u.com>. See his ad for PC Pro Computer Services on page 37.

Back in the good old days – you could keep your computer running without getting into much trouble by just having an antivirus application installed. Nowadays, Antivirus, firewall, security, updates and patches are words to live by.

In today's world of computing there are several tools you need to have - and keep updated. Here is some information about the gremlins and how to keep them at bay. At the end of this article I will give some recommendations for these must have tools. We'll start off with the basics.

Antivirus: Nobody should be without an antivirus application. Using your computer without an antivirus application is like driving a care on the freeway without seatbelts, doors or windows. An antivirus program is designed to keep your computer free of virus infection by providing real time protection from viruses and virus activity. An antivirus application will scan your computer on a regular basis and based upon its database of virus definitions, it will identify and handle the virus in three different ways. The virus application will first try and fix the infection by cleaning (some applications refer to this as "healing") the infected file of the virus. If the application cannot clean the infection it will quarantine the virus. By quarantining the virus the file with the infection will not be accessed by your computer. Therefore it cannot infect other files on your hard drive. If neither of these two fixes can be performed the antivirus application last resort is to delete the file. In some cases the antivirus application cannot perform any of the fixes. This may be the case if the antivirus definitions are out of date or the virus is very new and unknown but I have seen this only on a rare occasion.

Bottom Line – your antivirus application is only as good as its most recent update. There are many to choose from. The most popular being Norton and

MacAfee. These two have been in a neck and neck battle for the top spot of virus killers for years. What ever you choose you need to make sure that the program offers:

- Starts when your computer starts.
- Full time protection.
- Scans incoming and outgoing e-mail as well as Internet downloads.
- Provides automatic updates at a regular interval.
- Automatic scheduling of full system scans.

Firewall: Firewall sounds like such a technical term. Think in terms of a firewall in a car. The firewall in a car is designed to keep a fire in the engine compartment from entering the passenger area where it could obviously do serious harm to the automobile operator and passengers. A firewall on a computer does much the same. It keeps the bad guys from entering your computer with rouge programs and taking control of your computer. It also works in reverse preventing any rouge or malicious application that might be on your computer from sending a signal out. Common belief was that only computers with broadband/always on connections, such as DSL or cable modem services needed a firewall. However with the rampant spread of viruses and other malware, I recommend a firewall to anyone that has an online connection whether it is dial up or broadband. As the old saying goes "It's better to be safe than sorry". There are several available and Windows XP has its own built in and Service Pack 2 has enhanced its efficiency.

Antispyware: Spyware has become a major gremlin to computers and computer users this past year. "Spyware is any technology that aids in gathering information about a person or organization without their knowledge" – this is an official defi-



nition from www.webpeida but it has certainly evolved. There are several types of "spyware". I simply call it all Malware for malicious software. This includes browser hijackers, where you cannot get to your home page and are redirected to a site not of your choosing, sneakware that installs itself on your computer when you try to tell it you are not interested in it's promotional popup but by clicking on the X or "no" button.

A recent survey by the Cyber Security Alliance shows that almost 90% of home computer users have spyware infections and don't even know that the spyware is on their computer. This is bad in several ways. The not knowing alone is bad enough but once spyware is on your computer it runs rampant and builds like a snowball until it brings a computer to its knees. The big question I usually get when I am wiping out spyware for some one is how does it get there in the first place? The easy answer is just by being online. Not to scare anyone from being online, it's a great place and you shouldn't be intimidated from using it. The bad guys have gotten bolder and it is now easier than catching the common cold.

Many folks run into spyware by downloading and installing "free" software thinking that they are helpful tools. Such as Internet search bars, fancy cur-



sors, games, memory and computer optimizers. One of the best ways to get malware is by using free file sharing services like Kazaa, Bearshare and Limewire. You just don't know who is sharing what. That is not to say that all the freebies are bad but I advise you to check them out first. Ask a friend or do a search on google.com. There are many folks out there trying to make a quick buck off of the malware issue. You may have seen their popup – "You are infected with Spyware, download our software to get rid of it." Some of these programs that claim to be antispyware actually do more harm than good. Before trying an antispyware program I suggest you check this site out -

<http://www.spywarewarrior.com/rogue_anti-spyware.htm> This site is well maintained and contains a list of rouge antispyware applications.

Updates: When I say updates, I am talking about updates for all of the above tools that we have talked about as well as Microsoft Critical updates. Theses may come in the form of service packs, which are major updates. They may also be regular virus database updates that allow your antivirus to detect the new viruses that come out – your antivirus application is only as good as its last update.

I was at a home the other day where the folks had nice, new computers but I was on my third call within the last year for the same problem. The computers, one desktop and one laptop, both had been brought down with viruses and malware. The desktop which was under the control of the teenaged son had to be reformatted and Windows XP reinstalled. I had saved it twice before and made sure that it had good antivirus, firewall and antispyware applications installed. Disabling or even uninstalling these applications it not hard and certainly not above a teenagers abilities. That

is what they usually do to allow them to get to the sites and download the "treasures". I should know I have my own teenagers that keep me on my toes. It is not that the kids are mischievous. It is just that they see all this stuff out there on what is some times referred to as the "Wild Wild Web" and they want it – Free songs, games, screensavers, programs – you name it, it is all there for the taking. What you see is not always what you get.

The laptop, which was actually a Tablet PC, had no antivirus, firewall or antispyware software installed and was very delinquent in its Windows Updates. I had never seen this computer before; I had only been called out to fix the desktop on my previous visits. Needless to say I found several viruses, pieces of malware and several Windows Critical updates that needed to be downloaded and installed.

With newer computers it is pretty easy to make sure your computer is setup to automatically download or notify you about Microsoft's Critical updates. Bill Gates is not putting out these updates and calling them "critical" for the heck of it. These updates are put out because it has come to the attention of the Microsoft techies that somebody with nothing better to do has found a vulnerability in the Windows operating system. Some people are paid to find these vulnerabilities before the bad guys do. When these problems are found they in turn notify Microsoft so that a patch or update can be produced and put out to the public. This is good for you and me and spoils the bad guy's fun. If your computer does not prompt you to download Microsoft updates you can open your web browser and go to <windowsupdate.microsoft.com/>

Some software manufacturers such as Symantec, makers of Norton's Antivirus, McAfee, and Trend Micro, makers of PC-cillin, offer what they

call program suites with the antivirus, antispyware and firewall all in one. While these are good in most respects I find these suites to be the jack of all trades but not a master at all. My recommendations for some of the better programs currently available are:

Antivirus programs:

Norton Anti Virus
<www.symantec.com>
\$50.00

MacAfee Virus Scan
<www.mcafee.com>
\$50.00

AVG Anti Virus
<www.grisoft.com>
free

Firewall programs:

Zone Alarm
<www.zonelabs.com>
free

Norton Personal Firewall
<www.symantec.com>
\$50.00

Antispyware programs:

Spybot
<<http://www.safer-networking.org/en/download/index.html>>
free

Adaware
<<http://www.lavasoftusa.com/>>
free

Pest Patrol
<www.pestpatrol.com/>
\$40.00

For more information on the subject of spyware (malware) you can visit a site that I maintain at <<http://www.pcpro4u.com/malware.htm>>. Good luck and Happy Computing.



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Windows XP, Part IV

Win9x/Me/XP Computer tips & tricks

Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

Bill is retired military and an intermediate computer enthusiast who has been an APCO member for six years. He has contributed for the past five years.

Did you know that two or more operating systems can be installed on your computer? This operation is called "multibooting," and you will need a basic or dynamic disk. If you have one hard disk that's a dynamic disk, you can install only one operating system. To determine if you have a dynamic hard disk, click *Start, Control Panel, Performance and Maintenance, Administrative Tools*, double-click *Computer Management*, and then click *Disk Management*. In the right pane, your disk will be labeled as a basic or dynamic type. Next, each operating system must be on a separate partition. In the case of Win98, that partition must be formatted in FAT or FAT 32. But the real problem in putting Win98 and WinXP on the same machine is that you will have to start this project from scratch. Thus, you'll have to format the disk, and then put on Win98 and WinXP. WinXP must be installed last on your computer. Before beginning this operation, you should consider the drivers. WinXP is the first consumer version of Windows that was not based on old DOS code. Because XP has a completely different code base, older peripherals often didn't work with it when this operating system first came out on the market. Many of those problems have since been resolved by Microsoft (MS). The first task for this project is to go to Windows Update to be sure you have all the most recent drivers. These are small programs that tell Windows how to access hardware. To go to Update, open *Internet Explorer*, and click *Tools, Windows Update*, click "Scan for updates," and install any drivers that are recommended there. If this procedure doesn't solve your problem, go to the Web sites run by the manufacturers of your hardware. They probably have updated drivers for your equipment, which can be downloaded and installed on your machine. If no drivers are available, look for drivers within Windows. You can do that through Control Panel by clicking *Start, Control Panel*, double-clicking *Add Hardware*, and following the Wizard. Most peripherals will run on XP, but there is a chance that a piece of your equipment will not work with

it. In this case, you should replace the item that will not run on your computer. Going backwards to keep an old printer is not a good idea because Win98 is now old technology. Win XP is far less troublesome than Win98.

Send To Menu

To add items to the Send To menu using WinXP, such as folders, so pictures and documents can be put in them, click *Start, Run*. In the text box, enter "SendTo" and click *OK*. In the SendTo folder, click *File, New, Shortcut*, click the Browse button, and find the folder to be put in the SendTo block. Now click it, *OK, Next*, type a name for the shortcut, and click *Finish*. Repeat these steps for each folder you want to add to the SendTo block. The Send To option is used to move files around. To put a file in another folder, you must right-click the file and select *SendTo*. Now click the folder where you want to place the file. That action will put a copy of the file in the second folder, while leaving the original in its place. You can also use Send To if you want to e-mail the file. Again, right-click the file and click *Mail Recipient*. It will open your e-mail software with the file already attached, or you can create a shortcut on the desktop by clicking *Desktop (create shortcut)*. For some added functionality, check out Send To Toys, <<http://www.gabrieleponti.com/software/>>, a free program. It streamlines the process of adding folders or drives, and adds more places to the Send To list. When right-clicking on a file and choosing Send To, the menu options let you copy that file to the A:Drive, the My Documents folder, or other places. You can even add a menu item that will send files to any folder. Navigate to C:\Documents and Settings\username\SendTo for Win 2000/XP, or C:\Windows\SendTo for Win98/Me. If you don't see the desired folder there, select *Folder Options* from the Tools menu, click on the View tab, and check "Show hidden files and folders." In a second Explorer window, select the folder in question. Right-drag it into the Send To folder and choose "Create Shortcuts Here." Rename the shortcut as you want to see it in the Send To menu.

Scheduled Maintenance

Scheduling maintenance is a task in WinXP. XP uses a program called Check Disk (or Chkdsk). If you want Check Disk to fix errors automatically, click *Start, My Computer*, right-click the drive you want to check, and click *Properties, Tools*. Next click *Check Now*, check "Automatically fix file system errors" and "Scan for and attempt recovery of bad sectors," and then click *Start*. On the information window, click *Yes* and reboot the computer. Since Check Disk can take time to run, you might want to run it overnight. Use the process above when you have finished using the computer for the night. When Check Disk completes this task, it reboots the computer. To schedule Disk Defragmenter, you need a password. When the computer reboots, it will ask for a password. The boot process will then stop until the next day, when you enter the password. You can't run Disk Defragmenter the same night as Check Disk, unless you want to get up and enter the password. It is best to run Check Disk before Disk Defragmenter. You'll have to do a little customization to make Disk Defragmenter run automatically. It has to run in a DOS window. To set it up click *Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Scheduled Tasks*, double-click *Add Scheduled Task*, and click *Next, Browse*. Now navigate to Windows\System32 and click *Defrag.exe>Open*. In the Schedule Task Wizard, click *Weekly, Next*, select the time and day, and click *Next*. Enter your username and Windows password twice, and then click *Next*. Check the box marked "Open advanced properties for this task when I click Finish," and click *Finish*. In the Run box, you will find the path to the defrag.exe file. At the end of this string, add a space and "c:" (without the quote marks) and click *Apply*. If you are asked for your password again, enter it, and click *OK, OK*. The Disk Defragmenter will run in a DOS window. It analyzes the disk, reports on fragmentation, and then defragments the drive. The DOS window disappears upon completion of defragmentation. You must have a Windows password to schedule Disk Defragmenter. If you don't have a password, establish one by clicking *Start, Control Panel*, double click *User Ac-*



counts, click your account, and click "Create a password." Fill in the blanks, click "Create Password," and close the windows.

Shareware

There are many WinXP shareware program enhancers which can keep your operating system running at optimal speeds. They include: Tweak-XP Pro <<http://downloads-zdnet.com.com/3000-2086-10227628.html>> offers several utilities that let you optimize and customize XP to run at top speed. This application lets you enhance XP by shortening start-up times, tweaking cache settings, and optimizing RAM for better overall performance. RegVac <<http://downloads-zdnet.com.com/3000-2094-9640825.html>> works with most Windows systems and not just XP. It includes eight tools that deep-clean your Registry. Boost XP <<http://downloads-zdnet.com.com/3000-2094-10245412.html>> trims the excess processes that slow down your computer. It also lets you enable hidden performance settings.

Shortcut Keys

Older versions of Windows had underlined letters in their menus. Instead of clicking the mouse on menu items you could press *Alt* and the underlined letter to activate that menu item, thus a shortcut key. WinXP leaves them out. To turn them back on, right-click the *Desktop*, choose *Properties*, and click the *Appearance* tab. Click the *Effects* button and remove the check mark from the line "Hide Underlined Letters for Keyboard Navigation Until I Press The Alt Key." The underlines all appear and are now ready for shortcuts.

Software Pop ups

If you're annoyed with the pop up that tells you when new software is installed in WinXP, disable it by clicking *Start*, right clicking on the top of the *Start*

menu where your name is displayed, and clicking *Properties*. In the *Taskbar and Start menu Properties* dialog, click on the *Start Menu* tab, *Customize*, and *Advanced* tab. Finally clear the "Highlight newly installed programs" check box and click *OK*.

Sound Recorder

You can use Sound Recorder, which is a Windows utility, to record yourself using a computer. To find it, click *Start*, *All Programs* or *Programs*, *Accessories*, *Entertainment*, *Sound Recorder*. After opening Sound Recorder, you'll find a button on the bottom right with a red circle on it. Click it and then start talking. When you finish, click the button with the black square. It's next to the red circle. Next, click *File*, *Save As* and give the file a name and select the folder where you want to store it. Under "Save as Type," use Sounds (*.wav). To play the file, double-click it. You should have a player program associated with .wav files. If not, right-click the file and select *Open With*. If Windows Media Player is not listed, click *Browse*. Find *Program Files* and double click the Windows Media Player folder. Finally click *wmplayer.exe* and *Open*.

Unfortunately, Sound Recorder only creates one-minute files. It can be tricked into recording more, however it's not worth the effort. If you need a file longer than one minute, use Audacity, which is a free software program. You'll find it at: <<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>>. After downloading and opening Audacity, on the toolbar, click the drop down box, select *Microphone*, click the round red button, and start talking. When you finish, click the yellow square button and then click *File*, *Export as Wave*. That's a *.wav file. You listen to it just as you would a Sound Recorder file. If you can't complete your file in one sitting, click the yellow square button to stop the recording. Next click *File*, *Save Project As*. Save it as an *.aup file. When you return to

your project, click *File*, *Open*, find the file, and open it. Now click the end of your previous recording, click the red circle, and start talking. You can do this procedure as often as needed until you complete your project. When the project is finished, export the file as a Wave, as explained above.

User Name

Depending on how you set it up, WinXP may ask you to click your user name when booting up your computer. WinXP forces you to go through this process if you have more than one account on your computer. You can delete unused accounts by clicking *Start*, *Control Panel*, and double-click *User Accounts*. Next click the surplus account and select *Delete the Account*. If you are the only user on your machine, Windows will not normally ask you to click the account. However, a WinXP update installs an invisible account that can cause this problem. The update is .NET Framework, and it is intended primarily for software developers. You can safely delete it. To do so, go to *Control Panel* and double-click *Add or Remove Programs*. In the program list, click *Microsoft .NET Framework 1.1* and then click *Remove*.

Study Group

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-61.

Microsoft PowerPoint

A new class is being formed to explore how to use MS PowerPoint. Contact the Learning Center for class information and dates at 736-0700.

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Configuring Multiple Web Sites in SBS 2003

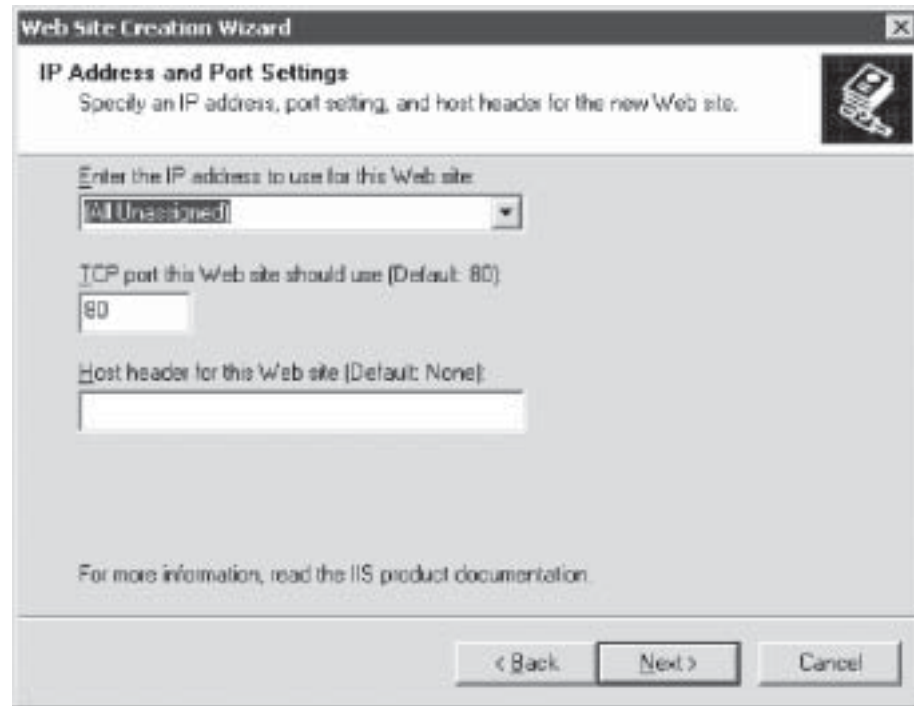
Larry Lentz, MCSE, + I & W2k, MCDBA, MCSA:Messaging W2k3

Larry Lentz is an MCSE + Internet, an MCSE on Windows 2000, a Microsoft Certified Database Administrator, and MCSA: Messaging on Windows Server 2003 and Exchange 2003, and Past President of Alamo PC. He is the owner of Lentz Computer Services, www.LentzComputer.Net, which he founded in 1989. Larry has over 22 years as a computer professional and specializes in Microsoft Small Business Server. He chairs the MCSE Advanced SIG affectionately called 'The Geeks' and the new Alamo PC Small Business Server Special Interest Group (SBS SIG). Larry is available for presentations on technology for small business and can be reached via e-mail at [<Larry@LentzComputer.Net>](mailto:Larry@LentzComputer.Net).

Recently I decided to implement Microsoft's CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system. CRM is primarily a web-based application and so requires configuration of its web site. Small Business Server also relies on the web server for many of its facilities such as the CompanyWeb (see December 2004 article), Remote Web Workplace, OWA, OMA, etc. The problem is configuring these independent web sites to 'play pretty' with each other on the same box. Although my objective involved MS CRM, the techniques described here would pertain to most other scenarios as well.

When hosting multiple web sites, you must have some way to distinguish amongst them. IIS (Internet Information Server, Microsoft's web server) has three methods you can use: Host Header; Port; and IP Address. Host header is actually fairly easy to set up. When you configure a web site, there is an entry for host header. For instance I can specify www.LentzComputer.net for my main web site and CRM.LentzComputer.net for my CRM. This actually works well and is how I initially set up my CRM when I first installed it. Then I decided I reeeaaalllyyy wanted to be able to take CRM with me on my Pocket PC using the new CRM Mobile. The problem? Microsoft CRM Mobile does not support (or allow) host headers! I hate it when that happens. Back to the drawing board or in this case the Internet Services Manager to reconfigure.

The next thing I tried was using a unique port. The standard port for web access is 80, so my www.LentzComputer.net defaults to 80. I decided to use port 85 for my CRM. That way I could get to CRM using www.LentzComputer.net:85 or CRM.LentzComputer.net:85. Access to my 'regular' web is www.LentzComputer.net:80, or you can leave off the port since 80 is the standard default. This also worked great even though it required my typ-



Web Site Creation Wizard dialogue box allows users to configure the IP address, TCP port and Host header.

ing a few extra characters, and remembering the port number.

But then I started working on the other requirement for CRM Mobile. It has to use a secure SSL connection. No problem thinks I. The default SSL port is 443. CompanyWeb uses 444. I'll just use 445. Configuring it is easy, sort of. I set up a Certificate Authority on my SBS server so I could issue my own certificates and not pay \$100s per certificate (I'll end up needing a couple) from a commercial 'trusted' source. Then I configured the site to use port 445 for SSL. This worked fine as long as I kept my default site turned off. When I turned on (started) my default site, I could no longer access CRM. I fought every which way all weekend trying to get it working. Finally I posted my problem on the CRM newsgroup and my friend from Australia and SBS MVP, Wayne Small, informed me it basically

couldn't be done. Boy! It sure felt good to quit hitting my head against that wall.

So I was down to my last option, using different IP addresses to distinguishing between web sites. My server follows the preferred SBS model of having two network interface cards (NIC), one for the Internet and one for the local network. My Internet provider only provides me with one public IP address and I'm too cheap to pay for more (see certificates above), so I decided to give it a try on the internal interface card. I can assign multiple IP addresses to the internal NIC. My 'regular' IP is 192.168.16.2 so I assigned 192.168.16.3 as well. Then I configure my CRM web site to use this address. This is relatively easy to do as well. Except... It won't start! When I try, it tells me the IP is invalid! But I can ping it and everything. It's there, only IIS can't see it. Off to Google I go and find an article that refers to a tool I've heard of but never



seen, httpcfg. This is provided with SBS in the support tools on the SECOND SBS CD! You have to use this tool to tell IIS to listen to the second IP (use httpcfg /? for the correct syntax). Once I did this, my CRM web site started right up. I added an entry for CRM in my local DNS pointing to 192.168.16.3 so I could access CRM from the local (internal) network. Worked great! But I also want to access it from the Internet. One caveat: SBS's CEICW (Configure E-mail and Internet Connection Wizard) doesn't like multiple IPs so you'll have to temporarily remove the second IP if you need to re-run the wizard.

Enter ISA Server, which comes with SBS 2003 Premium Edition. With ISA, I can 'publish' a web server and tell the world how to access it. I created a Destination Set for CRM and configured ISA to route

any requests for CRM.LentzComputer.net to my web page at 192.168.16.3. Worked great. Only one more little hurdle to negotiate. CRM Mobile requires the web site to be secured using SSL.

This shouldn't be a problem. I create a certificate for CRM.LentzComputer.net and configure the web site to use it on port 443. Accessing it on the local network worked fine, however access from the Internet was another story. Any time I'd try I would get an error indicating the target principal name was incorrect, whatever the heck that means. I found that wall and started banging my head on it again. I did a Google search and found an article by my friend and ISA guru Dr. Tom Shinder. Tom's article <[http://www.isaserver.org/tutorials/](http://www.isaserver.org/tutorials/error505.html)

[error505.html](http://www.isaserver.org/tutorials/error505.html)> goes into very fine detail explaining exactly what was happening and how to fix it. Basically what it boils down to is the address ISA Server uses to publish a secure web site must exactly match the name on the certificate. I was publishing to 192.168.16.3 using a certificate issued to CRM.LentzComputer.local. Changing ISA to publish to CRM.LentzComputer.local instead resolved the dreaded target principal name error. I can now access my CRM securely from anywhere using <https://CRM.LentzComputer.net>. Now if only I could get CRM Mobile to work. It's even got Microsoft's PSS Tech Support guys stumped and they're calling in the developers! But when they figure it out, my secure CRM web site will be ready.

Powerful SBS 2003 solution from NEC gets recognition

News Brief - Dec. 8, 2004,
<<http://www.biosmagazine.co.uk>>



NEC has introduced a relatively powerful entry-level server. The Express5800/TM710 is ideal for SMEs looking for affordable, industry-standard server technology that should provide performance, data protection, and upgrade potential for minimal financial outlay. Key features of the tower-based server include a choice of Intel Pentium 4 or Celeron processors, support for up to 4GB of DDR400 ECC SDRAM, up to four fixed or three hot-swappable SCSI or SATA hard disks, integrated Gigabit Ethernet, integrated RAID 0/1, SCSI or SATA, optional SCSI or SATA RAID controllers, as well as an AGP 8X graphics slot - should you want to use the system as a workstation. An optional 5U rackmount kit may also appeal to larger companies or those with server racks. The system can be pre-installed with Microsoft's Windows Server 2003, Windows Small Business Server 2003, Windows XP Professional and Red Hat Enterprise Linux operating systems.

Highlights of the new Express5800/TM710 include: Exceptional value and performance, with the latest Intel Celeron and Pentium 4 HT processors; up to 1TB of internal disk storage; integrated SATA and SCSI RAID 0/1 technology for security and performance; AGP 8X slot for workstation graphics performance; tool-less chassis for simplified servicing. The Express5800/TM710 can be configured with optional SCSI or SATA RAID controller cards in order to benefit from enhanced RAID technology performance and security. An optional Hot-Swap HDD cage is also available, further increasing availability and serviceability.

The Express5800/TM710 also offers the flexibility to be configured as either a server or a workstation due to the powerful AGP 8X graphics slot, which accepts a wide variety of optional graphics cards. In addition, the Express5800/TM710 is configurable with a double layer DVD writer or a wide variety of tape drives enabling a number of options for immediate data storage and backup.



Microsoft Software: ACTIVATE!

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

Shane uses PCs. He gets e-mail at shane@vpwn.com.

Clients always ask about Microsoft's latest efforts to curb casual software piracy, called product activation. They ask about the affect of upgrading and are concerned with privacy. Product activation became standard with Windows XP and Office XP. It's here to stay and other companies (i.e., Symantec) are following suit. This article will attempt to answer your activation questions.

How does product activation work?

Activation is integrated with OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer)—software bundled with a new computer—and full retail versions of Microsoft products. It isn't required with volume licensing—Microsoft Open License, Enterprise Agreement, or Select License agreements. Activation isn't an issue with the corporate edition of the software. It's also not required for Academic versions.

During installation, you enter the standard product key. Once accepted, the user is asked to accept the EULA (end user license agreement). Upon reboot, you're prompted to activate. A similar window appears for non-OS products. You may choose to activate or wait. If you proceed, you're prompted to activate over the Internet or by phone.

During activation, Microsoft uses an equation based on the product key and your hardware configuration. This generates a unique 50-digit installation ID. This ID is sent to Microsoft, who returns a confirmation ID. If you are activating over the Internet, your computer handles this automatically. If you are activating over the phone, you'll manually key the confirmation ID into your system. Once successful, a Thank You message appears and the product is fully activated.

What information does Microsoft gather during activation?

The only information Microsoft collects is the installation ID and, for Microsoft Office products, the country of origin. Microsoft claims they can't use the ID to determine your

hardware configuration. They also claim not to associate a particular user with their software during activation. I believe this is true.

However, from first hand experience, if you REGISTER the software after activation, Microsoft associates that name with the confirmation ID.

Will the product work without being activated?

Microsoft time-bombed their software if you don't activate. By default, Microsoft Office products can be launched 50 times before mandatory activation. The time limit on the OS is 30-days.

Can I use my software after the grace period expires?

Nope—that's why Microsoft time bombs it. With Office, the user gets read-only mode after expiration. You can open documents created before the timeout, but can't change or create documents. The OS will cease to function entirely, requiring activation before continuing to boot.

Will I have to reactivate my copy of Windows XP if I upgrade my hardware?

That's tricky. Microsoft says changing some hardware will require reactivation. They haven't detailed exactly which hardware but have provided a list of what's used to generate the initial confirmation ID. These include hard drive volume serial number, network card MAC address, CD-ROM drive identification string, graphics card identification string, CPU serial number string, hard drive identification string, SCSI host adapter identification string, IDE controller identification string, CPU processor model string, RAM size, and whether the computer is able to be docked.

What changes trigger reactivation?

Microsoft states if you "overhaul" your computer the system appears to be a different PC. You'll have to reactivate. Microsoft says "common changes" such as changing video cards, a second hard drive, or more RAM, won't require reactivation. Changes are cumulative. If you

change one item per day for a week, Windows will count that as seven changes to the system. Once a user reactivates, the count is reset to zero.

I have it on good authority that certain changes cause reactivation immediately. Since the MAC address on your NIC is 100% unique, changing the NIC requires reactivation. I've also seen reactivation triggered by replacing the motherboard and/or processor. Other than that, an anonymous Microsoft source informed me that the magic number is six changes to hardware per quarter. That means the OS resets the change counter every three months, no matter what you've done to the system. The same source also told me that Microsoft questions reactivation on a system more than four times per year.

Is reactivation required if the software is reinstalled?

In general, if you reinstall the same software on the same OS, you'll not be required to reactivate. However, you format the hard drive, reactivation is required. Reformatting resets the grace periods for all software.

Can I install the software on both my laptop and PC?

For the OS, that's exactly what Microsoft wants to stop! We all READ the software license before agreeing. It states the OS is only for a single machine. You need a copy for each machine.

Now, Microsoft Office licenses work on 80/20. You're allowed to load the software on one desktop and one laptop, for a single user. The rule is that you intend to use Office 80% of the time on the desktop and 20% of the time on your laptop. This rule only applies to the full retail versions. It doesn't cover OEM.

I hope I've cleared any confusion with activation. If you've got further questions, contact your Microsoft licensing representative or check out the Microsoft website at [<www.microsoft.com>](http://www.microsoft.com).

Until next month...



The Switcher



...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac Snippets

Shane's a Mac user. Help him learn Mac OS X, e-mail him at <mac@vpwn.com>.

This month will be more of stream of consciousness writing, with a string of things that I've found useful since the last time we were together. Here goes...

Product Activation

I believe this article to run the same month as my PowerTalk article which details product activation. Therefore, I won't explain what activation is again. However, Mac users beware: product activation is rearing its ugly head in the Macintosh world. Several Macintosh software developers are using product activation to fight software piracy. Microsoft and Macromedia (the maker of Dreamweaver Studio MX) are on board. When you install their software on your Mac, be assured that the software will "call home" if you are connected to the Internet.

Why is product activation such a big deal to Mac users?

Mac users are not accustomed to compromising in two areas: ease of use and privacy. As with PC-based systems, re-installing a software package you've purchased generally requires reactivating the product with the software company. With the introduction of so much new Apple hardware (i.e., G5 desktops) and the release of operating system upgrades, re-activation is becoming a common occurrence. Many Macintosh users are not accustomed to this perceived invasion of their personal space.

iTunes

I've recently started using iTunes to rip music. That's because Apple was kind enough to make both a Mac and PC version of the software. Both use the same formats, so music I rip on one can be used by the other. While I still tend to prefer the Media Player interface and music cataloging and album art automatic downloads, it's really nice to have all my music available no matter what platform I'm presently logged on to.

Encoding

What's the best format to encode the music with when ripping from CDs?

There are several choices available in iTunes on your Mac. The latest version support MP3, AAC (Advanced Audio Coding), and a new format known as Apple Lossless.

If you're limited in storage space, go with either MP3 or AAC. These don't create a bit-for-bit copy of the CD (which means some loss of quality), but the created files are around 1/10th the size of the original. MP3 is currently most compatible with other players and portable devices. Of the two, AAC provides better quality at lower bit rates, and thus smaller file sizes than MP3.

If you're an audiophile, or if you need an exact copy of the audio file, then use Apple Lossless. It compresses the audio to about 1/2 the size of the original, fitting less in your available space.

You can convert Apple Lossless files into other formats at a later date. So, if space is absolutely no issue, one strategy is to create one library of Apple Lossless files as an exact archival backup. Another library may then be created by converting the archive files to AAC or MP3, to create smaller files to use with a portable music player.

Collecting Album Art in iTunes

In iTunes, album art is stored in each song file. The advantage to this is that when moving a song from computer to computer, the album art moves with it. Of course, this increases the size of the file. If you're interested in learning how much of a size difference there is, drag a song from the iTunes playlist, onto the desktop. Select it, press Command-I, and make note of its size. Go to Amazon.com and download the album art for the song. Highlight all the songs from the same album, press Command-I, and drag the JPG art from Amazon.com into the Multiple Song Information window's artwork field. After clicking OK, all selected songs carry the album art. Drag the original file to the desktop and press Command-I to view its new size.

iTunes Add-Ons

To help complete your iTunes library, try out the following additions:

Jay Tuley's free iEatBrainz 1.0b5 from <<http://homepage.mac.com/jbtule/software.html>> accesses the MusicBrainz Web site to fix poorly tagged MP3 and AAC files in your iTunes library, using acoustic matching.

Yoel Inbar's free Fetch Art for iTunes v1.1 at <<http://staff.washington.edu/yoel/fetchart>> uses Amazon.com to download and add cover art to your iTunes songs.

What to do when the backlit keyboard on your PowerBook stops working?

There's a known problem with the backlight on the PowerBook G4 keyboard. I've discovered this myself. One day, it just stopped lighting up automatically in a darkened room. If you experience a similar problem, try the following quick fixes:

First, cover the speaker grilles on your laptop with your hands. The ambient light sensor is under these grilles. Covering them briefly may force the keys to shine.

Second, reset the Power Manager and the PRAM. These two areas store configuration information about your PowerBook and may become corrupted. Resetting them takes the values back to their factory default settings. To reset the Power Manager, turn off the PowerBook, simultaneously press and release Control-Shift-Option and the power button, wait five seconds, and then press the power button to restart the PowerBook. To reset (or "zap") the PRAM, restart the Mac while holding down the Command-Option-P-R keys and wait for the Mac to chime three times. Let go of the keys and the PowerBook will start up. You've successfully reset the system.

Finally, try repairing the permissions using the Disk Utility, found under \\Applications\\Utilities, or on the system restore disc that's included with your computer.

If these procedures don't work, it may be time to take your PowerBook back to the Apple store.



Software

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Susan Ives is a former president of Alamo PC. She archives these columns on her Web site, www.susanives.com/. If you visit, you can cut-and-paste the code instead of retyping it from the magazine – the ultimate in lazy Webmastering!

One of the key principles of lazy webmastering is to avoid doing things the hard way if there is software that can help you do it the easy way.

One of the key principles of frugal webmastering is not to pay any more for software than you have to.

One of the key principles of prudent webmastering is to try software before you buy it, to make sure it does exactly what you want it to do.

Most software programs – even the most expensive ones -- are available in try-before-you-buy versions. These are downloaded from the Internet, often deliberately crippled in some way. Some won't let you save your work; others will include a link to the company on the finished product. At the very least, they will have an expiry date, usually 15-30 days.

What these trial versions will do is let you road test the product to make sure it meets your needs before you spend your hard earned money. I probably try five or six programs before I hit on the one that has the features, price and ease of use that I am looking for.

AAA –Logo

AAA-Logo does one thing: make logos. You can download a free trial version at www.aaa-logo.com. The full copy costs \$49.95.



Figure 1. AAA-logo allows users to quickly create a logo.



Figure 2. Xara Menu Maker uses a java-based system to quickly create menus.

Xara Menu Maker

I'm working on a complex site for clients that want a little pizzazz. I decided to use java-based menus and found this program to be the most bang for the buck. You can see example at figures 2 & 3.

To start building your menu, you select from among several hundred templates. You then add your button text, change the colors and size and add textures, if you wish, and finally add the URL s and sub menus.

I created both of these menus in about 5 minutes. A neat feature: once you create the menu, you can select a different template, and all of the attributes (button names, URLs, etc.) will move right along with it.

The resulting file is a JavaScript (.JS) file and a set of small graphics in GIF, JPG or PNG format (you choose the format.) The cute little mouse menu is less than 9 KB. You just add one small line of code to your Web page, transfer all of the files to your remote directory via ftp and it works right off the bat.

You can have any number of levels of sub-menus. The templates run the gamut from corporate to whimsical.

Download a 15-day trial version from www.xara.com. The full version is a modest \$24.99, and worth every penny.

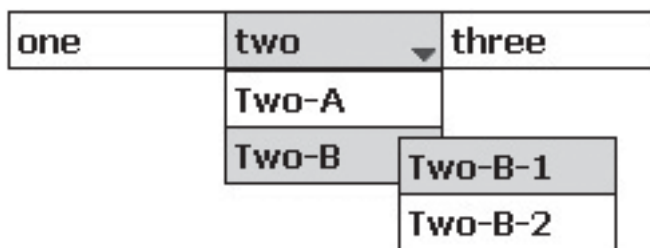


Figure 4. CoffeeCup uses a wizard interface to create a simple menu.

CoffeeCup DHMTL Menu Wizard

If your needs are simpler or your purse smaller, check out the Coffee Cup DHMTL Menu Wizard. DHMTL, Dynamic Hypertext Markup Language is a mixture of standards including HTML, style sheets, the Document Object Model and scripting. These menus are in JavaScript, but unlike the Xara menu program, it doesn't require uploading a JS file or graphics. The entire menu is included in the HTML document (all 768 lines in the example shown in figure 4!)

It's free and can be downloaded from www.coffeecup.com/free-dhtml/.

You can customize the colors, fonts, borders, alignment, size and padding. Menus can be horizontal, as in the example, or vertical. But that's it: all you are going to get is boxes. No cute little mice in your navbar. Everything is accomplished on a ridiculously simple point and click interface.

Picture Dicer

Picture Dicer takes a graphic, slices it into smaller pieces, and then reassembles the bits into a whole-looking graphic using HTML, hypertext markup language. It's free, and can be downloaded from www.ziplink.net/~shoestring/dicer01.htm

Why would you want to do this? The main reason is that you can treat each slice of the graphic as a separate image and assign a URL to it to make it clickable. You can, of course, do the same thing with an image map, but this is actually easier, both for your and your site visitors. Additionally, this method is accessible for people who use screen readers; image maps are not.

You get the idea: why write 768 lines of JavaScript (after you work your way through the 2,000-page Java for Dummies book) if there is a free or cheap program that will do the work for you? Lazy webmasters search for software to take the ho-hum out of HTML.

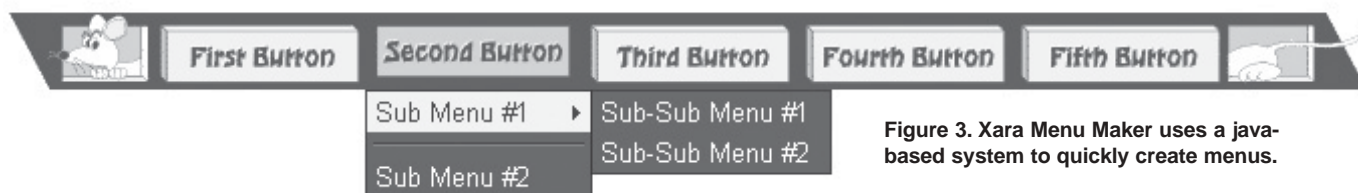


Figure 3. Xara Menu Maker uses a java-based system to quickly create menus.

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The Graphics Guy

Pop-up Nav Menus in Macromedia Fireworks

Paul Vaughn, Alamo PC

Paul Vaughn is a freelance graphic artist, writer and web designer. He also writes the Mac Guy column in the Business section of the Sunday Express-News newspaper. If you would like to a specific topic addressed, email Paul Vaughn at <paulv@mac.com>.

Use Adobe Photoshop, and its companion program ImageReady, for a lot of different tasks. The combination will do a lot of the retouching, compositing and general Web graphics work I need, but one thing that you can't do easily is to create pop-up menus for a Web site. You know what I'm talking about, those menus that drop down when you mouse over a button on some sites. ImageReady can make the buttons with rollover effects, but drop-down menus are not readily available. For this task I like to turn to a Photoshop competitor, Macromedia Fireworks MX 2004.

If you use Macromedia's Dreamweaver to create Web page, you already know what kind of handy tool it is. Fireworks works hand-in-glove with Dreamweaver; Macromedia even bundles them together, with Flash and

FreeHand, in their Macromedia Studio MX 2004 suite.

Fireworks is a great program for working with Web graphics. For my example, I created a simple Web page template with a navigation bar in Photoshop. Each button on the bar is a separate layer and I saved the file as a Photoshop PSD file to preserve the layers. You can then open this file in Fireworks, although you will need to now save it in Fireworks' native format, PNG (Portable Network Graphic). The Fireworks PNG file will also preserve the layer information as well as all of the Web-related effects we are about to add.

Now is the time chop up the image into slices. This is a way of subdividing the design to allow different areas to have varying functionality. Just like in Photoshop or ImageReady, you use the Slice tool to box off the individual but-

tons and the logo. You can make the slice exactly as big as the buttons or they can encompass more of the nav bar. I like to do this to keep from having a lot of little images in an oddly formatted table.

Once you add the slices you will see a green overlay on top of the sliced areas and a new layer for each one under the Web Layer area of the Layers palette (Fig. 1). At this point you can take the time to name each slice layer if you like to be organized about things, but you can leave the default names if you choose. You can now select any of the slices with the pointer tool edit things like link information and alternate text in the Properties palette.

This is where you can name the slice if you did not using the Layers palette, adjust the size of the slice numerically, set the file type and compression options (the pop-up menu next to the C-clamp icon). Here you see the Properties for the logo slice (Fig. 2) which I want to link back to the main page if you click it. In the Link box I typed index.html, but I could also use an absolute address beginning with http and spelling out the full domain name. You should enter some Alt text. This is the text that shows up in the browser if the image is not downloaded or the viewer is on a slow connection. This is also a great place to put some keywords for search engines. The Target field lets you specify an HTML Frame or spawn a new browser window (_blank).



Figure 1



Figure 2

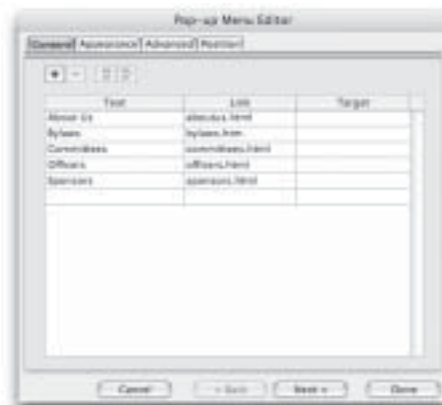


Figure 3



Figure 4

If you don't use frames, you can leave this blank.

Use these same settings for the 'Home' button and then we are ready for the cool part. We are going to add a pop-up menu to the 'About Us' button so that we can have multiple choices listed under the button. Select the 'About Us' slice and then from the menu bar pick Modify > Pop-up Menu > Add Pop-up Menu to get to the Pop-up Menu Editor. There are four tabs in the dialog box for you to fill out.

In the Content tab (Fig. 3), add the Text you want to appear in the menu, the page to which it is to Link and, optionally, the Target. The plus and minus buttons at the top allow you to add or remove menu entries, the icons next to them enable you to indent some menu options. When you have these filled in to your satisfaction, click the Next button to move to the Appearance tab (Fig. 4).

Here you can choose whether you want the menus to be styled using HTML tags or to use an image for the states of the menu. The image option does increase the download time slightly but looks much nicer and lets you apply some nice emboss effects. This area is also where you set the font and size of the menu text



Figure 5

as well as the color of the normal and over states. You can also choose whether the menu pops vertically or horizontally. When you are finished, hit Next and move on.

The Advanced tab (Fig. 5) gives you settings for borders, spacing and padding. You can set border colors and widths and a couple of other details. You can leave these settings untouched if you don't want to futz with it.

The last tab is Position (Fig. 6). This governs whether the menu pops down or up, left or right. Click one of the icons and then the Done button. Now when you have the slice selected, you will see an outline of the menu position. You can click this with the pointer tool and move it as needed. I chose to center mine under the button.

Once you have set up each button as needed, you can preview it in your Web browser of choice by selecting File > Preview in Browser (F12) (Fig. 7). When you are satisfied with your work, go back to Fireworks and export the page as HTML by choosing Export from the File menu. In the Export box, select Save As



Figure 6

HTML and Images and the other options as shown (Fig. 8).

While Adobe Photoshop is the best program for a lot of Web work, gems like Macromedia Fireworks MX 2004 offer useful features missing from Adobe's programs. If you are interested in Macromedia Fireworks, download the 30-day demo from Macromedia's Web site (www.macromedia.com). Look for the Free Trials section of the site and click on Studio MX 2004.



Figure 7

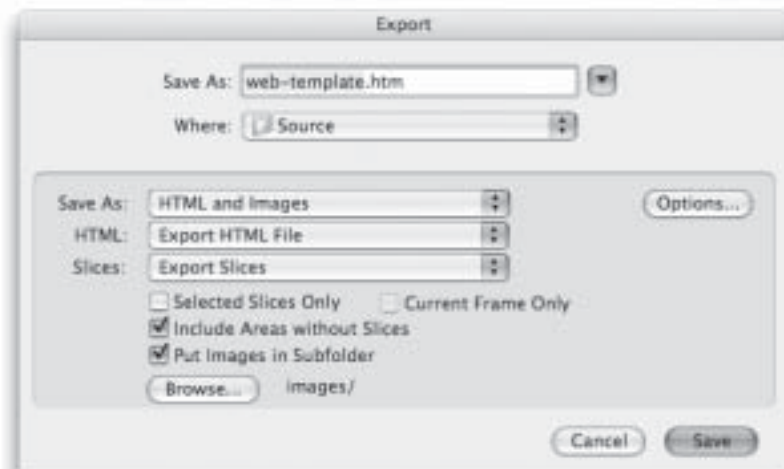


Figure 8



Ponderings

Meredith Poor

Those of us that were present and accounted for in the 1960's remember cars of that era; specifically how long they lasted. A middle class family would buy a new one, keep it for three years and trade it in, where it would then become a 'used' car and might be kept by another owner another two or three years. The buzzword in this time period was 'planned obsolescence' and we all knew it was a greedy corporate conspiracy.

Fuel injection, computer control, anti-lock brakes, airbags, and other digitally controlled automotive components starting phasing in the 1980's and 1990's. Cars were also designed with Computer Aided Design systems and manufactured with robots. Car lifetimes extended significantly, to the point where dealers are willing to offer 10-year warranties. My car is almost ten years old and has nearly 170,000 miles on it, and a friend of mine with a similar model has over 200,000 on his.

Computer controls and longer lifetimes correlate rather nicely: more of the energy in the fuel is spent moving the car and more or less by definition is not, therefore, being used to tear the vehicle apart. In earlier times incomplete combustion products would corrode various parts of the engine and exhaust system. High temperatures, or significant temperature swings, would attack and flex seals between the metal components. Lower manufacturing tolerances would mean more friction, more leakage, and more vibration.

So this raises an interesting question with regards to hybrid cars. These have gasoline engines in-line with an electric motor which is becomes a generator when the car is decelerating or braking. A set of batteries in the back of the car (typically) stores this energy, and provides it on demand when the car is peeling out from the light. The gasoline engine is turned off if the car isn't moving. Since the electric motor either 'cuts in' during high power demands or runs the car on it's own during low speed maneuvering, the gasoline engine operates in a more predictable and manageable power regime. This implies that the drivetrain, and

probably the rest of the car, should last a lot longer than cars do now.

How much longer? First, the engine is off unless it's needed. For hybrids in general, this means the engine is off when the car is waiting for a stoplight. For some hybrids, engines are off during the crawl home in 'rush hour' traffic. All that's 'running' aside from the AC and the vanity light on the sun visor mirror is the electric motor, something that is far simpler than V-8 engines with overdrive transmissions.

Second, both fuel and thermal management is far more sophisticated, so, again, more energy is spent moving the car and correspondingly less is spent tearing it apart. And associated with this at the design phase is far more exotic modeling that accounts for the behavior of the power train components during the life cycle of the vehicle. Regenerative braking lightens the load on conventional brakes, particularly with respect to heat.

The conclusion: such a car might last 30 years in normal use. This would be a disaster for car companies, which are already struggling. It might also create other problems. If Junior is given a hybrid when he goes off to college, he's still driving this car ten years later when he's married and the first child is on the way, and ten years after that when the third kid is starting to bulk up, and ten years after that when kid #1 is heading off to college. One's extended family might, over time, gather up a collection of different vehicles, so that the small cars are used by the high school and college students, the sedans are driven by the newlyweds and empty nesters, the minivans are driven by the young families, and full sized pickups are driven by the contractor types that write all this off as nonsense.

One thing the car companies can do, of course, is make cars run faster. Speed is an enemy of longevity, but this requires cooperation from state and national governments. We might have to raise speed limits to 90 or 120 MPH, and rebuild the freeways to handle that. This won't change urban driving much, which accounts for most car use, so overall it may not matter.

The other 'enemy' of course is rough treatment, particularly 'off road'. Curiously, more efficient vehicles burn less fuel, when in turn lowers gasoline tax receipts, which in turn leaves less money available for building roads. So we might be willing to live with more potholes.

My concern with such vehicles is their entertainment systems: will present day DVD's still work in 2035? How many generations of entertainment systems and associated media will emerge over such a lifetime? One might forgo such installations completely, and simply wear the state of the art during one's drive.

Another idea that's floating around is the 'autopilot' freeways, such that one can read one's paper while commuting to work. I suspect that in the current corporate culture, however, if you have time to read a paper you could do something useful. Your workday might start when you take your seat behind the wheel. On the east coast this might mean leaving the house at 8:00 and returning home at 5:00, reserving the period between 9:30 and 3:30 for face-to-face confrontation.

For some people their car then becomes a living room, for others an office, and for others a playpen. You might need a separate vehicle for each role. At that point your house and your car merge, and you shower in your garage.

Study Group

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-61.

HGSI Study Group

The High Growth Stock Investment group fosters discussions about using Fundamental and Technical Analysis for the buying and selling of equities. Meetings are held the 1st Thursday of the month at UBS Conf. Room, 200 Concord Plaza Dr. Suite 300 at 6:30 PM. For more information contact Maynar Burstein at 735-3288 or <maynardb@juno.com>



Computer Essentials

By Pim Borman, SW Indiana PC Users Group

Pim Borman (swipcug@sigecom.net) is Web Editor and APCUG representative for the SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc (http://swipcug.apcug.org). This article appeared in the Nov. 2004 issue of the P-SEE URGENT, newsletter of SWIPCUG

What can be done to make computers true household appliances, intuitive and simple to use even by technophobes? Computers capable of email and word processing, Internet browsing, audio and video editing and storage, simple data processing such as checkbook and genealogy tree maintenance, and entertainment in the form of games and puzzles. After all, modern cars have highly complex, powerful engines under the hood, but turn on with a simple ignition switch and only need a steering wheel, accelerator and brakes for operation. Computers should be just as simple to use. Here are some suggestions.

- A simple on/off switch for instant-on computing, with a reset button for the rare occasions the system goes haywire and needs to reboot. The hibernate feature in Windows XP is the nearest thing to it, but for shutting your system down you must first click on Start (!), then hold the shift key down to change the Standby option to Hibernate, and click on Hibernate. Stupidly unobvious, and it should be easy to replace the whole rigmarole by reprogramming the current on/off switch.

- Security and privacy, built-in virus and spyware protection, automatically updated. Upgraded Internet/email protocols to thwart sender address spoofing. Fortunately, the need for improved security is now widely recognized, and the search for solutions is on.

- Application programs. As my former boss used to say, "Be reasonable, do it my way." That should go double for computer applications that satisfy the users' needs without extraneous bells and whistles and with simple menus to access special features and built-in security provisions. Most common menu items should be available by using clearly labeled, standard, special purpose keyboard keys; read on.

- Special purpose keys on the keyboard to perform common operations in most programs. There already are Insert, Delete, Backspace, Home, End, Page Up and Down, and Arrow keys; why not have more of that kind? To start with, the function keys (F1 – F12) could be reassigned, standardized, and clearly labeled to make them more useful. F1 might always provide context-

sensitive help and be relabeled as such. F2 could Save current work while shift-F2 would Save as... F3 might do Find and Find / Replace operations, and so on. Many current programs, such as Microsoft Office, already make extensive use of the F-keys, but usage is non-standard and few users are familiar with them for lack of labeling. The same holds for the Windows and Menu keys on most keyboards; they provide handy shortcuts but are mostly underused.

- Wireless Connections, high-speed, self-configuring, to peripherals such as a mouse, printer, scanner, sound system, and router for connections to Internet and a local computer network. That rat's nest of wires under and behind our computers has to go!

- Broadband connection to the Internet, essential for regular updates of security programs and desirable for other Internet activities.

You may be able to think of more simplifications. Let me know about them.

Computers of the Future

By Pim Borman, SW Indiana PC Users Group

For the last 40 years or so computer chips have closely followed Moore's Law, which states that the number of transistors doubles every 18 months. The corresponding increase in computing performance has been enormous, but chip manufacturers are beginning to reach the physical limit of miniaturization. Intel's latest chip, "Prescott," with 125 million transistors an improved version of the 55-million transistor Pentium 4, was delayed by production difficulties and proved to be only marginally faster. Cramming more transistors in a certain area by reducing their size leads to increasing electrical leakage problems and crosstalk; it also increases heat generation. Some recent microprocessors consume over 100 watts, generating more heat per square centimeter than a laundry iron on the cotton setting (W. Wayt Gibbs, writing in Scientific American, November 2004, pp.96-101). Increased computation speeds have to a large extent also been the result of clever

changes in computer architecture that allow the chip to execute multiple instructions for each clock tick. We are finally reaching the inevitable end of Moore's Law.

Intel has already announced that it will no longer distinguish its microprocessors by clock speed, which is after all only part of the system's performance characteristic. In addition, starting next year, all Intel chips will have not one but two "cores" that allow higher computation speeds through parallel processing. AMD already has such chips. There is nothing new about fast computing with parallel processing computers; the fastest computers in the world are now built using thousands of processors that operate in parallel to perform specific operations, such as playing world champion chess. But all current software for home and office use will have to be rewritten.

Many users, as well as software companies, may decide it is not worth the hassle. If you have an up-to-date computer it probably responds faster to your inputs than you can provide them, unless you are a game freak or use industrial-strength graphics or database programs. Customers will be better served by improved security and simplified operations.

Not by coincidence, W.Wayt Gibbs also wrote an article in the same issue of Scientific American (Nov. 2004, pp. 80-87) about future computers using photons (light) instead of electrons (electricity) to perform computations and connections between the cpu and memory storage. There are many technical problems to be solved as yet, including the challenge to bring the cost down, but it seems likely to be the computer technology of the future. Photons move many times faster than electrons and do not significantly generate heat. All the rest is engineering detail!



Why can't I open this file?

by **Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Sarasota PCUG, Florida**

Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than 30 years. He can be reached via e-mail at <bwsail@yahoo.com>.

There are times in every computer user's life when the computer seems to be deliberately trying to increase your level of frustration. One of these little moments is when you receive a file from an associate and no matter what you do, you can't open it. The file can be a document, a picture, a spreadsheet or any number of other types. So why does this happen? And what does it have to do with these things called extensions or suffixes?

Believe it or not, every file name on your computer has a three digit suffix. I know if you have never used any OS other than Windows you may never have seen this suffix or file extension. But they really do exist. If you open "My Computer" or Windows Explorer, select "Tools" from the menu. Then click on "Folder Options" and in that window click on "View". In this list some items are checked and some are not. If there is a check mark in the item "hide extensions for known file types", remove it. Then click on "apply to all folders". You will get a message telling you that the change will occur the next time you open a folder. Now open up any folder and look at the array of file extensions. Go from folder to folder and see how many different extensions you can find.

So now you see that the number of different extensions seems to be limitless. Or at least enough to bring on some confusion. Why is there such a proliferation of these three figure suffixes? Let's look again at the "Tools" menu and "Folder Options". This time click on the tab for "File Types". The upper window lists "Registered file types". Now scroll through the list until you find "Adobe Acrobat Plug-in file". This has an extension of API and in the lower window you find a short explanation as to which program can open this file. In this case, Adobe Acrobat. Keep scrolling down through the list. You will probably find the BMP suffix. This is a picture file and usually opens with Microsoft Paint. However, on my computer it has been associated with IrfanView, a graphics viewer. Keep scrolling to get an idea of all the different file types and their extensions.

If you click on enough different file types you will notice that each type is generally, but not always, associated with an application. When you click on the change button, the preferred application is listed at the top. You can change this to another application but then double-clicking a file of that type may result in a error and it won't open. Applications such as Microsoft Word, Word Perfect, Microsoft Works, Excel, etc., can only open files that were created by them unless they have the appropriate translator for the document. This goes back to the reasons for the file suffixes. The suffix tells Windows what application is needed to open a particular file. Every application capable of creating files uses a different format for the file header and body information. This formatting allows Word, for example, to open a document that has specific margins, type face, printer assignment, etc. The same is true for other applications.

Let's take a look at some of the definitions associated with the file structure of a Word file.

"FIB (File Information Block): The header of a Word file. Begins at offset 0 in the file. Gives the beginning offset and lengths of the document's text stream and subsidiary data structures within the file. Also stores other file status information." "DocFile: A Word docfile consists of a main stream, a summary information stream, a table stream, a data stream, and 0 or more object streams which contain private data for OLE 2.0 objects embedded within the Word document."

"Document: A named, multi-linked list of data structures, representing an ordered stream of text with properties that was produced by a user of Microsoft Word."

"Datastream: The stream within a Word docfile containing various data that hang off of characters in the main stream. For example, binary data describing in-line pictures and/or form fields."

From these descriptions you can see that a Word document has a very specific structure that has to be read and interpreted in a specific way. Other applications can't read a Word file unless they have a translator for it. Even then, the translation may not accurately

reflect the content and format of the original file.

Another file format is that of database files. In a dBASE file, or a FoxPro file, the first byte identifies the version that created the file. Consequently, older versions can't read files created with newer versions of the program. For a number of years Microsoft created similar problems in Word documents by changing the file format every time a new version of Word was released.

Another application that has it's own file formats is Microsoft Works. This application can create text documents, database files and spreadsheets. None of these files can be opened by other programs. The interesting thing is that Works can save files in Word format, WordPerfect format or RTF (rich text file). It can even open most of these formats. But Word and WordPerfect are unable to read files in the native Works format.

Another problem exists with picture (graphic) files. Although your web browser should be able to read the most common formats, they have to be associated with the browser. If they are not, you will get an error when you attempt to open the file. Every graphic format has a different structure and may not always open in your photo software.

The most common formats used on the web are GIF and JPG (jpeg). However, these are two very different formats. GIF is a compressed format that is referred to as a "lossless" compression. In other words, you don't lose any detail in the process of compression/decompression. However, GIF can not use more than 256 colors. That makes it less usable for color photos than other formats. However, for web page logos and other small graphics, GIF is ideal. The file size is small, so transmission time over the Internet is quite short.

Photographs can be sent by e-mail using the JPG format which is very compressible. Jpegs can be compressed to 10% of their original size which greatly reduces transmission time. However, the greater the compression, the greater the loss of detail. Jpegs are a "lossy" format. The detail that is lost by compression can never be recovered.



ered. If the picture is important, you should always keep an uncompressed master in a safe location.

Another "lossless" graphic format is TIF or TIFF (tagged image file format). This is the best format for color pictures and should be used to save the master copy of important photographs. The major problem with TIF files is that they are very large. Much larger than jpegs. For example, a file from a digital camera was 526 KB in its native format. When converted to TIF and compressed, it took up over 6 MB on the hard drive. However, not every graphics program can

read TIFF files. If yours can't, then you need something like IrfanView, a free file viewer.

So the answer to the original question is: you either don't have the application installed on your computer or you don't have the application associated with the file you are trying to open. Now, if you know the application that created the file and if you have it on your computer, you can solve the problem. You only need to associate the file with application. To do this open "My Computer" and select the "Tools" menu and "File Options".

Click on the "File Types" tab and then scroll to the file extension for the file you want to open. Click on "Change" and select the application you want to use to open the file.

All of this discussion assumes that the file has not been corrupted. Even minor damage to the header of file can keep it from being opened. Transmission of files between computers is always subject to possible damage. Now maybe those undamaged files can be opened with a little less frustration.

Synchronize Those Files!

by Joe Shipley, Phoenix PC Users Group, Arizona

Joe Shipley, Co-Owner of SMART IDEAS!, is a computer consultant, in Mesa, AZ. You can reach Joe at <joeship[nospam]@cox.net>.

With so many laptops available these days, one of the more common things I come across is the need for people to synchronize their files between their laptop and their desktop. Or synchronize files among several computers on a network.

Let's say you use a spreadsheet to keep track of information. This spreadsheet is used on a daily basis to show you what you did in the past. Every day you add to the spreadsheet to keep it current. Some days you add information while using your desktop, and others while using your laptop. You want to make sure the same information is available to you whether you're working on the laptop or the desktop.

If you had copies of the same file on both your desktop and your laptop, each time you added information to the file on your laptop, it would not automatically be added to the version on the laptop. So you'd have to do double work and spend lots of time copying the latest version from one computer to the other.

What File Synchronization does is provide a way for you to update the same file from either machine and make sure that both files are exactly the same. The way to do this is by using Offline Files. You could also use the Briefcase feature on your laptop, but I suggest Offline Files. And I'd make the desktop the

"master," even though the files on both systems will be identical.

To set up your desktop computer to use Offline Files, open My Computer or Explorer, go to Tools, Folder Options, Offline Files and make sure that the Enable Offline Files check box is selected. Select Synchronize all offline files before logging off to get a full synchronization. Leave it unselected for a quick synchronization. While you're here, also check the box to place a shortcut to Offline Files on your Desktop.

Once this is done, go to your laptop and use Explorer or My Network Places to find those files on the desktop computer you want synchronized. When you have highlighted the shared folder or file(s) you want to work with, click on the File menu item and then click on Make Available Offline. If you don't see Make Available Offline, you didn't correctly set up your system to enable Offline Files. Note: To make Offline Files work on a system running XP, you may need to disable Fast Switching. If an entire folder is made available offline, any files in that shared folder now or in the future will automatically be made available offline the next time the computers are synchronized.

At this point you have selected files to be worked on offline. When you want to work on a file that will be synchro-

nized with another computer, you can access the file by opening the folder, Shortcut to Offline Files, select the file you wish to open, and make any changes you desire. When you save the file and get ready to close your system, if you're connected to the other computer your files will be synchronized. If not, the next time you do connect to the other computer, synchronization will take place.

While this may appear to be very complicated, it's actually easier than I may have described it. For more information, go to www.microsoft.com and enter "Working Offline" in the search box, then select the first result to see a more comprehensive discussion of this topic. By using this feature you can keep important files on one machine while still working with them on another, and knowing that both are identical.

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Bargain Landscape Design Software

Reviews by Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Susan Ives is a past president of Alamo PC.

Great software bargains are to be had at Half Price Books. Their stock consists primarily of discontinued versions. You're not getting the most up-to-date software, but then you're not paying up-to-date prices, either. The software is mostly new, and comes with a 30-day guarantee to be free of defects. There are four stores in San Antonio:

11654 Bandera Road Suite 106, San Antonio, TX 78250 (210) 647-1103

3207 Broadway, San Antonio, TX 78209 (210) 822-4597

11255 Huebner Rd., San Antonio, TX 78230 (210) 558-3247

125 N.W. Loop 410, San Antonio, TX 78216 (210) 349-1429

I bought three landscape design programs at the Half Price Books on Broadway. Decide for yourself whether I got great deal or wasted \$40 and a day of product testing.



Figure 1

1. Instant Landscaping

Topics Software (\$14.98)

This is a 4 CD-ROM set that contains four separate software programs: Instant Landscape; Burpee 3D Garden Designer; Colorful Water-Wise Gardening and Gardener's Journal. Two of the programs are keepers, the other two are a waste of disk space, but you can't beat the price! They claim that it's a \$119 value with an estimated \$29.99 street price.

If all you want is the Instant Landscape Software, a better deal is Topics Software's 2-CD set, which includes version 7 of the program contained in this box PLUS a similar program to help you design decks and hot tubs. Get that one at COMP USA (in the rack of bargain disks near the cash register) for \$9.99. If you decide you want the garden Journal as well, this box is the better deal.

Instant Landscaping (ver. 6)

This computer-aided design program, the centerpiece of the 4-CD-ROM set, helps you visualize an attractive and sustainable garden.

You can use their standard graphics or import a photo (or photos) of your own. In figure 1 you can see a small area of our back yard, nestled between a small deck (still under construction) and a wooden fence. The whole area is 6' across by 9' wide. It's edged by Texas mountain laurel in a bed of Asian jasmine, and along the fence there are four Italian cypresses in green ceramic pots interspersed with three Belinda roses planted in the ground. Lady Banksia Roses (badly in need of pruning) tumble across the fence. Oh yes – and a birdfeeder. It's the part of the back yard you see first when you walk in the back gate, and is also visible from the sunroom. I want something attractive here, which used to be a huge square of weedy St. Augustine grass. This is the photo I imported.

Figure 2 is a screen capture of my "completed" little garden. I dragged in a few boulders, a bench, a fountain edged by pansies, a butterfly bush and a butterfly weed, a little mound of daisies, three varieties of stonecrop, a bunch of gamma grasses and a little stone path. Whew! I really went to town, didn't I!

This was a fun and easy program to use. To place the plants and architectural features, I just dragged them from the CD-ROM and manipulate them to fit. You were supposed to be able to drag-and-drop supplementary photos from a Web site, but I couldn't get this feature to

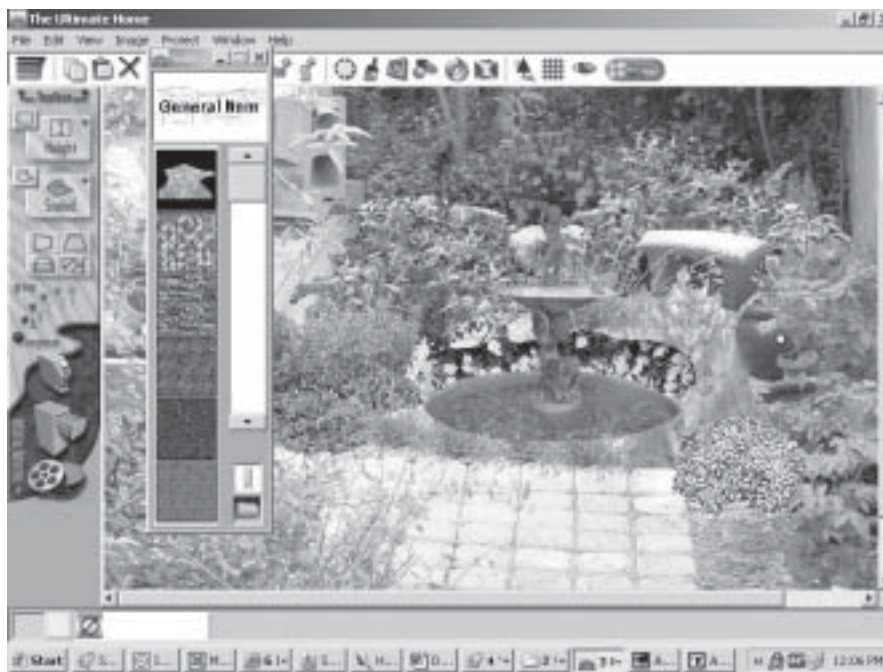


Figure 2

work. You can also import your own photos from other sources. There is a button for "plant properties" that will tell you the names of the plants, care instructions, hardiness zone and the ultimate size it will attain.

There's a series of slick little videos that teach you the more difficult procedures, and help is available at every step. The results were very realistic.

The hard part of this program, I found, was getting everything into proportion. Quite frankly, I'd need a plot four times this size to cram all this stuff in. I could have overlain a grid and have been a little more careful about getting the sizes right, but the temptation is to stuff, stuff, stuff, and there's nothing to keep you from doing it.

All in all, though, a worthwhile program that helped me think through a design for my little garden plot.

Gardener's Journal

This one will be a keeper. I've always meant to keep a garden journal. What is that rose? Where did I buy it? What care does it take? When did I prune it last (hint: here in San Antonio, prune your roses on Valentine's Day.) Maybe this program will inspire me to be a more faithful journaler.

The journal is a specialized database for your garden. You can make journal entries every day, including information about weather – even the phase of the moon! – and log in what you did that day.

You can add your own photos, videos and audio clips. There's a button that lets you turn your journal into a Web page: it creates a new page for each month of your journal (you provide your own Web space and FTP software to upload the page.) You can print reports and share journals with friends. The entire database is searchable, so if you are looking for all journal entries that contain the word "frost" or "pumpkin" you could easily get right to them.

There are additional categories to log in the seeds you plant and the plants you buy.

Version 1 is included with the Instant Landscaping package. Version 3.1 is now available and looks a bit nicer. You can upgrade to the Home (list \$39.99) or Professional (list \$49.99) version of the software for only \$15.99 by going to their Web site <www.gardeners-shop.com/GardenersJournal/index.html>.

Burpee 3-D Garden Designer

I've been eyeballing this program for a few years now: I grew up a few miles from Burpee headquarters near Philadelphia and always thought of it as my local seed company. I still love Burpee's seeds and plants, but their software is verminous. This disk is the Millennium edition, and I applaud their good ruthlessness in pruning it from the marketplace.

The centerpiece of the program is the 3D designer, and this is where it suf-

fers from root rot. The concept is great: start with a 1-foot per-square grid, drag plants from the encyclopedia into the grid and view your design in 3D. The 3-D rendering is primitive and the viewing angle was bizarre. I dropped in a ligustrum hedge, intending it to be a nicely clipped, straight-line living fence. Instead, it showed me a curved monstrosity, badly in need of an energetic session with the pruning shears. I tried adding a walkway -- faux brick would look nice -- and got a skinny gray splotch.

The garden design guide is a total of five scraggly screens. Big whoop. The encyclopedia and questions and answers are nice enough, but you'd be better off buying a decent book. This one was uprooted from my computer

Colorful Water-Wise Gardening

Gardeners who live in San Antonio, where we get 30 inches of rainfall a year (all of it is scheduled to fall on Tuesday, by the way) are interested in water-wise gardening. This is a strange little program: really a Website on a disk. It doesn't have much basic information about xeriscaping in it, just plant lists. I found disconcerting errors: looking for a yellow flower, it took me to a photo of a red hollyhock; the temperature zone map had skewed colors, which put San Antonio climate on par with the Klondike.

If this was a Web site I might recommend it, but as a CD it's more trouble than it's worth. If you want to learn about this topic, I suggest reading *Water-Wise Gardening* by Thomas Christopher (1994, Simon & Schuster.)

2. Custom 3D Land Designer

Sierra Home Software, \$7.98

This 3-CD-Rom Set is billed as five programs in one. A 3D land designer; photo garden designer; a garden encyclopedia, designer garden library and a landscape design guide.

Sierra Photo Garden Designer

I used the same garden photo that I used in the *Instant Landscape* program and came up with a totally different design, complete with a very fat cat in figure 3. This has a sort of Italianate feel: an large ornamental grass and a salvia, a few clumps of sage, two agapanthus (I had to look that up: it's an African lily), a strawberry jar filled with herbs, a low row of lavender filling in the gap between the planters and the path. A few boulders casually



Figure 3

tossed around. A trellis in the back. A market umbrella mounted on the deck. The crowning touch, I think, is the lion's head fountain mounted to the fence. Once again, over the top.

In some ways, this is a much more rudimentary program than *Instant Landscaping*. There doesn't seem to be a scale to proportion things correctly and there are no plant descriptions or care instructions (once you drag a plant in, you can see its name by right clicking on it, but that's it.) It was easy and fun to use and there were more objects to choose from (I held myself back from putting in an arbor, a deer and the statue of Michelangelo's David.)

The color and texture of objects can be easily customized. The market umbrella was originally green. I tried red, and settled on green. It was harder to resize the umbrella. By convention, if you "grow" a graphic by tugging on a corner, it changes size proportionally. In this program, it distorts the graphic. Took me a while to figure that out.

This program was fun and helped me conceptualize some ideas, but because of its lack of plant details, it's more of a toy than a tool for serious gardeners.

Garden Encyclopedia

This is a wonderful program for one main reason: it contains audio files that have the pronunciation of the Latin names of every entry in the 3,000-plant database. I learned, to my astonished embarrassment that *kalanchoe* is pronounced kal-

ann-KO-ee, not kal-ANN-cho. How was I to know?

There are also dozens of lovely photo albums arranged by category (i.e., labor saving perennials, plants that stand neglect, plants for hot sun, plants that attract butterflies, fun plants for kids) and the ability to add plants to a list and print it out to take to the garden center. There's a section on caring for plant that contains short videos on topics such as dividing perennials and starting seeds.

This is a well-thought out program and well worth the price of the entire package.

Land Designer 3D

The CD would not install on my computer so I stuck it on my husband's. We both have similar Dell's running Windows XP, so I don't know what the glitch was, although I suspect it a conflict about video resolution. It also crashed a few times.

All that being said, this is a far, far better program than the *Burpee 3D* program. It's meant to design an entire yard, starting with entering the details of your plot, setting the orientation, adding slopes and hills.

You could add a photo of your own home, but it won't be rendered in 3D and you will lose most of the 3D advantages. They have a nice selection of pre-drawn homes, or you can create a 3D home roughly resembling yours by adding elements like stone walls, doors and windows, chim-



neys, dormers, paint colors and hardscaping. Finally, you add the plants.

There is a database of 4,600 plants and 2,200 objects that you can plunk into your landscape. You can take a 3-D tour or a birds-eye view and twirl everything around to look at it at every angle. You can see how the plants you selected will change through the seasons and see how your landscaping will grow and change over the years.

One interesting feature is the ability to design a drip irrigation system. For anything in the landscape, you can create a shopping list to help track costs.

Also included on this CD is the designer garden library and landscape design guide, which will help you achieve an aesthetically pleasing and geographically appropriate design. It's nicely done, but I have landscape books that are much more thorough.

It would take me a few days of intense study to feel comfortable using this program. I'm not convinced the results are worth it.

3. Total 3D Landscape Deluxe

By Individual Software (\$14.98)

Of all three 3D software packages, I expected to like this one best and ended up loathing it. The box promises a lot more than it delivers. The photo on the cover is of a fully rendered pondscape with a lovely deck, subtle lighting and gorgeous plants. The results are clunky 3D renderings.

I played with this program for about an hour, right after I used Land Designer 3D. It suffered greatly in comparison. This program gives you a much more primitive house: no doors or windows, for starters. The plant choices are fewer: the annual plant choices are tuft and upright. That's it. Tufted or upright.

I found it very confusing to use, even with the accompanying 180-page user manual. The data is read off of the CD and consequently the program is exceedingly slow.

Although it's meant to be a landscaping program, only about 3 pages of the manual deal with plants and their placement. The rest was about building the house that will not look like your house and does not have a door or windows. Why bother?

The plant database was nice enough but the one in Sierra's Land Designer was ten times better and more usefully organized. Although the plant database is integrated



Figure 4

into the program, it doesn't interact with it: you can't read about lobelia and then drag-and drop one into your landscape.

You can see my test house – an hour's worth of tedious work – at figure 4. The program has been upgraded since this version (which came out in 2002) and the newer version might be more robust. This program ended up in the compost pile.

The surprise value in the box was Black and Decker's Landscape Design and Construction software. This is the piece missing from all the software I've reviewed so far: building the hardscape, walls and other garden features. The topics covered are water gardens, walls, walks and steps, arbors and trellises, patios, grading and fences.

As one would expect from Black & Decker the instructions are clear and the presentation outstanding. In the wall section for example, you can determine whether you need a retaining wall or a freestanding wall. Under freestanding

walls, you can view information about footings, adding lattice panels to the top of a wall, working with cinder block, and adding a stucco or stone veneer. If you select stucco, you can view a detailed slide show about applying stucco, print out a materials list and even use an onboard calculator to see how much Portland cement you need to buy. Very spiffy.

If you are a do-it-yourselfer, this program is both entertaining and informational.

So what's the verdict? For less than \$40 (I get a 10 percent discount at Half Price Books when I flash my Texas Public Radio membership card) I bought three software packages that contained nine landscape design programs. That's less than \$5 apiece. I'll probably use three or four of them again, and I learned a lot about the strengths and weaknesses of various landscaping programs. What a deal!



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Design Your Next Home or Remodeling Project with Imagine Pro 7 Software

By Larry Grosskopf, Alamo PC

Larry Grosskopf, Ph.D. is a Clinical Psychologist at the San Antonio State Hospital, who has a keen thirst for more computer and technology knowledge. Larry and Marta, have two growing children a daughter, Zoë who is 11, and a son Jackson, who is now 9. If you have questions, contact Larry via e-mail at <reviews@alamopc.org>.

Visual Applications offers a software product, or more correctly, 3 software products that allow the user great freedom to design changes or remodeling plans and to see how they would look before actually buying the materials or beginning the work. What you do is take a picture of a home and play with it to their heart's content by changing the look of the grass, shrubs, flowers, trees, walls, windows, roof, floors and practically anything else you might want to experiment with. These three Visual Application computer software products are called Landscaping and Outdoor Living, Exterior Remodeling and Design and Interior Remodeling and Design. These products allow you to visualize your ideas using an actual color photo of your yard or home. You can scan in a photo or you can use a digital image with equal ease. You can also create color images, which display the effect the changes will make at various points during construction

The way this software works is simple, at least from the users viewpoint. Initially, you can use the Imagine Pro software to scan in a picture if it is not a digital image. Next, the scanner scans in the image and opens it up as a new project for the program. After the photo of the house or landscape has been opened up, you can go to the library of images and drag and drop them into the picture using the tools that are part of the software program (See Figure 1 and Figure 2). You can experiment with changing the look of your home by adding bricks, a different color roof, changing the color of the paint, shape and style of the windows or add wallpaper inside. Use a photo of the interior of your home and change furnishings, appliances, paint or wallpaper, flooring and use your imagination to spruce up the old castle. If you are like me, you may have had an experience where you thought you were going to love a new color and once it was on the wall, you hated it or at least you didn't like it as much as

you thought you would. Using this program first would let you apply the color to an image and give you a visual representation of how it would actually look (See Figure 3).

Now suppose you don't find what you want included in the vast thousands of images that accompany the software, you are stuck, right? Wrong, you can simply take a photo of the item or items you want to include and make your own personal database that can be used again and again. You can add these images to an existing category (doors or shrubs, for example) or you can create your own new category (lawn ornaments or bird-baths, for example). Here is an example of what you can do, take a picture of the back of your house in order to see what a gazebo and/or a hot tub would look like at various places in the yard. I also took a picture of my fence, which needs to be replaced and tried some different looks and fence types to see what I should plan to do to resolve my "fence issue." This really is a practical software

package that is fun to use, or at least for me, it was enjoyable.

There were several features of this program that stood out for me. People are different when it comes to learning to use a software program. Imagine Pro 7.0 offers tutorials and other forms of support to get the user operating the program efficiently. Video Tutorials are available to demonstrate how you can use the product to accomplish home projects. I personally liked the tutorials very much and found them extremely helpful. The tutorials provide a descriptive introduction to the Imagine Pro process and tools. An introductory video runs automatically the first time you launch the program. There is also the Video Tutorial library, which is available any time you click on the Movie Reel icon on the Main Menu, Left Toolbar or Help Menu.

The manual gives you the Hands-on Tutorial, which works great if you prefer to learn by reading and doing. The Basic Tools icon used in Imagine Pro is lo-



Figure 1



Figure 2

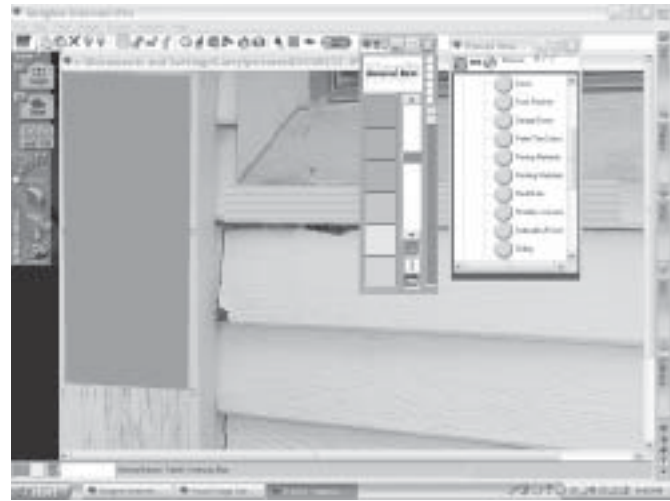


Figure 3

cated on the Left Toolbar and automatically launches a short video, which shows you how to use the tool that is clicked. Videos can be turned off when you no longer want them to run. Along with the Help system, which can be accessed with the F1 button, there is Voice Assistance that tells you verbally how to bring up a photo for use with this software program. I found that this assistance really helped familiarize me with the program more quickly.

System requirements for this program are as follows: Windows platform PC

running Windows XP, 2000 Me or even 98. I would suggest Windows 2000 or XP with a Pentium III 800 MHz or higher CPU (Pentium IV or AMD Athlon would be even better). Your system needs 567 MB free hard drive space for program installation, if you download all of the components to your hard drive. If you use a camera, you would need to be able to download images from that camera and if you want to use regular printed photos, you will need a scanner. On my system, I am using Windows XP Professional with 512 MB RAM, a 3.06 GHz Intel Pentium IV CPU with a

Radeon 8500 graphics card. This program installed and is working perfectly on my system.

At the time of this writing, you could purchase any of the individual Visual Applications Imagine Pro 7.0 programs for \$44.99 each or the comprehensive (all three programs) for \$99.99 from the company web site <<http://www.visapp.com>>. The three programs regularly retail for \$149.99 but if you buy two of the programs at the regular price, according to the web site, you get the third one free.

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Home Painting Programs

Reviews by Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Susan Ives is a past president of Alamo PC.

Our latest decorating project was the guest bathroom, finished just a few months ago. I'll spare you the gruesome details, but suffice it to say that after almost a decade of false starts I decided to do it right this time.

I picked up a couple of CD-ROMs at home improvement stores that pointed me in the right direction.

Faux Finishing Techniques

Faux Finishing Techniques by Behr, distributed by Home Depot (buy it there for \$4.95) is an interactive CD that works on a PC or a MAC. It covers glazing, texture and accent techniques on two disks.

Hosts Matt and Judy star in a series of videos that teach you, step-by-step, how to do sponging on and off, ragging on and off, color washing, frottage, dragging, sand wash, Venetian plaster, and metallic, pearlescent and crackle accents. There is also more generic advice about selecting colors and preparing a room for painting.

The videos run in Quicktime, and a copy of the program is included if you need to install it. You will also need a CD-ROM drive and a sound card and speakers. It works on Windows versions 98 and up, and it's recommended that you have at least 64MB of RAM. The CDs are autoplay – just pop them into the drive. No installation is required.

The demonstrations were clear and easy to follow. It helps to see something being done instead of just reading about it, and this was the perfect format for me.

Each section comes with a set frequently asked questions that can be read on the screen and a printable materials list in Adobe Acrobat format (the Acrobat reader software is included, if you need it.) The materials list also includes a recap of how to do each technique.

Get this CD at the paint counter at Home Depot. The two faux finish CDs are also included in the Behr Color Solutions Journal, which includes two color wheels - one for mixing color and one for creating decorative textures - eight paint swatch pockets, a storage pocket for clippings and samples and grid paper. Tabbed dividers with ad-

hesive labels let you keep records on up to eight painting projects. This hefty three-ring binder is available at Home Depot for only \$9.97: what a deal!

If you're wondering about the faux finish in our guest bath: it didn't happen. I tried a sponging-off technique, and it looked horrible, no fault of the CD. Take my advice: a moss green faux finish looks like a virulent mold infestation. I painted it over. But I've got my eye on Venetian plaster for the bedroom . . .

Virtual Painter

You might have played around with this program at Lowe's; they have it set up in a kiosk next to the "signature paint collection." For six bucks you can take it home, play with colors to your heart's content and even import your own photographs.

I took a digital snap of our newly decorated bathroom, saved it in a JPG format (a BMP would work fine, too) and easily imported it into Virtual Painter. There are 48 designer rooms you can play with if you don't have your own photo.

Next, browse through their collection of more than 1,100 colors. The brands available are:

- * Alexander Julian at Home
- * Waverley Home Classics
- * Earth Elements
- * Laura Ashley Home
- * Eddie Bauer Home
- * Nickelodeon

There are several different ways to paint. You can use the software like a regular paint program: pick up a brush and start coloring things in. You can also delineate areas to paint using a marquee-type tool to block out specific areas. I found the paint bucket worked best. Just point to an area and it colors it in. There is a little slider that selects the paint sensitivity so that you don't accidentally slop your wall color onto the trim. You can use up to seven colors on the seven surfaces that you select.

To change colors, just point to a different color and the selected surface area will change. It's that simple. The program suggests coordinating trim colors. There's even a little paint calculator to figure out how much paint to buy.

The edges are a little sloppy. I supposed I could have futzed with it for another hour to make the edges crisp, but the quick-and-



Faux Finishing Techniques box



Video demo of how to apply the ragging technique



Box shot of Virtual Painter

dirty method was more than adequate to let me know what the room would look like in different color combinations.

There is an excellent tutorial. You can save your projects and print them. Another incredible bargain!

This program only works on a PC (sorry, Mac users!) and requires Windows 98 or

above and a CD ROM drive. It prefers 64MB of RAM but claims to work with as little as 16. You'll need a sound card to run the tutorials. It installs on your hard drive and needs about 40MB of free disk space.

Our newly-renovated bathroom is now a deep moss green on the top of the walls, a buttery pale yellow for the bottom half of the walls and cabinets and white for the chair rail. If I decide to redecorate, I liked Eddie Bauer Daffodil and Laura Ashley Summer Field, a combination I never would have selected without help. Maybe in another ten years.

Color@Home

Glidden's entry is Color@Home. I tried version 1; according to the Glidden Web site, version 2, much more fully featured, is now available for less than \$10, but I wasn't able to find it. Thanks to Dan at the Home Depot on DeZavala for digging out this copy for me!

The advantage to the Glidden program is that it includes exterior paint colors as well as interior ones. As with the Virtual Painter, in version 2 you can import your own images and color them in. The program makes suggestions about compatible colors. You can print out a project planner (including your photo and a list of all of the paint colors) to take to the store, or you can export it to the online Glidden project planner to save it there.

The screen capture is from the newer version of the program.

There's also a part of the software that helps design children's rooms. Function also includes stencil that you can add to the virtual walls; additional stencil patterns can be downloaded from the Web site.

These programs are all reasonably priced, easy to learn and fun to play with. As I was playing around with Virtual Painter, my husband was hanging over my shoulder saying "make it blue! Oh, that's ugly! Try brown!" If you are timid about color, it's a good way to test out your ideas with no mess and no fuss.

Free Class

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 59-61.

DotNetNuke

This is a class on using the DotNetNuke portal software for hosting your website. For more information, contact Joe Brazell at <ejbrazell@satx.rr.com> or by phone 345-2207.



View of the interior of Susan Ives' bathroom



Using Virtual Painter to sample various interior color schemes



Using Color@Home to sample various exterior home color schemes



Accessing Autodesk Architectural Desktop 2004

By Joe Mizer, North Orange County Computer Club

William G. Wyatt Sr. is a professor at John Tyler Community College in Chester, Virginia. He is a certified Engineering Technician, as well as an active member of the Institute for Certification of Engineering Technicians and the American Society for Engineering Education. Thompson Delmar Learning publishes this book, which is available on line as well as many bookstores. You can visit <http://www.delmarlearning.com> and find this book and all of the other AutoCAD books they publish. Delmar seems to have the largest selection of AutoCAD books because of their association with Autodesk Press. The ISBN # is 1-4018-5015-4. The list price is \$75.95 USD and is available with a street price of about \$55.00 at some locations. The author has just released his latest version for Architectural Desktop 2005.

This book, written by William Wyatt and from Autodesk Press, is primarily for the architectural designer experienced in AutoCAD but needs to learn to use Architectural Desktop. Architectural Desktop is an object based CAD program for designing homes and commercial buildings. When you select the wall tool you will be asked to specify the starting and end point as if you are drawing a line. However, you have just created a complete wall that has length, thickness, height, and will interface with other walls, doors, and windows.

The program is so complex it requires experience in an AutoCAD program, more for the mental thought process you go through than for the actual use of the editing tools from a previous program. I did not find any of the available Architectural Desktop books that cover AutoCAD basics so you will have a giant step if you are attempting this book without the required background. This is not one of the many books available that are written as a tutorial. The author has used the 900 + pages very well and presents the material in what I call classic style where you are told what will be presented, followed by the presentation of the instructional material, and then you are presented exercises which are expected to be done to reinforce the material.

The difficulty the student is going to encounter in learning Architectural Desktop is a lot like learning 3D modeling in standard AutoCAD was before Mechanical Desktop and Inventor were both available. There are new concepts to learn and strange new methods to be mastered. Not only are the files and project structures different but the interaction with the intelligent objects that need to be tweaked to interact properly with other objects to work properly. One feature I like is the various sheets required in a drawing set you can rotate your model to any position you want to emphasize.

You can export the screen image to a JPG file and save it just like any other photograph in your computer. You can then print it or insert it into a document just like any other .JPG.

The book is composed of 13 chapters, starting with chapter 1, an introduction into Architectural Desktop. Chapter 2 introduces wall objects and making of floor plans. Chapter 3 presents advanced material on wall features, and chapter 4 introduces adding doors and windows. Chapter 5 introduces doors and windows as assemblies that may have multiple windows and door, and side panel combinations. This section also describes creating special window and door shapes and combinations that can be saved and reused.

Chapter 6 teaches making roofs with the roof tool and then how to convert them to slabs using the slab tool so dormers and other details can be added. Chapter 7 creating slabs for floors and ceilings is almost the same as the slab tool in the previous chapter and chapter 8 introduces the tool that will make generating stairs easier than you can climb them. Chapters 9 and 10 are both the annotation chapters. You can add notes to the drawing or a schedule, which is generated automatically from the information on the doors and windows in the project and imported into the schedule. You can add dimensions automatically to a section of the drawing or construction notes and other documentation to your drawings. Chapter 11 is about making the sectional drawings, which display building details, which are hard to display otherwise so you can look at the interior features of the building. Elevations can be added so you can see frontal, side and interior views. It is hard to tell what the kitchen will actually look like if you are only looking straight down from a plan view. Chapter 12 covers creating mass models, spaces and boundaries. Mass elements can be used to simulate building elements such as columns, floors, fireplaces. Space and boundaries can be used to define restrictions, simulate walls and



other items. Chapter 13 is about the special problems encountered while drawing commercial structures.

One important question everyone wants to know is whether or not he or she can learn using this book. The answer is a definite maybe. This book does what it should, it presents the information in a clear and easy-to-understand manner, but the subject is very complex and it takes a lot of work to get through 900 pages. The order the material is presented in is excellent because most of the time the material is presented in the order it is used in the tutorials, and on only a few situations you are referred to a chapter later in the book. I recommend this book as a good first text. The difficulty level is rated from the beginning to advanced. I wish this had been my first Architectural Desktop book. This is also the book of choice in assorted college courses including Spokane Community College and others. The book comes with a CD that contains four appendices and drawing files to complete the tutorials in the book, as well as completed tutorials for reference when assistance is needed. That is great because there is nothing worse than trying to work out a problem or answer a question in a book and there is no easy way to know if you have answered the question correctly or worked the tutorial correctly.



Architectural Drafting and Design, 4th Edition

By Joe Mizer, North Orange County Computer Club

William G. Wyatt Sr. is a professor at John Tyler Community College in Chester, Virginia. He is a certified Engineering Technician, as well as an active member of the Institute for Certification of Engineering Technicians and the American Society for Engineering Education. Thompson Delmar Learning publishes this book, which is available on line as well as many bookstores. You can visit <http://www.delmarlearning.com> and find this book and all of the other AutoCAD books they publish. Delmar seems to have the largest selection of AutoCAD books because of their association with AutoDesk Press. The ISBN # is 1-4018-5015-4. The list price is \$75.95 USD and is available with a street price of about \$55.00 at some locations. The author has just released his latest version for Architectural Desktop 2005.

This text and reference book (authored by Alan Jefferis and David A. Madsen and published by Autodesk Publishing / Delmar Learning) is for the junior draftsman with at least one semester of drafting experience embarking on a career in architecture. This is also an excellent edition for anyone with an interest in architectural design in general and a desire to know how the pieces fit together. The main emphasis is on learning how to prepare a set of documents, which can be submitted, to contractors and building and safety departments in your community.

The authors are both architecture and drafting instructors in Oregon and have many years experience in teaching and as architectural designers. Alan Jefferis has 24 years of experience in the industry. David A. Madsen is a former member of the board of directors of the ADDA and is currently the chairman of the drafting department at Clackamas community college. David Madsen is also the author of an excellent book on Inventor 5 and other AutoCAD and drafting books. Alan Jefferis has 24 years experience as a professional building designer and is a member of the American Institute of Building Designers (AIBD).

Mr. Jefferis has been teaching architectural design and drafting for the past 22 years at Clackamas community in Portland Oregon.

As anyone who has tried to draw something on paper or with AutoCAD knows, the first problem is not how to draw the object, but is simply learning what you need to draw. It is assumed that you know how to draw before starting this book even though the book in chapters two through six covers much of the basics of drafting. Very little is left to chance and if you are forced to learn without the assistance of an instructor and have not completed a previous drafting class, even though this book is the quite complete I would en-

courage you to get another book for the basic material you will have missed.

This book presents the information in layers, starting with very general information and then expanding into greater detail with each section. Anyone following the book from start to finish and making the drawings for the sample project will be working on a two-story house with two-car garage. The interesting part about the design project is you are working with a fixed floor plan for a house throughout the book. The plans can be modified so the foundation you draw can be completed with a concrete slab, or with a full basement or half basement and with several different framing methods. The roof plans can be drawn with a gable, hip, or Dutch hip-style roof, and the framing details on how to draw each of them is presented. The roof of a house is very important detail because often the view of the roof from the street can make up fifty percent of the front elevation and a small change in the roof can and does totally change the appearance of the house. In each section the primary drawing method is on a drafting board however guidelines are given to assist if you are drawing with AutoCAD and each section also provides a list of web pages, which are applicable.

The 909 pages in the book are divided into thirteen sections with a total of forty-seven chapters. Each chapter presents the basic information, along with options and is supported with drawings and photographs. Sample drawings showing how the actual information is presented on a completed drawing with a full set of notes takes a lot of the mystery out of knowing what is expected in industry. Sections one and two in the book are the introduction chapters covering the profession, tools, and residential design principles. Sections three through seven are the design chapters for floor plans, roof plans and elevations. Sections eight through ten are the construction chapters for framing methods, foundation plans and wall sections. Section

eleven is on rendering and section twelve is on construction specifications. Section thirteen (chapter 44) is on drafting of commercial as opposed to residential construction plans.

The framing of a house varies depending on the property, part of the country, availability of local materials, and the weather. If the property is sloped and it is not desirable to cut a section for a slab floor, a different foundation will be required. On the west coast we normally encounter platform construction; however balloon framing is often used in the eastern states, or in sections of the house where the second floor is open to an area on the first floor.

A complete section on the selection of structural components is given which includes selecting the size of beams and joists required to span a given distance. This is probably a good time to point out that even if you have selected the proper size of material to make the house from you will probably need a signoff done by a structural engineer for the Building and Safety department acceptance. It is also important to remember that each state and county can and often does have their own building codes which are the rules you will have to make your drawings to, and not the sample examples in the book which are given as a starting point for the students.

There is a complete section about fireplace construction and the different firebox designs that can be used. The flue must be sized to match the open fire area of a fireplace and can be lined or unlined. Charts are provided to help select standard combinations. The book also stresses that a fireplace should be energy efficient, and not just a decorative item.

The design of a roof plan layout depends on the style of roof used and the final look the architect desires. The style of roof chosen is based on the floor plan, the look of the area, snow

load if you are in the mountains and the desire of the architect and the wishes of the owner of the home. A dormer is a window that opens out of the roof for a room that is constructed in the unused space of the attic of a home. Dormers can be constructed with a gable roof or a shed roof, the former being more decorative and the shed roof that is normally wider and might also be more functional.

The construction of a home needs a set of electrical drawings unless the house is very simple and the outlet and other details are sometimes added to the main floor plan. A complete set of symbols and sample completed electrical

drawings with construction notes are provided in chapter 17. I could go on about the plumbing or the heating and ventilation chapters and the chapters on framing and foundations, but I am sure you get the idea that this book is very complete and gives the student the information necessary to make a set of drawings.

I recommend this book as excellent, and even though other books show you more information on framing and plumbing or the details of how to actually wire a house, none of them show you how to put the information down on paper or on the computer, and that is what you need if you are going to get approval to actually build the home of your dreams. The

book is published in both paperback and hardback. I only found the paperback listed on <http://www.amazon.com> and it is priced at \$29.95 + shipping and the hardback edition, which I have, is really beautiful and has a list price of \$115.95; it is available for

\$97.95. Amazon also listed used hardback books from \$67.91. Whichever one you choose you cannot go wrong because this is an excellent book. You will probably pay full price on other web sites or at your local bookstore if they carry a copy.

- Reprinted from August 2004 issue of *Orange Bytes*, newsletter of North Orange County Computer Club.

Complete Home Journal

Review by Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Susan Ives is a past president of Alamo PC.

John and I moved into this house about 12 years ago. Ask me how much we paid to have the saltillo installed on the floors, or who put the new counters in the kitchen. Ask me the name of the house painter, or the exact color of the front door. When did we have that new air conditioner put in? Is the water heater still under warranty?

I don't have a clue. I'm sure we have scraps of paper containing the information somewhere but it would take me days to find it.

But ask me what you wrote in an e-mail five years ago – I can probably lay my hands on in less than five minutes. I'm one of those people who is extremely well organized when it comes to computer files and a mess when it comes to paper.

The Complete Home Journal is the perfect program for people like me.

In a nutshell, Complete Home Journal is a specialized database that helps you organize everything about your home. There are seven parts:

(1) Home purchase, including details about the mortgage, realtor and insurance

(2) Exterior of your home

(3) Interior of your home

(4) Mechanicals of your home, such as the furnace and water heater

(5) To-do lists

(6) Contact database

(7) Inventory

The program can accommodate as many homes as you own or manage.

The screen capture in figure 1 is for our guest bathroom, which, thank goodness, falls into the "indoor" category. There are sub-categories for floor, walls, wood, fixtures, ceiling, windows and miscellaneous. We're looking at fixtures, and I entered the tub, sink, toilet, faucets, lights, etc. The screen you are viewing contains everything you could possibly want to know about our new bath and tub surround. At the bottom,



there is room to insert my own digital photos. One photo is of the tub, but I also scanned in the receipt and stashed it there. If there was a user's manual, I could scan that and include it, too.

You'll also see tabs above the purchase information where you can enter data about its installation (who installed it,

when, and for how much) and the dimensions of the fixture.

The screens for the exterior and the mechanicals follow the same format.

The contact database is a simple one, giving you a place to store all of your contact information. The to-do list is also a simple one: as many lists as you want, with the ability to check things off as they are accomplished.

The inventory gives you a place to record all of the stuff you have stashed in those rooms. There is room for purchase price, warranties, insurance, appraisals and, of course, photographs. They can be viewed by room (everything in the living room) or by category (all electronics.)

All of the screens have ample room for free-form notes, so you're not limited by the pre-determined categories. There are numerous report formats for you to print, and an easy backup utility. They recommend keeping a backup copy at another location so that if disaster strikes, you have a complete inventory of your possessions.

Now I can hear you database gurus saying, "I could program that myself!" And, of course, you could. But for \$39.95, the Complete Home Journal does it for you. You can download a trial version from <www.thehomejournal.com>, which is fully functional but will not save any data. You can buy a full version from the same site, or order it by calling 1-800-999-2734 (request product #2745.) Their marketing guy told me that they were just informed that CompUSA will start carrying the boxed version, so look for it there soon.

It's a Windows program, requiring version 98 or higher and a minimum of 32 MB RAM. The Mac is not directly supported but the company says that many

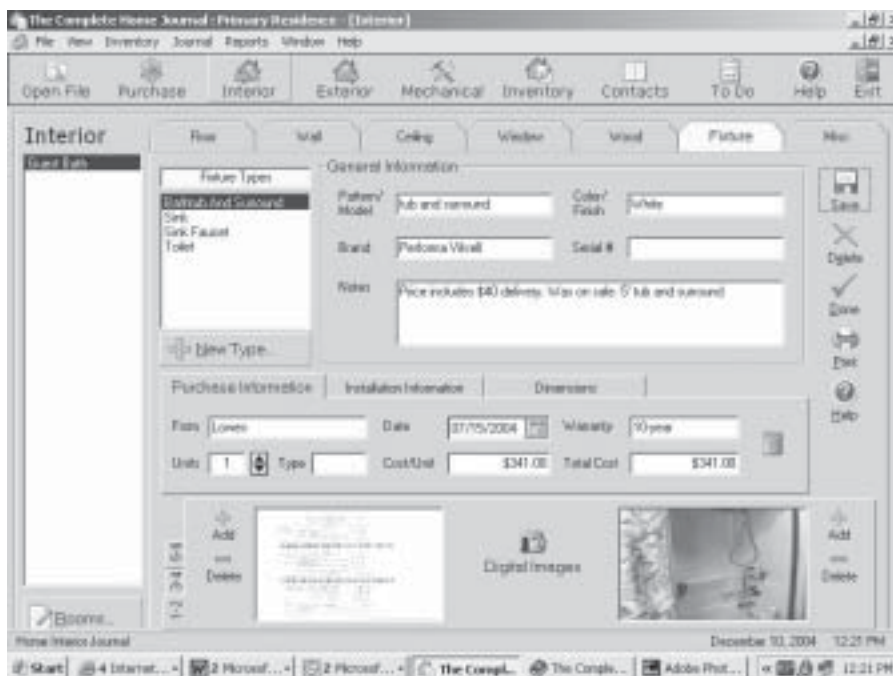


Figure 1. Complete Home Journal allows many categories of information to be stored. Here, details about the bathroom are organized.

customers run the software using Virtual PC for the Mac from Microsoft, which allows the Mac to run PC software.

There are a few features I would have liked to have seen included. The contact database is generic, with no cross-categorizations. You can't search for a list of plumbers, for example: you'd have to remember the plumber's name, although you could set up a plumber "group," and sort them that way. The contact list is not linked to the entries for the installers. Duane installed our new tub; I can't just click on his name in the bathroom journal and get all of his info in the contact list: I have to look it up separately.

The photos don't have a space for an annotation; this would be a nice fea-

ture if I were doing before and after photos, for example.

It would also have been useful in the mechanicals section to have some sort of a maintenance reminder built in: a popup screen telling me when to change the furnace filter, for example.

All and all, though, it's a great program. I wish I had it when we first bought the house.

They thought of that, too. The company sells the program in bulk to real estate agents who give it to new homeowners. If you buy only 10 copies, they sell them to you for \$14.95 each (\$9.95 for 100 copies) and affix a custom label to the CD with your office information and logo on it, if you want. This is a great idea and a great deal.

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Faithfully Executed, by Michael Bowen

Hardback, St. Martin's, 1992, \$17.95, 230 pages

Former diplomat Richard Michaelson is commissioned by the White House to investigate anomalies in the execution of a hired hit man convicted of murdering a Pentagon computer programmer who was working on a secret project to determine whether electronic voting machines could be tampered with to rig an election.

A hot issue today is whether or not we need a paper trail for electronic voting machines. Just a tiny change to the proprietary code could alter election results and there is no way to conduct an audit – except by running the same computer

program! This insightful mystery anticipated the problem a decade before it hit the news. Not many technical details, but nonetheless a thoughtful look at the intersection between technology and politics.

The Forgotten, by Faye Kellerman

Hardback, W.C. Morrow, 2001, \$24.95, 363 pages

Los Angeles Police detective Peter Decker takes it personally when a troubled young man desecrates the Jewish shul his family attends. Decker suspects the kid has accomplices in a white supremacist group but he can't prove it, and the boy seems to be contrite. Six months later the teen is brutally murdered at a nature camp run by a pair of psychologists, and Decker catches the case.

The technological hook is that the psychologists have hired a hacker to break into the computers that house standardized tests, such as the SAT and IOWA tests; they use their advance-knowledge to coach rich students to score well. The scanty tech talk is woefully inaccurate: in one paragraph, the detectives say that you can read "the pixels" in a web site's cookie database just by visiting the site. Pixels, of course, are picture elements and have nothing to do with cookies. A casual user could not look at a site's cookie files – you would have to hack into the log files on the server. Nonetheless, this is an excellent series with complex characters and gripping plots. Read it, but not for the computers.

Susan Ives, past president of Alamo PC, claims that computers are a mystery to her. Remember the Alibi Bookstore at 8055 West Ave. #101, San Antonio, TX (at the corner of West Ave. and Lockhill-Selma), (210) 344-7776, tries its darndest to keep the recommended books in stock.

Book Review**Building the Perfect PC**

by Robert Bruce and Barbara Fritchman Thompson

\$29.95

Published by O'Reilly

Reviewed by Gilbert Rodriguez

If you have been entertaining the ideal of building your own PC, help is but a book away.

I had the opportunity to review the book *Building the Perfect PC* by Robert Bruce and Barbara Fritchman Thompson.

Building the Perfect PC teaches and illustrates how to build in detail five different PC systems. The first look at the cover of the book will either interest you to start reading and building your perfect PC or will put the thought in your mind, "Do I really want to do this?"

After reading the preface you are more at ease and realize that the book will be very helpful by walking you through the selection of components, assembly and testing of your computer. The authors will explain the reason why components were selected as well as their recommendations for alternative components and the reason why certain others did not get

selected. The price of many or all of these components is listed, showing you what your investment will be.

The book exposes the reader to different top component manufacturers and puts some questions in your mind of the reliability of no name brand components.

This book is intended for the personal and business user as well for the experienced computer builder. Information of the specific needs and budgets of different end users is well accepted because not all of us have an unlimited budget. You would think that the book would be very technical but in fact it was very easy reading and where it did get slightly technical there was a detailed explanation.

In building your own pc you definitely have total control of what the end result will be. We all want to be in control! The end result is A Perfect PC in your eyes



based on quality, reliability and performance.

The book is broken down into 7 Chapters and the index. Fundamentals; Choosing and Buying Components; Building a Mainstream PC; Building a SOHO Server; Building A Kick-Ass LAN Party PC (excuse the language); Building a Home Theater PC; Building a Small Form Factor PC; Index

Additional valuable information that you will obtain in reading this book are notes on: TV signaling protocols, DVD optical drives and DVD media, RAID, CPU Temperature, and Backup Solutions.

The first two chapters explain the fundamentals of building a PC and why one would build a PC. The selection and purchasing of components is vital to build your perfect PC and is explained in Chapter 2. There is great information in these first two chapters.

The following chapters 3 through 7 discuss the design and the building of different PC's for various applications. Included in these chapters is a graphic titled Design Priorities that represents the importance of different elements such as, Price, Reliability, Size, Noise level, Expandability, Processor performance, Video performance, and Disk capacity/performance for each system built.

There is an average of 50 to 60 color illustrations in each chapter, photographs of components selected for the PC you are building and of the steps taken when actually putting the components together. The photographs are very close shots not like some other books I have read. You can see what they are pointing out, from installing motherboards to connecting the various wires to different connectors.

These chapters have plenty of Warning Prompts throughout the different steps of assembly, which will warn you of real life issues you may encounter or cautions that need to be taken.

Figure 1 displays a few of the illustrated photos and Warning Prompts that are displayed throughout the book.

At the end of these chapters, there is a checklist that can be followed to verify all is done before the initial power up of the PC or what they call the smoke test.

Chapter 3: Building a Mainstream PC

In this chapter the authors will design and build a Mainstream PC, that uses top-quality (but midrange-performance) components at a reasonable price.

Chapter 4: Building a SOHO Server (Small Office / Home Office Server)

This chapter will go into detail in designing, selecting components and instructions on building the type of server that you have decided on after considering your office needs and application. You will first come across a few tables that recommend starting points in selecting the components needed for the server. Server components and configurations like Backup Tape drives and Raid are mentioned.

Chapter 5: Building a Kick-Ass LAN Party PC

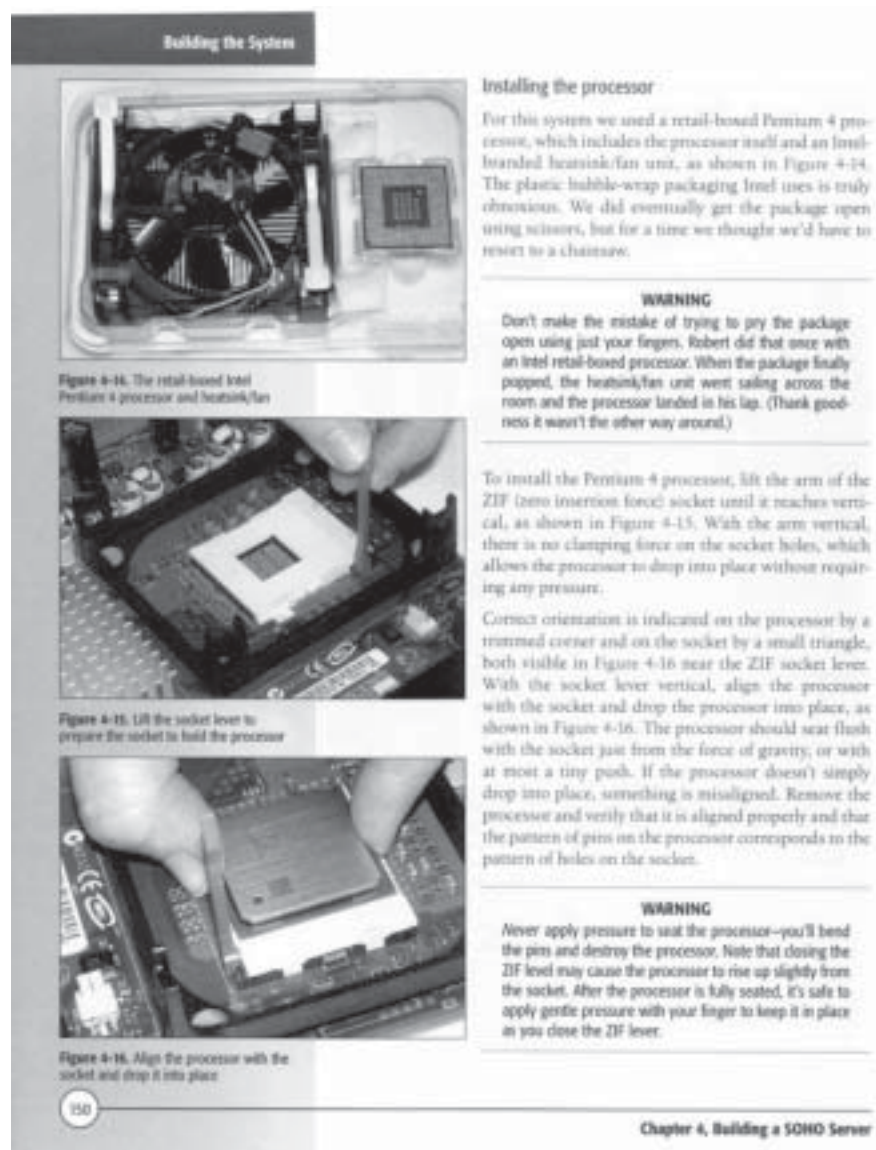


Figure 1.

In this chapter you come across important components that pertain to LAN PC's for LAN PC parties, these recommendations are great as the author has tested and done their research. This chapter will show you how to build a very fast and easy to carry PC. This chapter is great reading for all those serious gamers that are interested in building or upgrading their current gaming PC.

Chapter 6: Building a Home Theater PC

The Home Theater PC chapter was great reading. After you have built this type of PC and saw the viewing and recording applications first hand along with many other features you will never use a VCR again. This chapter definitely came in handy as I was evaluating and testing a copy of Microsoft Media Center 2005 Software. I love all the features so far and it is a great experience in digital media. I

was surprised to see all the things this type of software could do like record and rewind live TV, and what ever else you can imagine doing with digital music media. What an experience! Ok, that was my plug for Media Center 2005.

This chapter covers five pages on the software that was considered for the Home Theater PC, as it would be utilized extensively for certain applications, Microsoft Media Center 2005 had not been released so it was not mentioned in this chapter. The functional requirements would play an important part in the selection of the correct software.

Chapter 7: Building a Small Form Factor PC

In this chapter component selection was more critical due to heating or cooling issues that may occur due to the small form factor design. Warning prompts are

more visible prior and when assembling the PC due to the limited space. After reading this chapter you will have your own thoughts about the advantages and disadvantages in building this type of PC and where it can be best utilized.

Final Words

I highly recommend this book, it is a valuable resource to all those that want to put together their own computer.

Building a Perfect PC has 350 pages and is published by O'Reilly. The book sells for \$29.95 but can be purchased online for less than that. At the time of

this review the book was on sale at Amazon for \$19.77 with free shipping, well worth the price as an installation of a component in the wrong place or skipping an assembly step can cost you dearly, but this book will guide you the way and be very helpful.

You can go to the O'Reilly web site <<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/buildpc/index.html>> and you can actually get a sample of Chapter 1, as well as a table of contents and index which will give you a feel for the book and its contents. You can get more information on the authors or an update of component recommendations and other new material at <<http://www.hardwareguys.com/>>.

As a system builder we all continue to learn from each other and I definitely made some notes on some of the things that were mentioned in this book. The research done on the components and software was very helpful and would be an added plus to the research that has been done or will be done by the reader in the search for Building the Perfect PC.

Gilbert Rodriguez, owner of SeekMeFirst Computer Services provides custom built computers and other computer services to individuals and businesses. He is Comptia A+ and Microsoft Certified. He can be contacted at <grodrig@seekmefirst.com>.

Book Review

Switching to the Mac: The Missing Manual

by David Pogue

\$24.95 US

Published by O'Reilly

Reviewed by Shane Hicks, Alamo PC

I picked up a copy of "Switching to the Mac: This Missing Manual" at Barnes & Nobel to see what someone else has to say about switching from Microsoft Windows to OS X. The book weighs in at a light 434 pages, including appendices and indexes. It includes no software. However, David Pogue, the writer, includes a link to his website at <www.missingmanuals.com> which includes software mentioned in his books.

The book is broken into five sections, with 14 chapters and three appendixes.

Welcome to the Macintosh

The first section has four chapters. Chapter One covers PC-Mac differences, from hardware to software (i.e. a one-button mouse).

NOTE: In his discussion of power saving options, there's one thing the reader should remember. OS X is UNIX-based, performing several automated maintenance tasks. Since UNIX is intended to run constantly, these tasks occur in the early hours of the morning. Therefore, it's important to leave your Macintosh running (even in sleep mode) if you wish the tasks to be performed by the system.

Next, the author tackles the differences and similarities between the Finder and Windows Explorer, the Dock and Taskbar, and Menulets and the system Tray. He includes a noteworthy comparison of Mac and Windows special keys (i.e., the Command and CTRL keys). He ends on the topic of sizing and using windows. I especially like the example of the genie-effect when minimizing in OS X.

Chapter 2 is about file management using icons and various views in folders. Main differences: disclosure triangles (a.k.a. floppy triangles) for displaying submenus and controlling text width of columns with the handles (the two vertical bars) at the bottom of each column.

The author highlights a common problem in this chapter: losing long filenames when transferring files. Windows and OS X support file names of 255 characters. These names are often truncated when copied from Windows. The author claims these files can simply be renamed once copied into Finder. OS X will then remember the corrected name, even if the file is opened in a Mac program that doesn't support the long name.

Chapter 3 touches on how to use and manage multiple apps on the Dock.

Chapter 4 talks about installing, managing, and using programs and associ-



ated files. Windows uses file extensions, the three letters following the dot at the end of most programs, to associate a file with a particular application. Earlier versions of Mac OS used creator and type codes, embedded inside the file. Since UNIX uses file extensions, so does OS X. It also uses the legacy codes for backward compatibility.

Moving In

Chapter 5 talks about transferring files between your Mac and Windows machines. He's got a great tip for troubleshooting networking problems between Mac and Windows machines. He even shows how to transfer your favorites folder from Windows Internet Explorer into Mac's Internet Explorer.

Chapter 6 covers transferring e-mail and contact information. There are several methods for doing this—but Microsoft doesn't make it easy, as the author points out.



Chapter 7 is a discussion of particular applications and how they function between the Microsoft and Macintosh worlds.

Chapter 8 talks about different hardware connections, such as printers and digital cameras. It also talks about different hard drive formatting options. I discovered that both Windows and OS X read and write to FAT32 (with a size limit of 128GB). OS X can also read, but not write, NTFS partitions. Surprisingly, Pogue doesn't mention this.

His provides cursory coverage of iTunes for managing music files. I've found using iTunes on both the PC and Mac fairly easy. There are issues with proprietary formats (i.e., WMA for Windows and Apple Lossless for Mac), but both platforms handle MP3s. You can also create your own music CDs on either platform. Then transfer the songs by re-ripping them onto the other computer. Be careful with digitally protected music. iTunes only allows five devices to share a common license.

Making Connections

Three chapters are dedicated to getting online, using the Mac's e-mail and addressing programs, and using Web and Chat features. I tend toward MSN Messenger, which is the same on Mac or Windows. The author points out that Apple's version, iChat, isn't compatible with other networks, but looks cool in a Mac-to-Mac environment. Using Safari as a web browser has issues. Several web sites requiring IE don't display correctly on Safari. There are other browsers available. One called Firefox, not listed by Pogue, is gaining popularity.

Putting Down Roots

The final section covers setting up user accounts, system preferences, discusses some of the programs that are built-in to OS X, and closes with troubleshooting advice.

Appendixes

There are three appendixes. The first discusses setup problems and where to look for help. The second is a dictionary of

Windows terminology applied to OS X. The final is a list of keyboard shortcuts used in OS X.

Summary

Overall, this book is good. Pogue writes in a non-technical manner with a fair sense of humor. Just look at his screenshots to prove this. As a hardcore Microsoft user, I found some textual explanations lacking. I'd preferred true head-to-head comparisons, with screenshots from BOTH systems.

Updates

I registered my book with O'Reilly online, hopping to receive free updates and corrections to the book. I only found a coupon that would provide me with a 30% discount on the NEXT edition of the book. This doesn't seem like such a great deal since you can generally find this same sort of discount at multiple locations without providing any of your personal information to a publisher. I even looked for updates and errata on the author's homepage and found little of interest.

Book Review

Linux Server Hacks - 100 Industrial Strength Tips and Tools

By Rob Flickenger

\$24.95

Published by O'Reilly

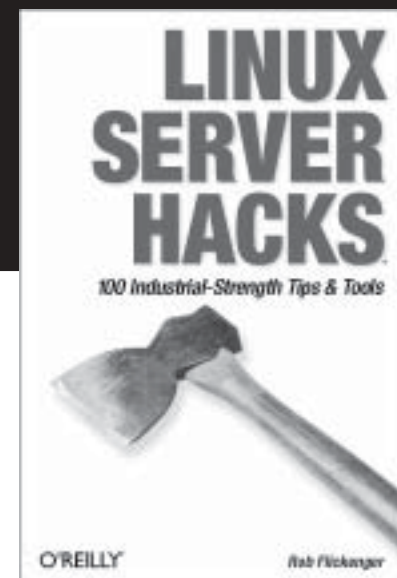
Reviewed by Steve Devine, Alamo PC

What's a Server?

A Note on Terminology: O'Reilly Press publishes many books with the word "Hacks" in the title, such as Google Hacks, Online Investing Hacks, and Flash Hacks to name just a few (to name a few that need reviewing, that is!) The word "hacks" is used to refer to a clever trick or other sly maneuver that is not so obvious to a rank beginner in the field, like a Hint from Heloise for the computer world. It emphatically does not refer to how to trespass on other peoples' networks, or how to commit hardware vandalism or computer sabotage, otherwise known as a "crack". That is a use of the word "hack" which is not covered in this series of articles. Perhaps an article on "Computer and Network Security" would make a go of that use of the term.

So there's all this stuff on the Internet, and more being added every day. Any one of us can fire up a browser, go to a search engine, and find material associated with just about any string of keywords we can think of. But – did you ever think to yourself: "How did this stuff get here? And how can I put my stuff out there? How can I join the party, and not just watch through my browser window?"

To get right to the point, the browsers on our computers at home draw up the webpages we see by copying information off a computer where the master copy of that webpage exists. That computer, which serves us the webpage info, is called a server. A server is an information storage and delivery computer sitting on a live internet wire 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except for maintenance and emergencies, ready to dish out the goods if and whenever anyone should ask. Servers aren't just passive stacks of



webpages, though, they do data processing and computations, usually involving logging the particulars of the information requests they receive.

"Why would I want to get a server?" you might ask. If you live as part of a large family, you might consider getting some space on a server somewhere ("Don't Panic". Trust me: more details later at the right time.), maybe name it

“grannyskids dot com, and take all your old family photos, important or otherwise interesting family historical documents, a family tree, a newsletter or small journal, and maybe even a restricted set of e-mail addresses that only get e-mail to and from each other (No spammers allowed, in other words). What you would have is a way for a far flung family to keep in touch with each other, even if they don’t all own their own computers! By surfing at libraries, a cyber-café, or even a public computer lab like the four online PCs we have down here at the APCO learning center at Crossroads Mall (hint, hint) you and your loved ones can check in every month or three and see what’s cookin’ at the home front.

OR (deep breath, here) your Scout troop, garden club, business or other professional association, church, hobby group, neighborhood association, small or medium sized business, or any other group of folks might want to get into the act, and even without fighting over the rights to “Mr. Big-shot dot com” you can get something out there and establish a presence on the web that helps folks keep each other apprised of the situation.

“How do I get a server?” That ‘more later’ I promised? Here it is. You go to a web hosting company, which operates one or more servers that host, or hold data up to the Internet so everybody can get at it. You rent space from that company, and register a domain name for it which names it pretty much whatever you want. Then you can take info from your home PC and up-load it to the server space you now own. You can store whatever you want to there: webpages, documents, daily journals, pictures, sounds, movies, and even software. A Safety Tip: don’t put any stuff out there that isn’t completely legal to give out for free. Your own photos, writings, and such are fine. Public Domain stuff is also fine, like a digital camera snapshot of the Mona Lisa or other. Don’t put up copies of anything someone else is trying to make money off of, such as current magazine articles, copyrighted drawings or photographs. This is because of legal issues such as patents, copyrights, licenses, and trade secrets. Material in the Public Domain is always ok to give out for free, however you want.

“So How Much does all this cost?” You can register a domain name for five or ten bucks a year. From merryoldlandofoz dot com (nobody’s taken that one yet), to ihatebroccoli

dot com. I am chicken to recommend specific companies to do this in an article for a nonprofit organization. But the miracle is you don’t need to, exactly, it just makes the process easier for your users. If you don’t register a domain name, your hosted space is a string of four numbers such as 123.234.34.7 for reasons that go deeper into the internet details than I want to for this article. Believe me, it has already overgrown what I had originally intended by far! After registering your domain name, or deciding to tough it out without one, you can rent a few megabytes to store your stuff on, which costs from five dollars a month on up. Hosting companies are cheap and plentiful, ‘cause they’re holding all the webpages and other things people are browsing on every day. Large information companies like CNN, Yahoo, and Microsoft run their own banks of servers, called “server farms”, but don’t try to rent directly from them, “they ain’t sellin’”.

“Ok, I have my server space. What Now!?” Well, webpages are written in a simple layout language called HTML, and we have free and frequent courses on it down here at the Alamo PC Learning Center at Crossroads Mall on Fredericksburg, so that’ll take care of the webpages themselves. Also, lots of people know this HTML, so its actually more work deciding what you want to have on the site and how you want it to look than it is getting it ready for the machines. That takes care of the raw material of the webpages, but how about the pictures? Well, Digital Photography classes are free and frequent down here at the ... yep, you guessed it!

“How do I get files from my PC over to the server so the rest of the folks on the Internet can get at ‘em?”

“How do I make the server do what I want?”

“What if I change my mind?”

Wow! You sure are impatient. Maybe I should teach a class myself! Until then, there is a book about how to set up and handle the basics of an internet information server, and how to work with it.

But first a few words about the philosophy of software engineering and marketing!

I love Microsoft. It’s that simple. I have worked as a bottom-of-the-totem-pole computer tech everywhere from the basement of the Supercomputer Computational Research Institute at FSU, to the backroom mom and pop computer shops in some pretty amazing neighborhoods in “Greater” Los Angeles. In my

opinion, Mr. Gates and company have done a world beating job of putting together the Microsoft Windows package of software, which will install and run on practically any kind of computer hardware you can fling together. I know by direct experience – I have paid my rent doing this stuff. The reliability of MS Windows has grown steadily better over the years and it is a fine suite of programs that make computers do what we want them to do.

BUT. There are many aspects of automating, customizing, and securing Windows machines that have been slow and difficult to adapt to one particular kind of individual: The Tinkerer. If you’re the kind of person that fixes even anything on your own car, mows your own lawn, and swears at or just glares at the Internet sometimes, then having more convenient personal control over the details of your machine just might fit more comfortably to your mental style. For one, I like Legos and Erector sets more than I like jigsaw puzzles. It’s not that I hate jigsaw puzzles; I like ‘em just fine, just like I like Microsoft software, but I just naturally gravitate towards the systems that give me more of a sense that it is an “open ended toolbox”. Like Linux, for instance.

Now that I have honored the fine products and services over at Microsoft, I guess its time to “throw a bone” to the Linux companies. The software is so reliable that machines running very early versions of it have run for years without needing a reboot or a fresh re-installation. It is lively, flexible, and customizable to your heart’s content, and it’s easy, safe, and convenient to do so. It has a reputation of being a little intimidating to people who are not computer or software experts, but that hasn’t been true for years. Whereas only a dyed-in-the-wool Tinker would even want to mess with this stuff, most versions of Linux will install as easy as you please onto a very wide variety of hardware, even if you’ve never peeked inside your computer just to see what’s there. I know: I’ve done it myself just to see how easy it is. The vast majority of it is usable in much the same way, using the much the same skills as the software you already use, whether it’s MS Windows, or the Macintosh. There isn’t very much difference in the way the user addresses and activates the software. It’s all starting to look pretty much the same. The software itself is cheap, cheap, cheap! You can download and burn a cd install disk for free from non-profit foundations or companies that give away the software for free and make money from help desk support, business consulting, and add-on



software services. You can also buy an install disk for under \$100 loaded with programs that will seem very familiar to you in the way that they operate, plus all sorts of goodies. If you fancy yourself a red hot tinker, you can even find totally new programs reflecting some of the latest, most interesting, and most powerful developments in computer science, and download, install, and run that stuff yourself, and take your computer education and your home or business software to whatever extent in whatever direction you decide on.

To cool off and come back to earth now, we should realize that places like e-Bay, Google, NASA, and Amazon all use Linux based servers both to run the day to day business of managing their websites.

"How might one do the same for one's own website?" There is a book called "Linux Server Hacks" by Rob Flickenger, and published by O'Reilly Press (the tinkers' friend!). It is written in classic "cookbook" style – not a lot of theory, but it has a collection of 100 practical tips, tricks, and advice to help you get started. It's not an introduction to Linux, nor is it a book on how to run a server, but after a book on each of those subjects, this one is the one to read next

What is Linux?

Linux is composed of computer operating system software, and packaged with a suite of utilities, or "helper programs", like a browser, word processor, and a variety of other programs to display graphics, and play audio, and videos.

So what's an operating system?

An "O.S." is a set of instructions that get loaded from the hard disk into your computer's RAM memory when the machine boots up. The OS manages the programs that make things happen on computer hardware. These things include reading, copying, and deleting files; and accessing the different devices such as the disk drives, the keyboard, mouse, modem, and monitor. You see, all of the application programs (word processors, games, drawing programs, spreadsheets) make requests to use the computer hardware. These requests go to the operating system where they are evaluated, and either fulfilled or denied depending on what else is going on in your computer at the time.

In practice, most "operating systems" contain vast amounts of software other

than the actual OS -- like a word processor, for instance. Most OS's include one, but technically it is a separate program. Microsoft Windows contains a huge set of tools and games that enable a first time user to get started immediately after the system installs, and so do other operating systems out there on the market such as the Mac OS X, and, yes, Linux.

Why should I change from Windows to Linux?

You shouldn't. That's not even remotely what this article is about. Linux is based on a different philosophy of software design than Microsoft Windows: it's easy, and it's a whole lot of fun. If you'd like to broaden your horizons, and explore the world of software that you can copy freely and give out to your friends, then Linux is a great way to do so, but "getting people to change to Linux" is not what's going on around here. Regardless of the avalanche of advertisements we get swamped with these days, there is never a big burning need to change your computer's software if it is already doing what you want it to do -- it's that simple.

Well if I don't have to switch, and I can have the best of both worlds whenever I feel like going for it, what is so good about this Linux that I should want to expend the effort?

There are economic reasons to try it: it's free. And upgrades are free. This paragraph is short, but I threw it in first because of its importance. Linux is free. Thousands of applications for it are also free. If you have the time, you can download an entire distribution from the Internet, or you can buy a CD for less than \$5 from sites such as Linux System Labs. Currently, the Debian distribution of Linux has over 4000 packaged applications, utilities, and games, and Red Hat, a subsidiary of IBM itself, markets a commercial Linux distribution, packages 542.

There are also security reasons: 90% of viruses and spyware are written for Microsoft Windows computers. Of those that are written for Linux systems, few are successful because it is so easy and effective to set up the security. I watched so many people scramble during the last virus outbreak -- wringing their hands and wondering if they would make it through unscathed or not. Most folks got zapped. I forwarded myself one of those viruses just to see what would happen. No problem. Linux isn't immune to all viruses though, merely well over 90% in today's environment! A properly set up and configured Linux system is very hard to break into, not impossible, just harder than most. The

worst thing a Linux virus can do is delete the files/programs owned by a single user. It won't affect any other users on that system (unless they were using the same program installed by the other user), and DEFINITELY doesn't affect the system itself. The default, built-in security measures in Linux are the biggest reason vandals will have their damage potential limited under Linux. When you are logged on as a regular user in Linux you don't have the ability to write to the MasterBootRecord (how deep damage is done to your machine) or fire up a new mail/IRC server (how viruses use your machine to spread to others). Of course, you always have the option to log in as a system administrator to do system upkeep, but that is never done for routine tasks. Entire communities of people who really know their stuff review each line of software that goes into Linux and its applications. If a problem is found, and problems happen, patches to the code come out with amazing speed, often in less than 24 hours. Some argue that having the source code opened to the public contributes to security problems, because people can examine the code to find holes and problems, and it's true, problems are easier to find. But here we get into big questions about society and human nature: which would you prefer, hundreds of unknown problems, or a few known, and quickly fixed problems? Also, the programmers who are savvy enough to find and exploit the problems are highly skilled professionals and usually ethical enough to fix and report them, not use them against innocent users.

There are reliability reasons: I have heard and read about Linux systems running for months and even years without a reboot. Not many other systems can make that claim, in fact I haven't even heard of them. You can add the vast majority of new software without a reboot. In other systems, it seems that you can't upgrade, add new software, add new hardware, or even sneeze without rebooting or sometimes re-installing the whole operating system from scratch!

There are reasons related to freedom: at a recent APCO meeting, one man was told that if he added enough new hardware to his computer so that the Operating System thought it was "too much", the OS then made a decision on its own that it had been pirated and it shut down and his whole computer refused to operate until he went through some kind of re-registration

process over the phone to a help desk. In other words, he needed permission from his software to make extensive modifications to his own computer's hardware. The philosophy of Linux is that since it's free (as in speech) and also costs nothing to download (CDs cost a bit - in the five dollar range.), the rights of the user (you) come first. You will never run into licensing problems using Linux. If you buy or download one copy of a version of Linux, you can use that software on as many machines as you want. You can share it with your friends as if you wrote it yourself. You'll never have to buy a license package. There's no such thing as a pirated copy of Linux. The whole point of writing it was to get beyond restrictions and turn people loose on it.

There are speed reasons: Linux is very lightweight - easy on the RAM. Even with many applications open and running simultaneously, you will not notice much disk swapping or slowdown.

What can I do with Linux that is so great that I should take the time to try it?

- It's free.
- It crashes far less often than most commercial software you've ever seen.
- The applications are often faster.
- Access to many useful and free applications.
- It works just great on old hardware, and doesn't require ever larger systems to support it.
- And best of all (for me): You don't have to get rid of Windows if you don't want to!

Why should I not use Linux?

Many games are written for the MS Windows mass market, and won't work on Linux systems, but that's about it. There are Linux applications such as graphics editors (paint programs) and word processors that are capable of dealing with documents in Paint and Word formats, so you can try out Linux applications and Windows applications on the same files and compare performance and ease-of-use for yourself.

So, if no large corporation paid somebody to develop Linux, then how did it get made?

Linux is an operating system that was initially created as a hobby by a young

student, Linus Torvalds, at the University of Helsinki in Finland. Linus had an interest in Minix, a small UNIX system, and decided to develop a system that exceeded the Minix standards. He began his work in 1991 when he released version 0.02 and worked steadily until 1994 when version 1.0 of the Linux Kernel was released. The kernel, at the heart of all Linux systems, is developed and released under the GNU General Public License and its source code is freely available to everyone. It is this kernel that forms the base around which a Linux operating system is developed. There are now literally hundreds of companies and organizations and an equal number of individuals that have released their own versions of operating systems based on the Linux kernel.

Apart from the fact that it's freely distributed, Linux's functionality, adaptability and robustness, has made it the main alternative for proprietary Unix and Microsoft operating systems. IBM, Hewlett-Packard and other giants of the computing world have embraced Linux and support its ongoing development. More than a decade after its initial release, Linux is being adopted worldwide as a server platform primarily. Its use as a home and office desktop operating system is also on the rise. The operating system can also be incorporated directly into microchips in a process called "embedding" and is increasingly being used this way in appliances and devices.

Throughout most of the 90's, tech pundits were caught unaware by Linux's rapid development and acceptance, and dismissed it as a computer hobbyist project, unsuitable for the general public's computing needs. They were unable to grasp the potential of Linux, and got caught by surprise.

Through the efforts of developers of desktop management systems such as KDE and GNOME, office suite project OpenOffice.org and the Mozilla web browser project, to name only a few, there are now a wide range of applications that run on Linux and it can be used by anyone regardless of his/her knowledge of computers. Those curious to see the capabilities of Linux can download a live CD version called Knoppix, for Knopper Linux, developed by a German Electrical Engineer named Klaus Knopper. It has everything you might need to carry out your daily tasks and it needs no special skills to install. It will run from a CD in a computer capable of booting from the CD drive, after typing "install" at the prompt.

If you're interested in learning about Linux, need help with some aspect of its

use or are enthusiastic about it and want to help foster its adoption, you may want to get in touch with a Linux User Group in your area. There are groups in practically every country, region and city in the world, so there is likely to be one near you. In San Antonio just look up <<http://satlug.org>> -- the San Antonio, Texas Linux User Group..

Linux *Server Hacks - 100 Industrial Strength Tips and Tools* is a compilation of tips, tools, and tricks to help you manage a network server computer that runs the Linux operating system. Many high traffic Internet websites run on Linux systems where security and reliability are an absolute requirement. Examples include Google, Amazon, and NASA.

Whereas I wish to deftly sidestep the overhyped "Linux versus Microsoft" controversy, I do wish to emphasize that both of these fine computer systems and their related products, like Apache and IIS, are here to stay, ill advised lawsuits and assorted radical assertions notwithstanding.

This book is laid out cookbook style - it is a listing of 100 server management tricks well grouped into sensible categories. A deeper description of its contents and style would be better approached by saying what it is not:

It is not an introduction to the Linux operating system.

It is not an introduction to server management / administration.

But after a book or two on each of these two above subjects, and after renting some server space to practice on, this book will definitely ease the transition to your becoming an intermediate server admin from a mere beginner.

These 100 tricks, or "hacks" as they are sometimes casually referred to, are arranged in eight sections:

1. Server Basics -- Carefully guides you through the basics of how to be a Good Shepherd over not just the server itself, but the community of people who contribute material to whatever websites that lives there.

2. Revision Control -- How to carefully upgrade your server to a higher version to take advantage of the expanded capabilities of newer, higher versions, and how to drop back down to the earlier versions if the new stuff proves to be buggy, insecure, inconvenient or otherwise troublesome. Aside from server soft-



ware itself, though, this section also teaches how to manage and synchronize versions of documents that get worked on, rewritten, and updated by many people, not just one.

3. **Backups** -- How to back up the files that your users create, edit, or download. Also covers ISO files as well as CD / CD RW disk burning as it applies to making system backups.

4. **Networking** -- Covers networking basics, simple firewalling, other defenses, the use of IP tables, and tunneling.

5. **Monitoring** -- How to see what is going on in your server. Scanning and monitoring network and disk accesses, and usage of other system resources.

6. **SSH** -- This entire section is devoted to teaching how to establish secure, difficult-to-tap connections to your server from remote locations in order to log in and control it.

7. **Scripting** -- Sadly this tiny chapter only includes four measly tricks for working with your server. I grudgingly admit that server scripting can be (ok, it is) the subject of many other entire volumes of computer lore.

8. **Information Servers** -- This meaty section is about as big as Section 1: Server Basics. It deals with setting up



MySQL, the free database program that powers huge numbers of e-commerce and nonprofit websites, and Apache, the server software that arguably forms the backbone of the Internet. More servers run Apache than all other known web servers combined ("Your Mileage May Vary"). This book was published in January 2003 and it's a first edition. If this info went obsolete while you were reading this review, I'm gonna try and plea bargain!). Apache and MySQL can power a website of good size.

Upshot: If you think you are ready to tackle running a server for a small business, an interest group of some kind or other, or maybe just trying to keep a far-flung family connected and up to date, then this book will see you through the tough times at the beginning. We've all been there in some context or other. BUT: if you haven't tried Google yet 'cause you're still getting used to Yahoo, or if you just want to use e-mail and surf the web and that's all, then you'll want to pass on this book -- it would be Way Too Much!

Disclaimer: Microsoft, a company many of you are familiar with, has many products that duplicate the functions of the software described in this book. All fine and good. This review is not to be interpreted as an attack against Microsoft or a slur against their many, many fine software products. That said: Linux, Apache, and MySQL also have a proven track record of excellence, reliability, security, ease of use, and they are free, free, free! They encourage and promote the kind of "tinkering around" with your system that some of us seem to be born needing to do, and they make it cheap, easy, and safe to try out new things and new ways of doing the old things.

Software Review

TurboTax, TaxCut, or None?

Reviewed by Joseph V. Barth, Alamo PC

Normally this is the time of the year I go out and buy TurboTax and get ready to review the product for this magazine but not this year.

For several years Intuit provided review copies for us to evaluate and inform the readers of how the program performed. Then, when they quit furnishing us the copies, I decided to buy a copy and report on it since I liked the way it functioned.

TaxCut does much the same as TurboTax -- that is, it leads you through an interview process, imports data from select accounting programs if you have them, calculates the tax you owe or the refund you have coming, offers electronic filing, and prints the selected forms. The programs work well.

OK -- if they work well, why the suggestion of "none", you ask?

Well, let's review a couple of recent offers for the programs from a major computer retail store. TurboTax is "only" \$29.99 after mail-in rebate plus they throw in a great FREE software bundle of TurboTax state edition, Quicken Basic, Internet Security Suite, a Personal Firewall, and EZ Armor. TaxCut is "only" \$19.99 after mail-in rebate plus a software bundle FREE that substitutes Microsoft Money in place of Quicken, plus the other programs.

Of course, the kicker is that you must spend \$269.94 plus tax for the TurboTax package and \$279.94 plus tax for the TaxCut package. Why? Well, they all call for mail-in rebates and, in

some cases, you must have the older edition of the program so you're upgrading your software. Otherwise, no rebate, no refund.

My personal opinion is that this is a rip-off of people that are inexperienced in buying software and hooks you into having to mail in countless forms (at 37 cents a shot) plus loading up your computer with programs you don't really need.

What are the alternatives?

Go to your favorite search engine and look for free income tax filing. There are hundreds of sites that will allow those that qualify to file electronically free -- yup, absolutely positively free. Elderly and low-income people qualify.

Go to the library near your home and people volunteer to help you file the returns free.

AARP offers free filings for those over 55.

If your return is not complicated, file the 1040A yourself – it isn't difficult to follow the instructions. This is for those that don't itemize deductions and have nothing unusual to work on.

If you itemize deductions, take your time since the newest tax laws allow us to deduct our sales tax like other

state residents are allowed to deduct their state income tax. Those tables aren't ready yet so do be in a big hurry to file.

When you Google for a free filing you'll find that the IRS <www.irs.gov> has a site that will help you file free. It works!

Electronic filing is the way to go and I'll be doing that sometime in 2005, but this year I don't think I will spend \$29.95 or \$19.95 or whatever it will sell for at Costco/Wal-Mart/Sams/HEB/Walgreen/etc. By the way, it is running about \$18.00 on eBay but watch the shipping costs.

I believe I'll work on the taxes on the Internet, using a secure site, and save the money this year. If I do decide to buy the program, you can bet I'm not going to go for the "bundle" – I can't afford to save that much money!

Joe is currently a member of the Board of Directors and has helped many people prepare their taxes as a volunteer. He is retired and keeps busy working as a volunteer with the Red Cross and doing what he is told to do by his beloved wife, Marion. They travel a bit and spoil the grand daughters a lot.

Software Review

PhotoMix

\$29.99

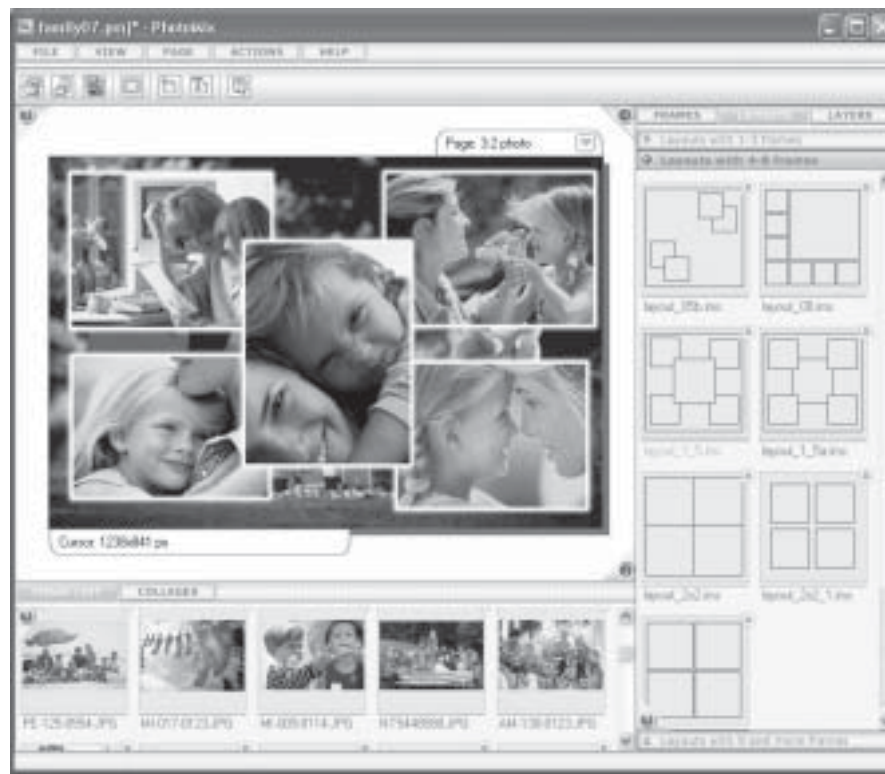
Published by fCoder Group, Inc.

Reviewed by Richard Villafana, Alamo PC

I love simplicity. You know, not having to read detailed instructions, take special courses, or work twice as hard as you need to in order to achieve the same result. Having said that, it makes perfect sense to me that PhotoMix by fCoder Group, Inc. impressed me like no other program has in quite a long time.

I love to work with graphic files, video files, and computer games. What I don't care for is spending most of my time reading telephone book size instruction manuals before I can work with the graphic files. I know that there are several excellent programs out there for photo and graphic editing, such as Paint Shop Pro, CorelDraw, and of course Photoshop, but quite frankly they are not very intuitive and it takes a fair amount of time and effort to achieve really nice results.

PhotoMax takes a very small part of photo editing, namely creation of photo montages, and simplifies it to a point that any novice can easily use and still achieve results almost every bit as good as Photoshop with a fraction of the effort. This program is especially useful for those people, mainly women, who are into the art of scrapbooking. In fact the program touts itself as such, and is one of the most user friendly programs I've had the pleasure of using.



System requirements for PhotoMix are as follows: Windows 95 and above, PIII or better processor, minimum of 128MB RAM, 16 bit or better color display adapter (accelerator not needed), 30 MB of hard drive real estate, and a mouse. Not a huge resource hog as you can see. The disc installed easily on my machine and registration was easily accomplished

online. The program boots up with a built in tutorial so that you can get your feet wet immediately.

Basically all you have to do is select as many graphic files as you want (JPEG's seem to be the favorite, but works with others as well), select one of the included templates, and then drag and



drop the photos from your thumbnail viewer to the actual montage "canvas". The rest is nothing more than manipulating the photos on the active window with zoom, scroll, text, and drag the photo to another part of the workspace. All the controls are easily used by clicking on the active photo and using the icons that pop up. You can also add special effects such as motion blur, rippling, soft focus, borders, backgrounds, sepia toning, and etc.

As I referred to before, if you get a little confused, you can click on the help menu at any time and the tutorial will instantly pop back up on your workspace to lead you through the task. The results are excellent and easily printed out on any laser or inkjet printer.

There are even a few included photo files for you to experiment on until you feel very comfortable with the controls, which truly shouldn't take too long. Support is excellent although there is no manual, the web site is excellent and includes even more tutorials at <www.photomix.com>, along with freebie downloads such as extra borders, fonts, special effects, clip art, backgrounds, and themes such as Halloween and Back to School. Upgrades to the latest version are also free.

The program may be purchased online for \$29.99 payable by credit card through a secure transaction. I don't think the program can be purchased at any retail store such as Comp USA or Best Buy as I did a thorough search and did not find it listed. It is an excellent program to get started with, and as I said before especially useful for scrapbooking. I cannot recommend this program highly enough and feel very fortunate to have had the pleasure of testing and reviewing it. Two very enthusiastic thumbs up for all. Until next time, take care and keep on clicking.

Richard Villafana is a local practicing M.D. who dabbles in the computer arts and games.





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Information Technology in San Antonio

The Internet Gets Local

By Mike Hogan, CEO ZiXXo

Mike brings to ZiXXo over 18 years of experience in various roles with technology companies ranging from start-ups to a fortune 500 company. He has experience not only starting companies but also growing companies and bringing them public. Prior to co-founding ZiXXo, Mike was the Vice President of Field Operations for US/Asia-Pacific for Poet Software (German Market: POXA), a company he joined at an early stage and took public in 1999.

The 'www' in web addresses refers to the World Wide Web, however the hottest market on the Internet today isn't worldwide, it's all about being local. The initial appeal of the Internet was how it enabled anyone with a webserver to establish an instant worldwide presence. Yahoo, Google, Hotmail and a number of other companies took advantage of this, creating worldwide audiences. Now some of the largest Internet companies, and some hot start-ups, are taking a decidedly local focus.

Think Globally, Act Locally

Usually that phrase is applied to environmental issues, yet it also applies to the Internet. If you are looking for information, a worldwide Internet is great. For example, if you need to find the lyrics to that new song that is stuck in your head, a worldwide Internet is great. But if you want to take action, like finding a job, selling your car, finding someone to rideshare with, or even finding that someone special...you want to act locally. In fact, while the vast majority of Internet searches are purely informational, a study by The Kelsey Group and BizRate found that 45% of all local searches are performed by people looking to buy something.

The market for local Internet advertising is currently valued at \$1 Billion and it is expected to grow to \$5 Billion by 2008. At the same time, newspapers earned \$15.8 Billion last year selling local classified ads; and yellow pages vendors earned \$14.9 Billion selling local directory ads. Yet classified ads

and directories are far more efficient online. This has combined to create a new Internet gold rush to address the burgeoning local markets.

Search Engines Look for Local Gold

Search engine companies such as Google, Yahoo and AskJeeves have begun building geographical awareness into local versions of their search engines. If you're looking for a local business like a bicycle shop in Davis, CA, these local search engines can help. But if you're looking to sell a used bike, or you want to find someone to bicycle with in Davis, you're out of luck.

The search engine companies have taken an outside-in approach. They reside outside of the local communities looking inward to find local information. The search engines hope to sell ads to local vendors that are displayed alongside the search results, just as they have done on a national basis—a process known as search engine marketing.

In their quest to extend their Internet dominance locally, search engine companies face two very significant challenges. First, the small to medium sized businesses that comprise the bulk of these local companies generally have no online presence. Since search engine marketing is built upon redirecting Internet users to the advertiser's website, it simply doesn't work without a web presence; there's no website for the user to click to.

Secondly, these small to medium sized businesses typically don't have the in-house expertise necessary to master the technical and marketing issues behind

search engine marketing. As a result, the search engine companies need to establish local representation to sell the concept of paid search and then to help the companies implement these solutions.

Local Communities Complement Search Engine Marketing

While the search engines take an outside-in approach of finding local information, local community websites, like Craigslist, complement this with an inside-out model. These web communities provide local residents with the tools to interact with one another. In the process, these residents create a tremendous amount of valuable information. This is the type of information that the users of localized search engines want. Search engines and local community websites are very complementary, like peanut butter and chocolate, in addressing local markets.

Craigslist, a popular early implementation of the local community, is now straining under the weight of its popularity. While the largest Internet companies were busy establishing their global dominance, Craigslist evolved into a quirky local free classified ad website in the San Francisco area. It has since grown into a collection of free classified ad websites covering 58 U.S. cities. This local Internet solution, which began as a hobby, has now become a big business. If you need proof of this, consider that eBay recently bought 25% of Craigslist.

Craigslist relies upon a simple posting model. You select a category and post your free classified ad. While this is very simple, it doesn't provide the context necessary to search effectively. For ex-

ample, searching the cars & trucks section of Craigslist for "1988 Acura Integra" yielded results that included a Mercedes Benz, some used Honda parts and all kinds of things that didn't fit my search criteria.

Without an efficient search mechanism, users are forced to read all of the newest ads to find what they want. This can be very time-consuming. It is also problematic from the advertiser's perspective. There are so many new ads posted each day, that in order to keep your ad fresh and keep it in front of readers, you need to post the same ad every day or two until you sell the item. Craigslist is a simple local community website, but it can be very time-consuming to use.

A new company called ZiXXo has recently launched a similar service in over 100 U.S. cities. The San Antonio site is <<http://sanantonio.zixxo.com/>>. ZiXXo provides free classified ads that use best-of-breed forms for most of its categories. These forms guide the user in creating their ad, ensuring that it includes all of the relevant information. The buyer can then search by field. To search for a 1988 Acura Integra, simply open the search form for used cars and enter "1988" in the year field, "Acura" in the make field

and "Integra" in the model field. This search finds only exact matches.

Unlike other supposedly free classified ad sites, ZiXXo doesn't charge users to make their headlines bold, to ad pictures, or anything like that. There are simply no charges at all. In fact, the company raffles off digital cameras or Apple iPods every week to users of the site. ZiXXo makes money by selling printable coupons to local vendors. Users of the site can find, print and redeem these coupons locally. ZiXXo relies upon local individuals to sell these coupons, paying them a commission for each sale.

The Local Internet Market is Still Young

While the Internet upstarts attempt to redefine local advertising, the demise of the current leaders in local advertising—newspapers and publishers of yellow pages—has been greatly exaggerated. With about \$33 Billion in revenue between them, they are developing, buying and partnering to defend their local turf as it moves online. For example, newspapers are offering online classified ads to complement their print editions. Some are also offering local auctions to fend off eBay's encroachment. The yellow pages are also active moving their direc-

tories online, so that they too can offer businesses a package that includes both online and offline advertising. In fact, BellSouth, owner of yellow pages publisher RealPages, partnered with Google to combine search engine marketing with online and offline yellow pages advertising.

It will be very interesting to see how the local Internet evolves over the coming years. It's hard to tell now which companies will come out as the big winners, but if the analysts projections hold true and local Internet advertising grows from \$1 Billion this year to \$5 billion in 2008, there will no doubt be some big winners.

Craigslist:

<www.craigslist.org>

ZiXXo:

<www.zixxo.com>

Yahoo Local:

<<http://local.yahoo.com>>

Google Local Beta:

<<http://local.google.com/>>

AskJeeves Local Search:

<<http://local.ask.com/local>>

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KLRN TV, the public television station serving San Antonio and South Central Texas, is seeking an ambitious, creative, self-starting individual for the position of Public Relations Representative. Position provides support for the Director of Public Relations. Responsibilities include serving as editor of KLRN's monthly magazine; graphic and web design; maintaining all program related publicity records, including media database and project files; and assisting with placement of advertising. Candidate should possess bachelor's degree in communications, PR, journalism, or equivalent work experience. Ideal candidate will have experience in desktop publishing and magazine-style layout. Experience in GoLive preferred. Strong writing skills and exceptional attentiveness to deadlines and detail required. PC skills working with word processing essential. Occasional weekend and evening work required. The position includes a competitive benefits package. No phone calls please. To apply, send resume with cover letter and salary history to:

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Public Relations Representative

KLRN TV 9

P.O. Box 9

San Antonio, TX 78291

EOE/Minorities/women encouraged to apply



Alamo Area Community Information System

Creating opportunities for our community to connect to the **new technologies**, rich **information** resources and the educational, economic and social **opportunities** that follow.

Wanted: Contract Computer Trainers

AACIS is looking for experienced TRAINERS to teach introductory computer courses on a contract basis (up to \$20/hour, depending upon experience). Topics include:
Intro to the PC, Internet (and E-mail), Word, Excel.
Bi-lingual a plus. Please send a letter of interest and resume to:

fvalle@sanantonio.gov
or call 210.207.6007





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Alamo PC Computer Fun

Word Search

Even experienced computer users are sometimes confronted by unfamiliar acronyms. There are 73 of them in this word search puzzle: can you find them all? We've found the first one for you -- ANSI -- just to get you started. This Word Search was created using the Word Search Construction Kit. You can download it for a free 30-day trial at <www.wordsearchkit.com/download.htm> or purchase it online for \$24.95.

- American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- Application Program Interface (API)
- American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII)
- Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM)
- Basic Input Output System (BIOS)
- Computer Aided Design (CAD)
- Compact Disc (CD)
- Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor (CMOS)
- Central Processing Unit (CPU)
- Cathode Ray Tube (CRT)
- Cyan-Yellow-Magenta-Black (CYMK)
- Digital Audio Tape (DAT)
- Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS)
- Domain Name System (DNS)
- Digital Subscriber Line (DSL)
- Digital Versatile Disc (DVD)
- End User License Agreement (EULA)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- File Transfer Protocol (FTP)
- File Allocation Table (FAT)
- Graphical Interchange Format (GIF)
- Garbage In, Garbage Out (GIGO)
- Geographical Information System (GIS)
- Global Positioning System (GPS)
- Graphical User Interface (GUI)
- High Definition Television (HDTV)
- Head Mounted Display (HMD)
- Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)
- Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP)
- Interrupt Request (IRQ)
- Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN)
- Internet Service Provider (ISP)
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG)
- Local Area Network (LAN)
- Liquid Crystal Display (LCD)
- Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI)
- Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions (MIME)
- Million Instructions Per Second (MIPS)
- Motion Picture Experts Group (MPEG)
- Network Information Center (NIC)
- Nickel Cadmium (NICAD)
- Nickel-Metal Hydride (NIMH)
- Object Linking and Embedding (OLE)
- Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)
- Portable Document Format (PDF)
- Pretty Good Privacy (PGP)
- Picture Element (PIXEL)
- Point-to-Point Protocol (PPP)
- Random Access Memory (RAM)
- Redundant Array of Independent Discs (RAID)
- Red Green Blue (RGB)
- Read Only Memory (ROM)
- Rich Text Format (RTF)
- Small Computer Systems Interface (SCSI)

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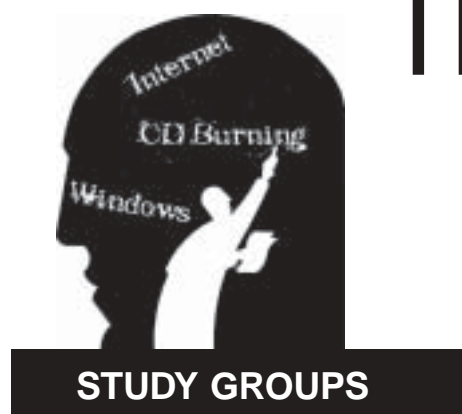
- Single In-line Memory Module (SIMM)
- Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP)
- Structured Query Language (SQL)
- Secure Socket Layer (SSL)
- Telephony Application Program Interface (TAPI)
- Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP)
- Tagged Image File Format (TIFF)
- Three Letter Acronym (TLA)
- Universal Asynchronous Receiver/Transmitter (UART)
- Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)
- Uniform Resource Locator (URL)
- Universal Serial Bus (USB)
- Virtual Private Network (VPN)
- Video Random Access Memory (VRAM)
- Wireless Application Protocol (WAP)
- World Wide Web (WWW)
- What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG)



Alamo PC Monthly Planner

January 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<div>Dec 2004 S M T W T F S 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31</div>		<div>Feb 2005 S M T W T F S 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28</div>			1 CC++ Computer Lit MCSE Adv
2	3 Genealogy	4 BoD Meets	5	6 .NET HGSI Photoshop Practice (Adv)	7 Dr. is in HTML Photoshop Class SBS 2003	8 Commodore Computer Lit MCSE Adv Photo Editing WindowsXP
9	10 General Meeting Crossroads Software Checkout	11	12 Homepage Power Internet	13 Photoshop Practice (Adv)	14 Dr. is in HTML Photoshop Class	15 CC++ Computer Lit MCSE Adv
16	17 PowerPoint Quicken	18	19	20 Photoshop Practice (Adv)	21 Dr. is in HTML Photoshop Class	22 MCSE Adv WindowsXP
23	24 CorelDRAW 1 PowerPoint	25	26 WordPerfect	27 Access Adv Photoshop Practice (Adv)	28 Dr. is in HTML Photoshop Class	29 MCSE Adv
30	31 PowerPoint					



The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

Advanced Access Study Group

This study group is designed for people with experience with Microsoft Access who wish to learn and share ideas on advanced forms, VBA code, reports, queries, etc. Attendees should already be familiar with database design basics and the basics of building forms, reports and queries in Access. Topics include using graphs, database security, SQL Server connectivity, customer functions or other topics of interest.

Contact: Joseph Kubon
<joseph.kubon@padgett-cpa.com>
210-828-6281 x 1554

When: Fourth Thursday, 7-9pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★★

C/C++ Study Group

Please note we are currently a study group and no longer a Class. C/C++ Study Group Our group consists of 3 to 6 regular members who meet twice a month to discuss their plans and progress on development of software for experimental use. We do not plan to offer C or C++ courses in this study group. To join the study group, get acquainted with some of its members and consider preparing a brief presentation of your planned or current efforts.

Contact:
Bruce McAlexander
<mcalexb@satx.rr.com> 210-680-0231

Murry Adams
<mnadams@texas.net> 210-696-0047

Carl Deneke
<cdeneke@Texas.net> 210-496-6397

When: First and Third Saturday, 2:30 pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★★ - ★★★

Commodore Users of SA

Contact: Diana Jones
830-303-1220

When: Second Saturday, 1-4 pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★ - ★★★★★

Genealogy Study Group

For everyone interested in using their computer for genealogy. We will discuss currently available genealogy software, their pros and cons and meeting participants views as to best software to use for both beginners and advanced genealogists.

Contact: Jim Collier
<jcinquiry@earthlink.net>
210-710-5660

When: First Monday, 7-9 pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★ - ★★

HGSI Study Group

The premise of the HGS Investor SIG is, "Knowledge is stronger when passed on to others." We have created an environment for continuing education and open discussion between well informed members and guest speakers in matters of using Fundamental and Technical Analysis for the buying and selling of equities. Meetings are held on the First Thursday of the month in the UBS Conference Room, 200 Concord Plaza Drive, Suite 300 at 6:30PM to 8:30PM. If you wish to be added to our mailing list or for more information, contact below.

Contact: Maynard Burstein
<maynardb@juno.com> 735-3288

When: 1st Thursday, 6:30-8:30pm

Where: UBS/Paine Webber, 200 Concord Plaza Dr. Suite 300

Pre-registration: Call Maynard
Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

.NET Study Group

A study group for those interested in developing Windows and Web applications using Microsoft's .NET technology. We will focus on VB.NET and C# to build Web applications that interact with a SQL Server database (ASP.NET & ADO.NET). Tools used will include the .NET Framework SDK and WebMatrix. Additional discussions and use of Visual Studio.NET will be included.

Contact: Joe Brazell 688-9508

When: 1st Thursday, 7-9pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★★★

MCSE Advanced Study Group

The MCSE Advanced SIG, affectionately known as 'The Geeks', has just completed its study for the Exchange Server 2003 design exam to qualify for the MCSE : Messaging on Windows 2003. In January we will begin learning about either ISA Server 2004 or studying for the Windows XP exam. The MCSE Advanced SIG is designed for those who already have their MCSE certification. Space is limited. Therefore membership is restricted. The SIG meets every Saturday morning from 8:30 until noon. Please contact Larry Lentz before attempting to attend.

Larry Lentz, MCSE on NT, W2K, MCDBA, MCSA: Messaging
<Larry@LentzComputer.Net>

When: Every Saturday, 8:30-noon

Where: Contact Larry

Pre-registration: Yes - contact Larry
Technical Rating ★★★★★

Small Business Server Study Group

The Alamo PC Small Business Server Special Interest Group held its December meeting on Friday, December 3rd at the Alamo PC Learning Center. After the Taco Social, we had a great presentation by Ken Strain, The Montopolis Group, on Remote Web Workplace. Next Larry Lentz, Lentz Computer Services, explored the SBS User Group Resource DVD provided by Mike Iem at Microsoft. Next month we're hoping to have Dr. Tom Shinder, ISA Server guru and author (isaserver.org), come down to kick off the MCSE Advanced SIGs study of ISA Server 2004. 17 were in attendance this month. The Alamo PC SBS SIG meets the first Friday of each month at 8 AM at the Alamo PC Learning Center in Crossroads Mall, San Antonio, Texas. For more information contact SIG Chairman Larry Lentz, <Larry@LentzComputer.net>

Photoshop Study Group

Visit the Learning Center every Thursday (except holidays) from 1pm - 5pm for advanced Photoshop practice. Basic Photoshop practice will be held every Friday (except holidays) from 1pm - 5pm during even numbered months. **Only students who have attended the Photoshop Basics class are eligible to attend.**

Contact: Beverly Bihn <bihndolls@att.net>

When: Thursdays & even month Fridays

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: no
Technical Rating ★★ - ★★★

STUDY GROUPS (cont.)

Power Internet Study Group

This year we are covering eight subjects: PC-to-PC data transfer, third party data transfer, DSL and direct cable broadband connectivity, e-mail, browser use, MS Outlook and virus protection in communications.

Contact: John Woody

<jwoody@texas.net>
210-494-5684

When: 2nd Wednesday, 10am-noon

Where: Learning Center

Preregistration: No
Technical Rating ★★

Quicken

Each month the Quicken Study Group leaders will provide tips, techniques, answer questions, solve problems, and present an in-depth discussion of some aspect of Quicken for Windows. Have questions about how to do something in Quicken? Come to the Study Group and have questions answered.

Contact:

Larry Mathews

<clm.sat@iname.com>

Yael Friedlander

<yaelf@sbcglobal.net> 210-492-1163

When: 3rd Monday, 7-8pm (No Dec. meeting)

Where: Learning Center

Preregistration: Not required but preferred. Call Yael Friedlander between 8am & 5pm.

Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

WordPerfect Evening Study Group

We demonstrate projects and features of the latest version of WordPerfect. We also like to work on real life situations with our members who have questions. Co-chairs Frances Pape and Paul Chevalier.

Contact: Cynthia Thompson

210-655-1058

When: 3rd Wednesday, 7-9pm

Where: Call Cynthia for directions

Pre-registration: Yes - Call Cynthia

Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

Call for New Instructor

A Computer Literacy class leader is needed for an additional class. Please contact John Gaddis at <education@alamopc.org> or 494-9449.

FREE CLASSES

Computer Literacy Class

This course is designed for beginners and those who want to brush up their computer skills. Students learn about the parts of the computer, acquire keyboard and mouse skills used in many software programs, and gain a basic understanding of surfing the Web and using e-mail. The course prepares students to enroll in a variety of second level courses.

Contact: David Henry <obootes@juno.com>

When: First three Saturdays of every month, 1-3pm

Where: Resource Center

Pre-registration: Yes - Call the Learning, 210-736-0080

Technical Rating ★

CorelDRAW I Class

This basic class discusses basic tools and effects, concentrating on fills, blends, envelopes and other special effects for the next few months.

Contact: Steve Tech

<stephentechjr@yahoo.com>

210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating ★★

DotNetNuke Configuration and Management

This is a class on using the DotNetNuke portal software for hosting your website. The class will focus on hands-on configuration and use of the DNN 2.x portal. This portal is a service available to Alamo PC members. The class will setup web pages, insert modules on the pages. Modify and edit the look of the pages as well as the data in the pages. Modules will include: Calendar, Announcements, Forums, Blogger, Contacts, Links, Surveys and HTML.

Contact: Joe Brazell,

<ejbrazell@satx.rr.com>, 345-2207

When: August 31 7PM - 9PM

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating ★

eBay - Bid with Confidence: An Introduction to Internet Auctions

This 4-session class shows you how to buy and sell at Internet auctions using the eBay system (excludes real estate and automobiles).

Contact: Learning Center 736-0080
<learncenter@alamopc.org>

When: 7-9pm on Wednesdays.

2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd February

Where: Learning Center, Room 1

Pre-registration: Yes

Technical Rating ★

Excel 2000 Class

Students will become familiar with and understand Excel 2000's basic functionality, menus, toolbars, icons, and short-cut keys. Students will learn how to create, format, save and print an Excel spreadsheet. Also, understand and use formulas, work with worksheets and workbooks import files and insert pictures and objects

Contact:

Bill Eastridge <weastridge@aol.com>

When: First four Tuesdays of odd numbered months (Jan, Mar, May) 7-9pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

HTML Class

Learn how to design, build and manage your own web site using HTML. Some of the topics discussed include formatting text, links and forms. Additional non-HTML topics include planning, design and management, color and graphics, CSS, FTP and dealing with search engines. The 10 week class will begin a new cycle each January, May and September.

Contact: Mike Bianchi

<webmaster@alamopc.org>

When: every Friday 7-9 pm

Where: Alamo PC Learning Center

Prerequisite:

Home Page Jumpstart familiarity with Windows

Pre-registration: yes

To register e-mail Mike at

<webmaster@alamopc.org>

Technical Rating: ★

Home Page Jumpstart

A general introduction to developing your own Internet web page. It is *not* a course on HTML. Includes a 20+ page manual and a training disk. Not hands-on.

Contact:

Susan Ives <suives@texas.net>

210-694-4582

When: 2nd Wednesday, 5:30-7pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating ★ - ★★

Internet Jumpstart Class

This class is intended for people who have never seen the Internet, who have not been on the Internet or who are on the Internet but are just beginning to find their way around.

Contact:

Ted Ressler <gtedr@yahoo.com>

When: 2nd & 4th Saturday of even numbered months, 9am-noon. **No Jan. meeting.**

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating ★



Introduction to Photo Editing

Due to member interest, two back-to-back classes will be held the 2nd Saturday of each month. Requirements are the attendee should be an intermediate computer user (no beginners, please) and should already have a graphics software program on their PC. We will primarily use Photoshop Elements software, although we will also use Corel PhotoPaint and ArcSoft Photostudio occasionally.

Contact: Clarke Bird
<cbird@satx.rr.com>

When: 2nd Saturday, 8-10am, 10am-noon

Pre-registration: Yes - Learning Center
Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

Power Point class

A new PowerPoint class will start in January 2005. See Significant Happenings Page 8. Pre-registration is required.

Contact: Learning Center 736-0700

When: call

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: Yes
Technical Rating: ★

Windows XP Class

This class is intended to help you make the transition to Windows XP the latest version of Microsoft's Operating System. Subjects covered include the features of and how to configure Windows XP.

Contact: Ted Ressler
<gtedr@yahoo.com>

Assisting - Dawn Spangler

When: 2nd & 4th Saturdays of odd numbered months, 9am - noon.

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: Yes
Technical Rating ★ - ★★

Word 2000 Class

Become familiar with Word 2000's basic functionality, menus, toolbars and shortcut keys. Students will learn how to create, view, format, save and print a Word document. Also work with templates, multiple documents, insert files, objects and pictures. Optional textbook: Word 2000 Step by Step book (this will be helpful but is not required). Student should have basic knowledge of Windows and be familiar with operating the mouse and keyboard.

Contact: Joe Haggard, 342-5373

When: First four Tuesdays of even-numbered months (Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec), 7-9pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

FEE-BASED CLASSES

Photoshop Elements & Photoshop 7 Class - \$

Classes have resumed for 2005 and will continue every other month from January through September. See Photoshop Study Group for additional schedule.

Day Schedule

Meets first four Fridays 1-5 P.M. (4 hours per session, 16 hours per class)

Fee: (includes textbook) \$120 non members (includes one year membership to Alamo PC), \$90 Alamo PC members

Night Schedule

There will no longer be any night classes offered due to low enrollment. If we get enough interest, we may schedule a special session.

2005 Schedule:

Jan - Photoshop 7 Basics

Mar - Photoshop Elements 2 Basics

May - Photoshop Intermediate (mixed)

Jul - Photo Restoration (mixed)

Sep - Web Production (mixed)

Contact: Joseph de Leon 320.4828

When: Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: Yes - call the Learning Center at 210-736-0080.
Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

Senior Comp Class - \$

Introductory classes for people 45 and over. New classes begin approximately every two months. Classes are held at the Resource Center Lab and meet for two hours once a week for six weeks. Courses offered: Intro to Computers 1&2 and MS Word and Internet/E-mail.

Contact: Ed & Audry Henkin
www.seniorcomp.org

When: see page 8 for schedule

Where: Learning Center

Fees: \$60 includes textbook

Pre-registration: Yes - call 736-0080
Technical Rating ★ - ★★

Introduction to MS Access Databases Class - \$

This class is a hands-on beginner's class on Microsoft Access offered in four 4-hour sessions (16 hours total) over four consecutive weekends. The focus is on designing and building database applications. The fee includes a syllabus and a textbook. Prerequisites: Experience using Microsoft Office programs such as Word and Excel.

Contact: Joe Brazell,
<ejbrazell@satx.rr.com>, 210-345-2207

When: contact Learning Center

Where: Learning Center

Fees: \$60 Alamo PC Members; \$75 Non-Members

Pre-Registration: Required - Call the Learning Center at 210-736-0080. Technical Rating: ★★

Call for Participants:

For those interested in pursuing employment in the computer industry, a volunteer has offered to help facilitate a study group for Microsoft Certified System Engineer (MCSE) or Microsoft A+ certification. Microsoft certification is practically required in order to obtain a job in the computer industry today. MCSE certification is required to design, setup, install and maintain MS based server/workstation based computer networks.

A+ certification is required in order to do computer repair. The study group would be for those interested in taking the Microsoft tests and obtaining certification for the first time. A minimum of six participants is required. If interested call 494-9449 for more information.

Technical Content Ratings

- ★ For the beginner, no experience necessary and no prerequisite.
- ★★ Assumes some basic familiarity with the subject but is not a technical course.
- ★★★ Assumes that the student is somewhat familiar with the subject and will discuss.
- ★★★★ Assumes that the student is competent in the material and will be technical.



Help Numbers

Can you help a new member with a new computer? Are you proficient in software not listed? Can you help with a title currently showing only one volunteer? Call John Gaddis at 494-9449.

1 Look down the list for the software program you need help with; note the number in front of the title.

2 Then look down the list to the right for the corresponding number for the person who may be able to help you.

Please observe the times given by the volunteers name to call for phone help.

Step One

0	ACT!	26	PowerPoint
1	Access	28	Quattro Pro
2	AlphaFour	29	Quick Books
6	dBase	30	Quicken
7	Delphi	31	Photo Album
8	Dreamweaver 3	32	Windows 98
9	Networking	35	WinFax Pro
10	Excel	36	MS Word Windows
11	Family Origins for Win.	37	WordPerfect
12	FrontPage 98	39	Visual Basic
13	Flash 4	40	Internet Explorer
14	Genealogy	41	MS Outlook Express
16	RoadRunner	42	Home Help
18	MS Publisher	43	Hardware
21	Paradox	44	OpenOffice
22	PageMaker	45	Time&Chaos
23	Paint Shop Pro	46	Opera
24	Adobe Photoshop	47	Mozilla
25	Crystal Reports	48	MySQL
		49	.Net

Step Two

Expertise	Name	Phone	Availability	E-mail
(2)	Tom Drawert	696-9601	M-F 6-9pm; S/S 9am-6pm	
(12,24)	Steve Northover	497-5750	M-F 7-9pm; S/S 12-3pm	
(6)	Bowen Moursund	736-1791	M-F 9am-4pm	
(7, 21)	Keith Marbach	(830)303-9344	M-F 9am-4pm	
(7, 21)	Ed Conner	696-0191	4-7pm	
(9, 10, 16, 23, 30, 32, 33, 35, 42)	John Bolton	658-3060	M-F 6-9pm;	
(0, 10, 11, 26, 29, 30, 35, 36, 42)	Jean Smith	822-1133	M-F 10am-8pm; Sun 12-8pm	
(11, 14)	Bob Harris	492-3683	M-F 7-9pm	
(14)	Bob Battaglia	651-5642	9am-7pm	
(18)	Lou Harris	492-3683	M-F 7-9pm	louharris@alumni.utexas.net
(18, 23, 31)	Herb Langthorp	651-6087	M-F 6-10pm; 6-9:30pm on S/S	pokeypub@satx.rr.com
(44, 45, 46, 47, 48)	Chris Montgomery	490-2415	M-F 7-9pm;S/S 12-6pm	
(21)	Paul Woods	653-8940	4-7pm	
(25)	Barry Woitena		M-F 9-5pm	dallasmx@swbell.net
(28)	Brian Collie	828-1505	M-Sat 10am-5pm	
(36)	Christel Villarreal			cvillarreal@stic.net
(37)	Cynthia Thompson	655-1058	9am-9pm	
(9,42, 43)	Frank Flores	344-2231	M-Sat 9am-1pm	frflores@grandecom.net
(10, 43)	Mario Flores	566-4048	10am-11pm. Leave name, number.	
(8, 13, 26)	Robert Carrasco			carrasco_r@yahoo.com
(1, 10, 25, 26, 36)	Joseph Kubon	828-6281 x 1554	12noon - 8pm M-F and S/S	
(1, 10, 36)	David de Leon	614-3100	1-4pm M/F 12noon-8pm Sat & Sun.	
(9, 14, 16, 32, 36, 40, 41,42, 43)	Bruce Cramer	865-2933	M-Sat 9am-3pm	service@pcpro4u.com

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January 2005

Classified Ads

E-mail or snail mail (address on page 3) your ad to the Editor, PC Alamode at: editor@alamopc.org. Copy deadline is 10th of month preceeding publication. Classified ads are free to members of Alamo PC.

- For Sale** Sundisk compact flash card. Retail for \$150, asking \$100. Brand new and in wrapper. Contact David 889-2218.
- For Sale** Dell DM 4500/100 mhz, 20gig, 128 RAM XP Home
Dell DM 4500s/400 mhz, 80gig, 256 RAM XP Home
Each with Harmon/Kardon speakers, keyboards, mouse. Dell Monitors E772 and P992, APC Surge Arrest Pro included.
All for \$800 or best offer 822-5531 Charley
- For Sale** Xbox--brand new in the sealed box. Includes: video game console, controller 5 with 9-foot cable, standard AV cable, power cord, and nstruction manual. Great holiday gift for the young at heart. \$140 or best offer by December 15th. Contact obootes@juno.com
- For Sale** Two Compaq Presario desktop computers. Each with 15" monitor (speakers in monitor base), Celeron 166, 128 RAM, 20 Gig HD, Windows 98. Each station also includes mouse, keyboard and rollaway desk with keyboard tray. Great for a guest room, kids/grandkids, or simple computer works. \$200 each or best offer. Contact Joseph 320-4828.
- Wanted** Router 4-8 port (plus cables, printer cables, parallel or USB, RAM, SDRAM 128, 256, or 512). Video camera also wanted. Will buy or please donate to great cause. Call Jean Smith @ 822-1133 or 737-9510 or e-mail: <ejslern@netscape.net>
- Wanted** Someone to teach me Publisher and Access, will pay. Contact <jwoody39@netzero.net>



100% gray cotton golf shirts with pocket and embroidered full-color

Alamo PC logo

Available at the Learning Center in a wide variety of sizes.

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

Your membership number entitles you to a full year of membership privileges. Established in 1983, this non-profit, all-volunteer organization is dedicated to helping members keep up with trends and technologies such as the Internet. Further, Alamo PC provides a social atmosphere where you can share your PC frustrations and triumphs, and help others learn from your experiences.

Monthly Meetings

Every month you can attend a General Presentation Meeting, which is open to our 3,000 members. Local and national companies provide formal presentations, providing the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

Award-Winning Magazine

You'll receive its 64-page award-winning magazine, PC Alamode, each month. You'll learn of group activities in which you can participate, and you'll enjoy the reviews of new products from your fellow members. Regular columnists will give you insight to this fast-paced, dynamic industry. As a member, you can sell your outgrown stuff in our FREE Classified ads section. Your For Sale items move fast!

Special Interest Groups and Classes

Alamo PC offers more than 30 Special Interest Groups or SIGs, as they are called, on specific software programs or levels of expertise. These small groups typically meet once a month in one of our two hands-on computer labs or classrooms and provide an opportunity to get answers in an informal setting. The SIGs and classes are focuses on topics such as Quicken, Windows 98, Word and Word Perfect. There are groups for graphics and programming and even study groups to help you get



Microsoft Certified. You can attend as many SIGs as you'd like and, as you become experienced, even lead one!

Internet (www.alamopc.org)

Alamo PC is on the Internet, and more importantly, Alamo PC can help you get on the Internet too. If you're already on the Internet, attending one of Alamo PC's Internet SIGs will help you to become a savvy Internet surfer.

Alamo PC SeniorComp

Are you a Senior and not into computers or the Internet yet? Let us help. With special instruction just for Seniors, we'll teach you computers from stem to stern and make you a net vet. Contact Alamo PC today and sign up for the very next class.

Expert Help

Deadlocked with a computer problem or question? Get access to personal help from expert

Alamo PC members. Just call! If you need someone to diagnose hardware and software problems, try "The Doctor is In," a free clinic where members bring in their computers and allow our experts to help diagnose and often fix many PC ailments

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

To join, return the application below or sign up online at www.alamopc.org. At \$35, Alamo PC enjoys the lowest dues for an organization of its size. You may use your credit card or send your personal check. With this win-win offer, you will never regret it. If you need more information, call (210) 736-0700. Shortly after joining, you'll receive a membership card entitling you to all rights and privileges and discounts. JOIN TODAY!



Membership Application -- Apply for your number today!

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS. This information will be kept in confidence - it will be used for planning purposes only

FIRST: _____ MI _____ LAST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: ____/____/____ OCCUPATION: _____

EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please accept my membership for: ☐ 1 year - \$35 ☐ 2 Years - \$65 ☐ 3 Years - \$90 ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Method of payment: ☐ Check ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Credit Card # _____ EXP DATE: ____/____ SIGNATURE: _____

Make checks payable to Alamo PC Organization and mail to: Alamo PC, PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

IMPORTANT ☐ I do not authorize Alamo PC Organization to release my name address and phone to selected vendors

PCA08-01