



# 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](mailto: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](mailto:editor@alamopc.org)

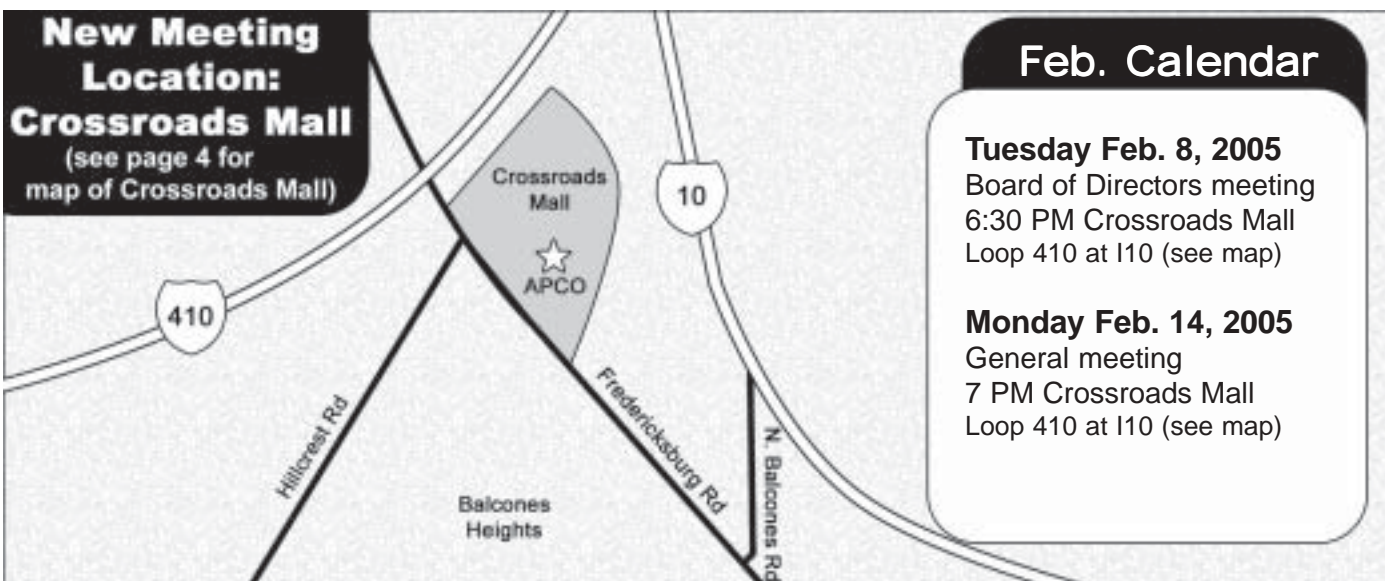
Please send change of address and other correspondence to:  
**Alamo PC Organization**  
**PO Box 65180**  
**San Antonio, TX 78265-5180**

## 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)



## Feb. Calendar

**Tuesday Feb. 8, 2005**  
Board of Directors meeting  
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall  
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

**Monday Feb. 14, 2005**  
General meeting  
7 PM Crossroads Mall  
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



## **columns**

<b>The Deals Guy</b> <i>Bob Click</i>	12
<b>Computer Law</b> <i>John Brewer</i>	13
Cyber Criminals - Who and Why?	
<b>Preventive Maintenance</b> <i>Russell James</i>	14
Computer Disposal	
<b>Whatsup.Doc</b> <i>K. Joyce McDonald</i>	15
More About Digital Appliances	
<b>Computer Defense Dept.</b> <i>Bruce Cramer</i>	16
Spyware Training 101	
<b>Windows Tips &amp; Tricks</b> <i>Bill Beverley</i>	18
Windows XP, Part V	
<b>Lessons Learned</b> <i>Dennis Schulman</i>	20
Hard Drive Housekeeping is Vital	
<b>Freeware and Shareware</b> <i>Tim Hoke</i>	21
<b>PowerTalk</b> <i>Shane Hicks</i>	22
Is Microsoft Longhorn a Longshot?	
<b>The Switcher</b> <i>Shane Hicks</i>	23
Virtual PC 7 for Mac	
<b>Lazy Webmaster</b> <i>Susan Ives</i>	24
Blogs	
<b>The Graphics Guy</b> <i>Paul Vaughn</i>	26
On the Trail of Dust	
<b>PC 101</b> <i>Ron Ingraham</i>	28
Windows Accessories "System Tools" Back up	

## **departments**

<b>PC Alamode Photo Contest</b>	5
<b>Enter</b> <i>Joseph de Leon</i>	5
<b>President's Message</b> <i>Bill Klutz</i>	6
<b>February Program News</b> <i>David Steward</i>	7
<b>Geeky Gourmet</b>	7
<b>Significant Happenings</b> <i>John Gaddis</i>	8
<b>Senior Comp Schedule</b> <i>Bill Hudson</i>	8
<b>Senior Comp Notes</b> <i>Bill Hudson</i>	10

## **guest contributors**

<b>Ponderings</b> <i>Meredith Poor</i>	30
<b>Gmail - Google offers e-mail</b> <i>Herbert A. Goldstein</i>	31

<b>Alamo PC Phone Directory</b>	4
<b>Map to Meeting Places</b>	4
<b>Alamo PC Calendar of Events</b>	58
<b>Study Groups and Classes</b>	59, 60, 61
<b>Help Numbers</b>	62
<b>Index of Advertisers</b>	63
<b>Classified Ads</b>	63
<b>Membership Application</b>	64

## Featured this month

- Free IRS Online Filing Service *Ira Wilsker*  
 Advice from the IRS  
 eBay Hints and Tips *Cathy Margolin*  
 AmiBroker and AmiQuote *Lloyd Mizer*  
 What to do if Lose Wallet or Purse *Bob McGovern*  
 Internet to Increase Buying Power *Charlie Paschal*  
 Donating Old Computer Equipment *Susan Ives*  
 Is PayPal Safe? *Susan Ives*  
 Government Here to Help Computer *Ira Wilsker*  
 Find Misplaced PC Files *Gabe Goldberg*  
 The Digital Home *Sherry Zorzi*

## product reviews

### Book Reviews

- Computer Crimes *Susan Ives* 44  
 IT Ethics Handbook *Susan Ives* 44  
 Mac OS X Panther: Missing Manual *Shane Hicks* 47  
 Hardware Hacking Projects for Geeks *Steve Devine* 48  
 Flash MX 2004 Game Design *William Morgan* 51

### Software Reviews

- Wordperfect 12 *Clarke Bird* 52  
 ByteGems Software Trio *William Hunsicker* 54

### Hardware Reviews

- Safecase for iPod *Duncan "Doc" Martin* 51

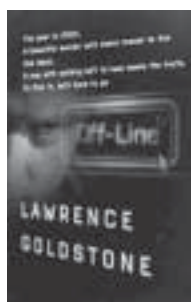


Concrete Hero  
by Rob Kantner

44

Off-Line  
by Lawrence Goldstone

44



## Volume 22, Number 2

# PC Alamode

## (501 (C) (3))

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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### Ad rates effective January 2005

Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
		Per insertion		
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

## Board of Directors

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VP Member Retention/Services

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662-8606 (Home)

532-9122 (Home)

223-8743 (Home)

unlisted

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226-2460 (Home)

531-8 388 (Office)

494-9449 (Office)

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675-2880 (Home)

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696-5783 (Home)

492-0005 (Home)

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Ed & Audrey Henkin

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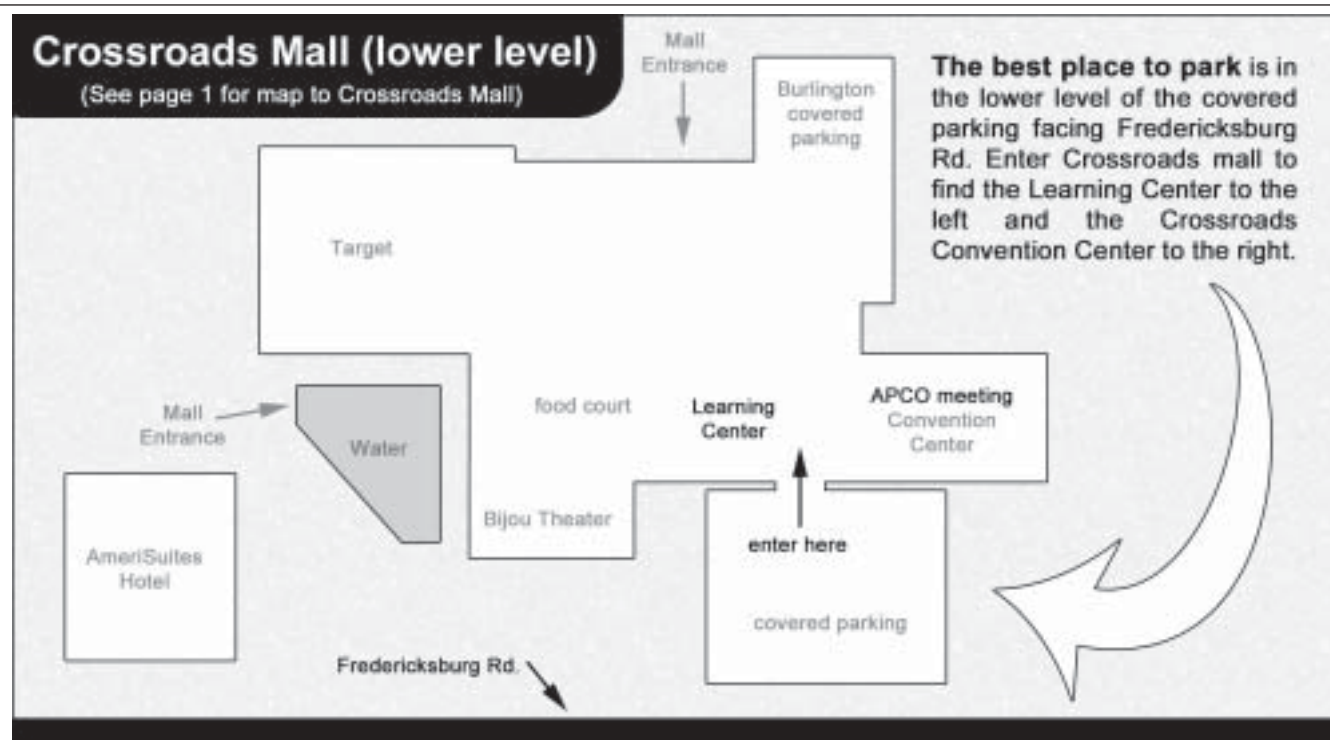
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## PC Alamode Photo Contest

### 1st Place Winner! (cover)

"Arc de Triomphe"

Submitted by Dean Kennedy

"This photo was taken half a century ago as I stood in the traffic on the Champs Elysees just before it enters the seven lane roundabout at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris for time exposure."

### 1st Runner Up "Red Rose"



Submitted by Wenda Gorman

This still life of a red rose was taken by Wenda for the Feb. 2005 Photo Contest.

### 2nd Runner Up "Wood Duck"



Submitted by Chuck DuVal

"I took this photo at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens with a Sony P10 Digital Camera"

#### 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 that the front cover is no longer full color. In an attempt to keep the cost to produce the *PC Alamode* down, we are considering a number of changes. One we have already implemented is a one-color cover. Other proposed changes include reducing the number of issues per year and decreasing the number of pages of each issue. If you have any questions or comments please e-mail me <editor@alamopc.org> or the president, Bill Klutz at <president@alamopc.org>.

Larry Lentz was unable to make his regular contribution to the *PC Alamode* this month. I could not find any other articles about Small Business Server 2003, so this month's Lessons Learned column features an article about hard drive house-keeping (page 20). Larry's contributions every month help to make the *PC Alamode* a well-rounded publication. SBS 2003 is a technical subject that few

people can address. Look for SBS 2003 Lessons Learned in our next issue.

PC 101 (page 28) by Ron Ingraham has returned this month. Many of you have written letters in support of additional computer literacy topics. The PC 101 column balances out some of the more technical information, and serves as a great resource for many of our members.

Bruce Cramer of the Dr. Is In Clinic offers his second installment of his new column Computer Defense Department. Most members will benefit from keeping on top of defending ones computer from spyware, virus attacks, and the like.

This month our theme is financial related. There is a wealth of information between pages 32 and 40. Some articles cover topics related to taxes, while others are about eBay or PayPal. We hope you enjoy the February 2005 issue!

### Joseph de Leon, Editor

<editor@alamopc.org>



### 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. He likes to play innocent, but in reality is quite the contrary.

#### STUDY GROUPS

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

# President's Message

Bill Klutz

## Meeting the Challenges!

February is typically thought of as the "Hearts (and Candy)" month - Valentine's Day on the 14th). But in the minds of others, another day may hold as much, or more, significance - Ash Wednesday (9th), Abraham Lincoln's birthday (12th), President's Day (21st), George Washington's birthday (22nd), or some other reason (on some other day).

It is no different when people think of the Alamo PC Organization. Some think of this magazine and the monthly information that is presented, some think of the Learning Center, the instructors and great facilities (2 labs with 26 late model computers, library, Dr. Is In, etc.), some the classes and/or study groups offered, etc. Few, however think about the organization as a whole, the personnel required to offer these services, the funds required and how they are generated (primarily from memberships), the expenses associated with the services offered, and the decisions that have to be made for the good of the overall organization (members and facilities).

Since taking office in October of 2004, I have tried to bring focus to many of the items previously mentioned. As a brief recap, in Oct I stated, "...the elected 'Crew' will review the course and initiatives charted by the previous years elected 'Crew,' make any necessary adjustments based on the latest information available, and begin to 'steer the "Ship"' for the next 12 months. (Additional adjustments will be made as more current information becomes available.)" and "...everyone has a vested interest in OUR 'Ship.'"

In November I reviewed the approximate number of positions (32) and approximate number of volunteers (234) to make the organization run smoothly. In December I reviewed the then current incomes and expenses typically required to keep the organization running smoothly. I also stated, "With the exception of advertising in our magazine (10%), a few fee based classes (3-5%), and some miscellaneous sales and donations (1-2%), almost 83-86% of the remaining monthly funding must come directly from each membership in this organization." I addressed our declining membership numbers since August

2000, and also stated, "It shouldn't surprise anyone that with declining membership comes a declining bank balance, since expenses have remained fairly steady." I also made the following appeal, "...each current member can help. First, please renew your membership when it is due or before (second line on the magazine address label has the date). Also, talk to former members and see if they will rejoin. Talk to new prospects to see if they will join. And, with the gift giving season upon us, consider providing a membership gift to someone you know who would benefit from reading the magazine and/or taking some classes at the Learning Center."

In January, I made the following statement, "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) ... allowing others to compensate us for using our facilities ...; Applying for alternate sources of funds.... 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."

Although none of the board members want to curtail the level of services currently available to members, some curtailments (until revenue increases to a level where the curtailment can be abolished) may be required to keep the "Ship" moving forward. As an example, the membership number at the end of November and at the end of December was exactly the same (2399). That meant the revenue stream from memberships remained the same. Hopefully we will see the January number be larger than De-

cember - an increase. That will mean members are trying to get new members. (We still need to retain members, while needing about 800+ additional members to have no curtailments in place.)

Some decisions, when viewed in isolation, will not be popular. But if the bigger picture is viewed, it is hoped that individuals can see that the decision is in the best interest of the organization, and not to benefit any one individual or group within the organization. Some of this philosophy was broached at the general meeting in January. Also addressed, was the information which appeared in my January message, "At last months board meeting (Dec), 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, ...)." It was also explained that there would be the annual special renewal discount again offered during Feb-Apr.

Other cost reducing things being considered (curtailments) involve Black & White covers for the PC Alamode, combining issues, reducing page count, or some temporary combination of each to reduce publication costs (our biggest monthly expense).

We are continuing with efforts to make members aware of an impending expiration (at no cost or minimal cost). 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 many will be at the February BOD meeting (8th) and everyone will be present at the general meeting (14th) for an update on our progress. Remember, this is "OUR" organization, and we all have a share in making it better.





# February Program

David Steward

No presenter has been confirmed for the February general meeting. Please check <[www.alamopc.org](http://www.alamopc.org)> for the latest details regarding dates and meeting times.



If you'd like to prepare a special breakfast for your valentine, whip up this 90 minute cherry lattice coffee cake and serve it with some steaming hot coffee and a fresh fruit smoothie for a light and easy breakfast.

## 90 Minute Cherry Lattice Coffee Cake

2 pkgs yeast

1 cup warm water

6 Tablespoons sugar

1 teaspoon salt

4 Tablespoons margarine

2 eggs

4-1/2 – 5 cups flour

1/2 cup chopped toasted almonds.

Dissolve 2 packages yeast in 1 cup warm water. Mix in 6 Tablespoons sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, 4 Tablespoons margarine,

2 eggs and 2 cups flour. Beat until smooth. Stir in enough more flour (2-1/2 – 3 cups) to make a soft dough. Knead for 2 minutes on a floured board. Set aside 1/4 of dough. Divide remainder in half. Roll each to an 8" square and place in 2 8" greased baking pans.

Combine 1 can cherry pie filling with 1/2 cup chopped toasted almonds. Spread over doughs. Roll reserved dough to a 6" square and cut into 12 strips. Place over filling forming lattice. Set a large flat pan of boiling water in cold over. Set cakes on rack above. Close over for 30 minutes. Remove water and turn over to 375 degrees. Bake 25 – 30 minutes.

When cool drizzle with icing made from 1 cup powdered sugar, 1/2 teaspoon almond extract and just enough milk to form a thin icing.

## Fresh Fruit Smoothie

1 cup orange juice

1 cup apple juice

1 banana, diced

1 cup crushed ice

1 cup sliced fruits (peaches, strawberries, etc.)

Whir in blender and served immediately.

Thanks to everyone who helped make our Christmas bake sale such a success.

If you have a favorite recipe send it to the Geeky Gourmet at <[gg@alamopc.org](mailto:gg@alamopc.org)>

## Windows OS Shortcut to Bypassing Recycle Bin

Ever need to delete a file in a hurry? Normally one must delete a file, and then empty the recycle bin. If the file has sensitive information, it could be dangerous to forget to empty the recycle bin. To bypass the recycle bin, select the file(s) and simply hold the Shift key while tapping the delete key. The files magically disappear instantly. **WARNING: There is no undo for this command.** If you accidentally delete files this way, it might give you a new appreciation for the recycle bin...





# Significant Happenings...

John Gaddis, Education VP

Early Alamo PC polls show that we are starting off 2005 with good attendance in our classes and study groups. Joseph de Leon's pre-registration Photoshop 7 fee-based class started with fourteen attendees. That is a full classroom.

Beverly Bihn will be starting another of her outstanding Photoshop 7 continuation workshops when Joseph's class ends. She conducts an ongoing workshop from 1:00 – 5:00 PM on Friday afternoons. There is a prerequisite that attendees of her workshop must have completed Joseph's class. There is a monthly fee.

Janice Higdon's new pre-registration Microsoft PowerPoint class was also full with fourteen attendees and a waiting list. Janice has an extensive teaching background in computers.

The class has a structured curriculum. The course is divided into 2 levels, Beginner and Intermediate. The beginner class will

introduce PowerPoint and will have hands on development of an entertaining PowerPoint presentation. The beginner course will have the student create a PowerPoint presentation that includes graphics, text, layout, titles, and slide transitions. The Intermediate class will have the student adding sounds, multimedia movies, and timing to presentations.

Each of the classes is a 2 hour session, with each level having 2 days of classes. This totals 8 hours of instruction and hands on activities. Some homework will be required to reinforce what has been covered and produce the finished product.

Once again our Microsoft Word class is in need of an instructor. Joe Haggard has been lured away by a corporation which has "made him an offer he can't refuse". Joe plans to help in the transition to a new instructor. If you have the time and want to take over this very popular class, please call 494-9449 or e-mail your desire to

jpgaddis@iName.com. The class currently meets the first four Tuesdays of even-numbered months from 7:00 – 9:00 PM.

Students will become familiar with Word 2000's basic functionality, menus, toolbars and shortcut keys. They will also learn how to create, view, format, save and print a Word document. They will work with templates, multiple documents, insert files, objects and pictures. Word 2000 Step by Step is the optional text book. Students should have basic knowledge of Windows and be familiar with operating the mouse and keyboard.

For those Apconians who are interested in the stock market, the High Growth Stock Investors, HGSI, Study Group is the place to go. Their premise is that "Knowledge is stronger when passed on to others." Maynard Burstein started the group several years ago and has diligently practiced this over the years by helping many members learn how to turn their computer into a powerful tool to find profitable investments. The Group meets on the first Thursday of the month. Call 494-9449 for directions.

## Senior Comp Schedule

Bill Hudson, Senior Comp Instructor

### Winter Schedule of Classes:

**Basic Introduction to Windows:**  
Donna Dudley, Andy Roca  
Wednesdays 10-12 - Jan.12 – Feb. 16

**Beginning Windows**  
Audrey Henkin  
Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 - Jan. 11- Feb. 15

**Beginning Windows**  
Jane Montgomery  
Wednesdays 1-3 - Jan. 26- Mar. 2

**Microsoft Word**  
Mary Lou Dougherty  
Wednesdays 1-3 - Jan.12 – Feb. 16

**E-mail & the Worldwide Web**  
Bill Hudson  
Tuesdays 10 – 12 Jan. 11 – Feb.15

**Turbo Tax class**  
Fridays 9 – 11 - Feb. 11 - March 18

**Senior Comp Practice Lab**  
Sarah Thomas and Joe Gentry  
Every Thursday 9-12.

### Spring Schedule of Classes

**Basic Introduction to Windows:**  
Donna Dudley, Andy Roca  
Wednesdays 10-12 Mar 16 –Apr 20

**Beginning Windows**  
Audrey Henkin  
Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 Mar.15 –Apr. 19

**New Greeting Cards Print Shop 15**  
Jane Montgomery  
Wednesdays 1-3 – Mar.30 – May 4

**Intermediate Windows**  
Bill Hudson  
Tuesdays 10 – 12 – Mar.29 – May 3

**Microsoft Word**  
Mary Lou Dougherty  
Wednesdays 1-3 – Mar.16 – Apr. 20

**E-mail & the Worldwide Web**  
Fridays 1 – 3 – Mar, 25 – Apr. 29

**Senior Comp Practice Lab**  
Sarah Thomas and Joe Gentry  
Every Thursday 9-12.

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



# SWEET SOMETHINGS



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ATX MOTHERBOARD W/ONBOARD  
VIDEO / SND / NIC **\$154**

COMBO 3:  
AMD® 64 ATHLON 3000 W/CPU FAN  
ATX MOTHERBOARD W/ONBOARD  
5.1 AUDIO / 6 USB 2.0 / NIC **\$255**

COMBO 4:  
INTEL® PENTIUM® 4 3.0GHz W/CPU FAN  
ATX MOTHERBOARD W/ONBOARD  
6 CHANNEL AUDIO / NIC / 4 USB 2.0  
FIREWIRE PORTS / SATA **\$330**

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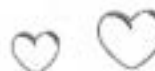
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## Senior Comp Notes

Bill Hudson, Senior Comp Instructor

# Let Your Fingers Do The Computing Or Keyboard Shortcuts

Knowing keyboard shortcuts is useful for any computer user. They are often the fastest, simplest way to make the computer do what you want. They can be more than useful for seniors who sometimes have problems using a mouse.

Keyboard shortcuts or “hotkeys” often involve holding down the Control (“Ctrl”), Alternate (“Alt”), or Shift keys and then tapping another key. Or you may only need to hit an underlined letter on a menu in order to select that menu choice or press an arrow key to move around the screen.

Hotkeys can affect the operating system itself, whether you are running Windows XP, Windows 2000 or you are still running Windows 98 or even Windows 95. In my Seniorcomp classes, I make sure to mention the “Three finger salute,” which is where you press and hold the Control (“Ctrl”) and Alternate (“Alt”) keys with two fingers, and then tap the Delete key with a third finger. I’ll represent this combination and future ones like this = Ctrl-Alt-Delete. This key combination will bring up a dialogue box where you can select the “Task Manager” to end a frozen program, show in figure 1. Se-

lecting Task Manager is as simple as clicking on the underlined letter “T,” then use your left/right arrow to select the “Applications” tab, and the down/up arrows to move through the list of programs to the one that is “Not responding” (working programs will say “Running”). Then hold down the “Alt” key and hit the underlined letter “E” (Alt-E) to end the program. Hold the “Alt” key down and hit the “F4” function key (Alt-F4) to close the Task Manager.

Keyboard shortcuts are also used to control functions within Windows programs that run on the operating system, including word processing programs like Microsoft Word, WordPad or even Notepad. For example, in Microsoft Word, I can hold down the “Shift” key and tap the up arrow to select the paragraph in figure 2. Then I hit “Alt-E” to show the Edit menu and hit “Ctrl-X” to move (cut) the paragraph to the clipboard. I can then move to another location in the document using keys (the “Home” key, arrows, etc.) and then hit “Ctrl-V” to paste the paragraph into a different place in the document. All without using the mouse. By the way, please note how you can see appropriate keyboard shortcuts on the drop down menu beside their menu action. Actually, the hotkey combina-

tions I find myself using the most are “Ctrl-X” for Cut, “Ctrl-C” for Copy, and “Ctrl-V” for Paste. I remember them because the “X” is like a cutting pair of scissors, “C” is for “copy,” and the “V” points down to where I want to paste something.

Here are some other useful keyboard shortcuts or “hotkey” combinations, many used in applications like word processors or other programs where the commands make sense (courtesy of <[http://www.out-loud.com/keyboard\\_shortcuts\\_for\\_windows\\_95.html](http://www.out-loud.com/keyboard_shortcuts_for_windows_95.html)>):

Insert table here:

Remember, keyboard shortcuts or hotkeys are useful computing tools. Try them. You will soon find favorites that you use often (like the copy, cut and paste hotkeys) and that you will remember. Alternately, go to an application’s “Help” file (including Windows “Help”) and search for “hot keys” or “keyboard shortcuts” to see a list that applies to your application. You can then print the list for a handy reference. Of course, you can also search the Web for the same topics if you want even more information on this important computing topic.

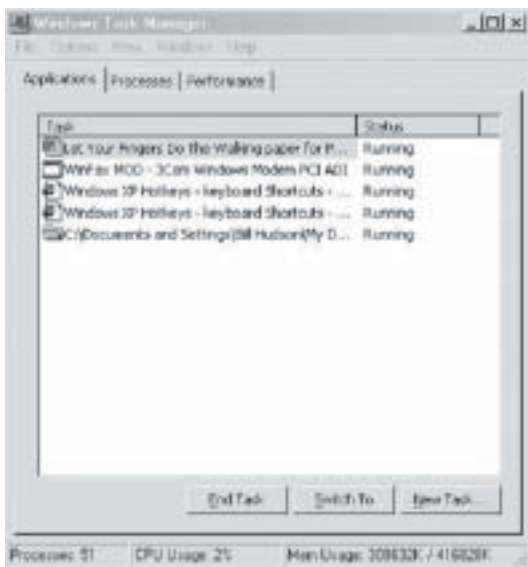


Figure 1

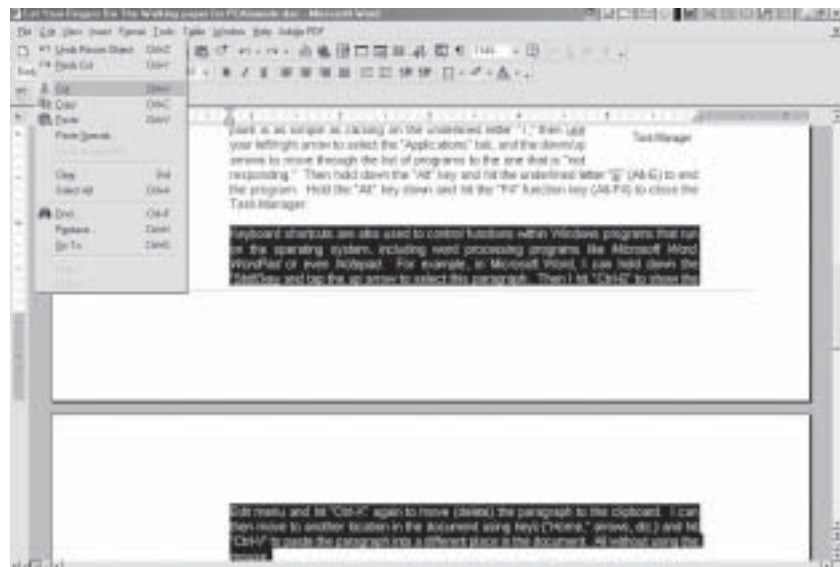


Figure 2





<b>HOME</b> – to beginning of line or far left of field or screen. <b>END</b> – to end of line, or far right of field or screen. <b>CTRL+HOME</b> – to the top <b>CTRL+END</b> – to the bottom <b>PAGE UP</b> – moves you up in your document or dialogue box by one page <b>PAGE DOWN</b> – moves you down in your document or dialogue list by one page	<b>CTRL+RIGHT ARROW</b> – jumps your cursor to the next word. <b>SHIFT+CTRL+RIGHT ARROW</b> – selects from cursor position to the start of the next word. <b>SHIFT+DOWN ARROW</b> – selects from cursor position down one line. <b>CTRL+DOWN ARROW</b> – jumps your cursor to the next paragraph. <b>SHIFT+CTRL+DOWN ARROW</b> – selects from cursor position to the next paragraph.	<b>SHIFT+CTRL+END</b> – selects from cursor position through the end of the document. With the HOME key, you select to the top of the document. <b>SHIFT+PAGE DOWN</b> – selects from cursor position down a page. With the PAGE Up key, you select up a page. <b>SHIFT+END</b> – selects from cursor position to the end of the line <b>SHIFT+HOME</b> – selects from cursor position to the start of the line
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## Those "function" keys:

<b>F1</b> – Help. <b>F2</b> – Rename, or edit. Hit F2, with an icon selected, will let you rename the icon. In Excel or Access, F2 takes you from having the entire field or cell selected to an editing position within the field. Do this and you don't have to click.	<b>F3</b> – Search or Find. Outside an application, will open "Find files or folders." Within an application, performs a "Find Next" function, after you have begun the Find function from the "Edit" menu. See F5. <b>F4</b> – Pastes from the clipboard in Windows 2000. In XP, displays the Address bar list in My Computer or Windows Explorer.	<b>F5</b> – Opens the Find and Replace dialogue in Word. In XP, updates the active window. <b>F6</b> – toggle through icons or screen elements in a window or on the desktop. <b>F10</b> – Toggles you from the text area to the menu bar. From there, arrow keys will move you among menus.
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Function keys are used for different specific purposes within applications, including Windows - see the application's Help for specific guidance.

<b>ENTER</b> – will activate a selected item. Hitting Enter with a program icon selected will open the program. With a button highlighted, it will activate the "button." It appears highlighted from the heavier line around it, or it might look like a depressed button. <b>SHIFT+F10</b> – like the right click of mouse, brings up context menu <b>ALT + the underlined letter</b> in a menu item carries out the action. <b>ALT or F10</b> – hitting this all by itself takes you to the menu bar, which can be navigated by arrow keys or by typing the underlined letter of each menu. <b>CTRL+Z</b> or <b>ALT+BACKSPACE</b> – undo. Undoes the previous editing action, if the application allows.	Hitting a letter key will take you to the first item in an open or save dialogue box that begins with that letter. i.e., in the "Open file" dialogue box, hit "W" one or more times to go to the "Windows" folder in the list of stuff that appears on the C drive. This can save a whole lot of hand action. <b>TAB</b> – takes you from one field to another in a dialogue box or form, one "button" to another, one icon to another etc. <b>SHIFT+TAB</b> – tabs you backward <b>ALT+TAB</b> – holding down the ALT while hitting TAB cycles you through open applications. <b># applicable:</b> <b>CTRL+P</b> – Use this to print. <b>CTRL+S</b> – save. <b>CTRL+N</b> – new document. <b>CTRL+O</b> – open. Brings forth the open file dialogue box.	<b>ESC</b> – to cancel, or get rid of something like box or window that popped up when you didn't want it (or if you change your mind), etc. This is an "undo" key. <b>ANY ARROW KEY</b> – removes highlighting; that is, undoes a selection. <b>ALT+DOWN ARROW</b> – opens a "Drop down list." It's like clicking those little arrows of fields in which you make a choice; for instance, in the "Look in" field of an "Open" dialogue box. <b>CTRL-F</b> – displays the find all files dialogue box. <b>CTRL-Shift-arrow keys</b> – highlights a block of text. <b>CTRL-F4</b> – closes the active document. <b>CTRL-ESC</b> – displays the Start menu. <b># applicable:</b> <b>CTRL+B</b> – toggle bold off and on with this; this will apply (or remove) bolding to either selected items or to the text that's input next. <b>CTRL+I</b> – toggle italic with this. <b>CTRL+U</b> toggles underlining.
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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.

I occasionally watch Mythbusters on the Discovery channel. I saw them trying to get a ringing cell phone to cause an explosion, with no success, even exposed directly to some very dangerous fumes. After more suggestions from viewers, they tried again on another show using the suggestions from the viewers along with some new ones of their own, but with no success. I'll still leave mine in the car.

#### \*Vacation Comments

Every time I mention taking a cruise, I get lots of feedback. My wife and I decided it was time for another getaway and opted for an eastern Caribbean cruise on Holland America's Zaandam cruise ship. I was very much disappointed with the Zaandam. Sailing on the Zaandam left something to be desired since it tended to roll a lot, even on relatively quiet water. I was told privately by a crewmember that one of their stabilizers was broken. While ashore in one port (St. Thomas), we talked to people who arrived there on Holland America's Maasdam who had the same experience. They also said the Maasdam had one engine down so their speed on the water was curbed until it could be fixed. That problem changed their next scheduled stop to Freeport where the ship was to be repaired. St. Thomas was packed the day we were there because there were a total of eight cruise ships docked or anchored with passengers ashore. Tour bus traffic sure added to the traffic congestion.

The only thing we liked better on the Zaandam compared to Celebrity's Summit was the food, although the available times for it should be improved. Thank God for room service when we wanted food in between serving times. To make matters worse, a complaint tended to fall on deaf ears at the Front Desk. They did have good shows though. We had been thoroughly spoiled by our last cruise, which was on Celebrity's Summit last year. That one was surely a cut above all others. That doesn't mean we didn't

enjoy this cruise though. We are now considering what and where our next one will be.

#### \*Reminder

Don't forget about the Alpha 5 ver.6 special offer that is still good this month. The discount is great and you can order at <[brett@alphasoft.com](mailto:brett@alphasoft.com)>. You get it for just \$179.00 as compared to MSRP \$349.00.

\*Below Are More Announcements Offering Discounts For User Group Members

#### \*AdWords Clever Wizard

"Our company, CleverStat, would like to announce the release of AdWords Clever Wizard 1.4 for

Windows 98/ME/NT/2000/XP. (Author's note: they included a press release, but because it was lengthy, I did not include it so check the URL) "Note, all users group members will have a 20% discount if purchasing AdWords Clever Wizard 1.4. In order to get the benefit of discount they need to type the following coupon code while ordering: TFBH-R4NT-IHNG."

This one was a bit hard for me to understand so I am passing it on to you with the URL to read up on it. <<http://www.cleverstat.com/adwords-analyzer-software.htm>>.

#### \*NotePage's FeedForAll

"To celebrate the launch of FeedForAll, NotePage's new RSS feed creation software, NotePage has created a User Group Power Point Presentation that explains RSS and how it can be used. RSS is becoming increasingly popular and is a hot topic in many user groups. NotePage, Inc. would be interested in making this Power Point presentation available to you, along with FeedForAll discount coupons for your members. The Power Point presentation can be downloaded from: <<http://www.feedforall.com/rss.ppt>>"

To read about this product, go to <<http://www.feedforall.com>>.

#### \*Announcement of Flash File Recovery 1.3

Below is an announcement I received that includes a discount for user group members.

"Our company, PANTERASoft, would like to announce the release of Flash File Recovery 1.2 for Windows 95/98/ME/2000/XP. We'd like to offer your members and subscribers a 15% discount off the regular price. (Author's note: They included a press release, but I didn't include it. Check their Web site) "Flash Fire Recovery is probably Net's oldest and most powerful flash recovery software created specially for digital cameras. The program brings back deleted images and salvages pictures from damaged or corrupted digital media, including the camera's built-in memory. It works with virtually all media types, including SmartMedia, CompactFlash, Memory Stick, MicroDrive, xD Picture Card Flash Card, PC Card, Multimedia Card, and SD Card. While this program does not recover mp3 files, it does recover image files like JPEG, TIFF and such, as well as RAW image files - Canon CRW, Nikon NEF, Kodak DCR, among others. Video files - AVI, MOV, MPG/MPEG are supported as well.

"Flash File Recovery is available at <[www.panterasoft.com](http://www.panterasoft.com)> for free evaluation. Registering the program is \$49.50 US Dollars per copy. Product Page: <<http://www.panterasoft.com/file-recovery/index.html>>"

I didn't see any code or downloading process in the announcement for getting the discount so I don't know how that works.

#### \*What Do You Want?

Joe Bendersky of Computer Club of Palm Shores periodically writes a favorite Web site column and this one took my eye. <<http://www.savvyseior.org>> It is said that this site offers everything for seniors including 3000 free goodies.



## Cyber Criminals - Who and Why?

### 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.

**W**hy do some individuals have the need to engage in cyber crime? I refer specifically to those people who write code that damages networks and the computers connected to those networks.

According to a recent article in Internet News: "Tracking virus writers – and more importantly, gathering evidence against them – is a thorny problem for law enforcement agencies worldwide. While the number of arrests made and sentences handed down make 2004 the best year yet for catching cyber criminals, it won't have a noticeable effect on eliminating virus writers, according to the Finnish security firm F-Secure."

F-Secure states there were three "primary security-related trends in 2004: a massive increase in phishing attacks; the introduction of open-source botnets and for-profit virus writing."

Phishing is the term used for fraudulent emails that seek to obtain information from the recipient. This information is used for nefarious purposes including identity theft. An article on MSNBC.com states that consumers are susceptible to phishing. The anti-spam firm MailFrontier Inc. showed 1,000 consumers examples of so-called "phishing" e-mail as well as legitimate e-mail from companies such as eBay and PayPal. About 28 percent of the time, the consumers incorrectly identified the phishing messages as legitimate. Now that is a frightening statistic, as 28% is a high rate.

A botnet is generally a trojan that has penetrated security safeguards and is resident on a computer. When that computer connects to the Internet, the botnet will connect to an IRC channel. Then other infected computers connect to the channel and a botnet is formed. The person who created the botnet, often called a "botmaster" or "botherder," can then control the computers that are connected to the botnet. For example, the botnet could be used to launch a denial of service attack on an innocent Website or computer.

The major viruses in 2004 consisted of Bagle, MyDoom, Netsky, Sasser, Korgo and Sober. Three of these were designed for specific crimes according to F-Secure.

The intent of MyDoom and Bagle and its many variants was to create spam proxies. These viruses caused damages in the millions of dollars and created denial-of-service attacks on Microsoft.com and SCO.com.

According to F-Secure, at one point MyDoom.A was responsible for 10 percent of all e-mail traffic. Both viruses used the Mitglieder proxy trojan. Officials at F-Secure suspect the two viruses may have been written by one group of writers. Bagle.A downloaded the Trojan from a Web site, and it was installed through a backdoor in MyDoom.A-infected machines.

The Korgo virus was designed to grab credit card and banking information, according to F-Secure. Similar to the Sasser worm, the virus targeted Windows 2000 and XP machines, scanning random IP addresses for PCs with a vulnerable, unpatched Local Security Authority Subsystem Service (LSASS).

Internet News reports it is difficult to trace and apprehend the cyber criminals. "If there's an increase [in arrests and indictments], it's very, very slight," said Paul Bresson, a spokesperson for the FBI, about his agency's efforts to combat virus writers. "We tend to devote our resources depending on the volume and scope of what's out there, and if there's a lot out there, we devote more resources."

The international nature of the Internet means many criminals can leave a long, convoluted trail that crosses national boundaries with ease, even if law enforcement agencies cannot. Despite actions by the Federal Trade Commission to promote cross-border communications and aid, there are still blind spots where virus writers can flourish.

Mikko Hypponen of F-Secure says that whenever he speaks with law enforcement contacts about tracking spammers or virus writers and it leads to places like Romania or Belarussia or Lithuania, "you hear this sigh from the investigators, because they know it became that much harder to gain local cooperation."

"The bad guys know how to re-route their spam and their viruses and their hacking through six, seven, eight different countries and go through places like China and South Korea and some obscure island in the South Pacific just to make it hard for the authorities to track them," Hypponen says.

As an example, he points to a recent case where a Russian factory was hit with a virus by a hacker group operating out of Kuwait. The virus, after gaining access to the machines, started downloading more code from a Web site registered in a small island off

the coast of Africa. The actual Web server, however, wasn't there; it was registered through Sweden to Jordan. From Jordan, the infected machines in Russia downloaded code that connected them with an IRC chat system operated in chat.cnn.com – CNN's chat server in the U.S.

Hypponen said it was a relatively easy matter for his company to call CNN and the ISPs in charge of the Web server to blunt the effects of the outbreak, but it's something police would have had a tougher time accomplishing.

"If the Russian factory would have called the cops," he said, "how likely would it have been for the Russian police to first of all successfully track the virus around the globe and how likely is it that they would have been able to prosecute the Kuwaiti offenders?"

Sarah Gordon, a security expert at Symantec, has engaged in extensive investigation of the personalities of cyber criminals. "All those years of research and contact have revealed that many myths about virus writers are just that. The stereotype that virus writers are all young teenage boys with no social life, hiding in their basement is not accurate," she said. In contrast, she said, most virus creators are typical for their age, are on good terms with friends and family and are often contributors to their local community.

"Whatever the reason for writing a virus, all these groups share a common blindspot, says Ms. Gordon, which is that they have no conception that what they are doing can affect the wider world. "They do not connect the impact of what they do on the computer with the impact on another person," she says.

"But, once they realize that it can have an impact on other people, they age out of it and stop."

Her research has shown Ms. Gordon that there is a real difference between virus writers and hackers. While virus writers are usually socially adept, many hackers are not. "When you see a complex virus," she says, "it's come out of the hacking community." In her experience many malicious hackers have a borderline criminal view of the world and do not share mainstream ethical norms. Their judgment processes might be different," she says, "as well as their perception of risk and reward."



## Computer Disposal

### 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](mailto:russell@bjassociates.com)> or visit them on the web at <<http://bjassociates.com>>.

During the past twenty years we have seen amazing advances in technology. Computers are faster and hold more information than ever before. Because of the advances as well as the decrease in the cost of computers, the life cycle has been reduced to about three years for the average business workstation. Home computers seem to still have a four to six year life but I would guess that the second half could be attributed to the gifting of the older systems to the younger generations in the family. It doesn't take much power to run that Sesame Street game for the preschoolers. A recent study by the National Recycling Coalition, <<http://www.nrc-recycle.org>>, states that there will be almost 500 million obsolete personal computers by the year 2007. That is a lot of hardware to get rid of and a lot of landfills that we cannot afford to fill up.

What should you do with your old computer? It is extremely easy to replace your old system with a new one but then you have the problem of getting rid of the old one. If you are like most people, the old system will end up in a closet or in the garage. This is the easiest method that most of the individuals as well as businesses use to get rid of old stuff. Most of us think that there is the chance that we might find a use for the old stuff so we think we need to keep it. This is also the reason that there are so many cars parked in the driveway in front of the house, because they could not get in the garage if they had to.

There are many options that are available to you whether you are an individual or a business. It does not change what you should do but only what you are required to do. Whether it is business or personal, the easiest method would be to donate the old equipment to an organization that specializes in computer recycling. There is a list of recyclers available on the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality website. The address for the list is currently <<http://www.tnrc.state.tx.us/exec/sbea/recycling/electronics/>

<<http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/RecyclersAndNonProfs.pdf>>. This is a PDF file so you will need the Adobe Acrobat Reader which is available free of charge at the Adobe website, <<http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/main.html>>.

One of the companies on the list is Corona Visions, Inc. in San Antonio. They can be located on the web at <<http://www.coronavisions.com>>. The person that I talked to on the phone stated that they will accept computers from individuals at their office free of charge. They are a for profit company so you will need to give them a call for a quote if you are trying to clean up the junk pile at the office. According to their Mission statement from the website, they are committed to eliminating electronic waste ending up as landfill.

The first thing to consider is whether or not the computer is usable. If the system is still in good working order, see if you can find someone who is less fortunate than you who could use a working computer. This could mean a little work on your part but you might check with your church to see if they have a program available to help the less fortunate ones in our city. It could be that you know someone that could use the computer but you do not have the expertise to make sure that your personal data will not be found and misused if the system gets into the wrong hands.

There are plenty of computer companies that will clean your personal data from the computer for a nominal fee. Be sure

that you choose a reputable company to assure yourself of a quality job. It is not sufficient to delete the information from the hard drive. After the deletion, there will need to be data written to those areas of the hard drive to remove any trace of the original data. There are a number of programs that are available for this purpose if you are inclined to do the job yourself. The chances of your data falling into the wrong hands and being misused would be minimal but that is not a chance that I would be willing to take. I have heard too many horror stories about people who have been a victim of identity theft. It would be much easier to take the risk away than to try to clear your name of wrongdoing after the fact.

If the system is dead, you will need to locate someone that will take care of disposing of the old system. The same thing applies to the data on the HDD as with a working computer. Even if the system is dead, there is still the chance that your data could fall into the wrong hands. The HDD could still be functional and if put into another system would be accessible. You would still need to follow the same procedures that you would use if giving a good computer away. A dead system would only make it a little harder for the bad guys to get at your data.

The best advice that I could give you is to make a decision when you change out the system. Don't bother to put the system in storage or in the closet. Make the decision now and get it over with. You and your garage will be much happier in the end.



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## More About Digital Appliances

### 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](http://www.jbmcdonaldandson.com)> and <[www.taichi-interactive.com](http://www.taichi-interactive.com)>. E-mail her at <[kjoycemcdonald@satx.rr.com](mailto:kjoycemcdonald@satx.rr.com)>.

In the March 2004 issue of PC Alamode, I described my experience with replacing all my kitchen appliances with new, mostly digital, appliances. They included a digital refrigerator from Sears, a smooth ceramic cook top and digital oven from Frigidaire, and a Goldstar microwave oven. When I wrote the article, I was concerned that my readers would be annoyed with my straying from the desktop. I was wrong. I got more response from the kitchen appliance article than I have from most of my recent PC-oriented articles. Last April, I followed up on some of the letters that I received. Now that almost a year has passed, I'll offer some further observations.

My first observation is one familiar to anyone who deals with intelligent machines: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." To that I can add a corollary: "If it still works, don't replace it." When you get new fixtures and appliances, you assume that you will enjoy more advanced technology that will make your tasks easier and be more friendly to operate. The reality is that advanced technology by its very nature can be harder to operate, and, you probably won't get much help from product documentation. You also have to figure in government regulations that can impair performance rather than enhance it. My husband and I spent \$70 recently to have a plumber tell us that we won't get any better water pressure from our new kitchen faucet because government regulations do not allow the kind of performance we once got from the old faucet. Any appliance that uses water or electricity or both may be hobbled by new resource conservation regulations.

Replacing a 28-year-old Maytag washer with a front loading Maytag Neptune washer a couple of years ago is another example. While the washer saves water and does large loads, and while we got rebates from both the manufacturer and the City Water Board, it doesn't make up for the fact that our dark clothes began to smell sour and pulling a large load of wet clothes out of the machine puts a strain on my back. Maytag has since fixed the smell problem, but my back is another matter.

Replacing my 15 year old Amana refrigerator/freezer cost a lot more than the \$1700 we spent on our energy star rated stainless steel Sears model. About two months after we bought the new fridge, it quit working on a Friday and Sears magnanimously agreed to fix it...the next Wednesday. We paid almost \$300 to get a private contractor to fix the faulty part that caused the failure. I can't judge how much we lost in ruined food, but vowing not to go through the same experience again, we spent another \$500 on an apartment-sized refrigerator/freezer to serve as a backup in the event our main unit fails again. Although we're enjoying the extra fridge space to stash goodies like sodas and ice cream, I had to give up some floor space in my kitchen to accommodate the addition.

That being said, sometimes purchases made reluctantly become pleasant surprises. I was lukewarm about my new ceramic cook top. I would really have preferred to have a gas one like the pros use. The ceramic one does, however, have its saving graces. For one, it looks good, and it can be used as a large hot pad when I take things out of the oven. Best of all, when a pot boils over, a few paper towels and a follow up with vinegar water is all I need to put things right.

Another pleasant surprise was the oven. We bought it as an afterthought when we purchased our cook top because it was so cheap. We felt we couldn't afford not to buy it. The upside of my oven is speed, consistent temperature control and reliability. Best of all, the ability to slow cook foods has opened a whole new world of cooking for me. My favorite things to cook are chicken breasts slathered in canned soup and sherry and baked all day at 180 degrees. When I get home, I remove the foil cover, turn the oven up to brown the tops and make a quick batch of risotto to go with the gravy. I can also slow cook a pot of beans in my oven using the ceramic insert to my crock-pot. With the pot in the oven, I don't have to worry about one of my cats knocking it off while I'm at work.

Later on in the year, I had to replace my 26-year old zigzag sewing machine after



I broke the bobbin housing. I wanted an inexpensive replacement since my main retirement goal is to buy the biggest, meanest electronic sewing machine available. Since my retirement isn't that far away, I wanted a just-adequate machine to fill in the interim. For this purpose, I bought a bottom of the line electronic Kenmore. It has an LCD screen and some electronic features, and it was on sale for \$300, about one-sixth of what I would pay for a top-grade electronic machine. Thus far, I have been very impressed with the machine's features and workings. Best of all, its documentation, which is a standard offering in three languages. (I can even select the language I want to appear on the machine's LCD screen.)

Many of the features, such as monogramming and buttonholing, that required additional equipment in the past, are now not only standard features, but improved features. Instead of guessing at buttonhole size, I can make a custom buttonhole by dropping the button into the buttonhole foot. To monogram, I use the screen to select the letters I want to use. Regardless of what type of stitching feature I use, the screen tells me the optimum tension setting, and the recommended presser foot, stitch length and width. Mending requires a little more experimentation (and several rereads of the instructions) but once you get the hang of it, this once demanding sewing job is transformed into a spectator sport with beautiful results. Since Sears has done such a great job with this sewing machine, I guess I'll have to forgive them for the refrigerator.



## Spyware Training 101

Computer Defense Department

### 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](http://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](mailto:service@pcpro4u.com)>. See his ad for PC Pro Computer Services on page 11.

Welcome to the Computer Defense Department. While this column is still new I would like to give a good definition of spyware, its causes and some prevention tips. Hopefully this will give us a base that we can build on in future articles. Spyware is a generic term used to describe a program that gathers information about you without your knowledge and reports back to a server/organization. The information could be anything that is on your computer but is usually limited to Internet sites you have visited. This gives the collector of your data the information that they need in order to send you popups, spam, and other unwanted and unwelcome nuisances. As reported by the National Cyber Security Alliance, more than 90% of home users have some sort of spyware on their computers. Some computer users have spyware to the extent that it makes it a mundane task just to use their computers.

Spyware comes in many different forms. Some spyware will alter your Internet home page and redirect your browser, known as Browser Hijackers. Trojans are programs that disguise themselves as useful programs but which can actually harm your computer. Unlike viruses they do not copy themselves and spread but can deliver spyware and viruses. Keyloggers do just that, they remain on your computer to log your keystrokes. This could deliver your credit card number or password to a site the spy controls on the other end. Dialers offer to let you download free games or other programs but uses your dialup connection to connect to an expensive number where they make their money. When several spyware programs get on your computer and set themselves to startup when your computer starts up, there are going to be problems. With spyware gumming up the works you will notice a slower startup, programs run slower. Maybe your hard drive space is mysteriously being taken up, or maybe your Internet experience is not much fun.

How do we get spyware? Spyware usually comes bundled with other free soft-

ware that is either intentionally or unintentionally downloaded. Some of the most prevalent programs are Hotbar, MySearch and Search Assistant, but there are plenty others with new ones coming on the scene at an alarming rate. Some will install programs and set themselves to run when your computer starts up allowing them to wreck havoc on your computer. There are even programs that claim to find, eliminate and prevent spyware that do just the opposite. Here is a link to a site that keeps track of these rouge anti spyware programs - <[http://www.spywarewarrior.com/rogue\\_anti-spyware.htm](http://www.spywarewarrior.com/rogue_anti-spyware.htm)>.

Another typical way to get spyware is by using file sharing or peer-to-peer applications such as Limewire, Kazaa and Bearshare to name a few. While these applications may seem harmless and "free," by using them you are exposing your computer to whatever the other guy or gal wants to slip onto your computer. If you download and install any of the peer-to-peer applications such as those I mentioned above, you would notice that they install other applications and may even tell you that they are being installed. You have no choice but to install them or the functionality of the main program will be lost. Most of the accompanying software does the spying and other nasty chores in the background. But the main threat is from exposing your computer to whoever else is on the peer-to-peer network that the program sets up. This opens up a port or door if you will, on your computer to anybody who wants in.

Prevention. Spyware is not a virus and antivirus programs will not protect you from it. However some of the top antivirus software will detect and eliminate Trojans. Don't be sold on programs that throw popups at you telling you that you have spyware, enticing you to purchase their program to get rid of the spyware. These popups are usually enticing you into purchasing a program that does not do a very good job of what it claims to do.

To rid your computer of spyware you need an application that is made specifically for that job. Luckily there are some good, free,



programs just for that purpose. Most of these programs will check for files and registry keys as well as running programs to detect and eliminate the spyware. Once the spyware is detected it will show you what it has found and give you the choice to remove it. Some times it is not as easy as that because when some spyware is running it can put up a self defense mechanism that prevents its removal. There are some steps you can take without using spyware removal applications to get rid of some of the more common spyware. If you are familiar with msconfig you can run it and look at your startup tab to see if there are any odd entries in your startup. You can also run the Add Remove Programs application found in the Windows Control Panel. Check for any unfamiliar programs. Some spyware programs are tricky to remove. For instance, you may be presented with a text box that says "Are you sure you want to discontinue removal of this program." Obviously this is the opposite of your intent but they count on people clicking the yes button and therefore the program remains installed. Some spyware programs will insist that you must connect to an Internet site to continue with the uninstallation. This will take you to their website where they continue their spy mission. Bottom line - spies are tricky and its removal is best left up to a dedicated spy removal programs such as AdAware - <[www.lavasoftusa.com/software/adaware](http://www.lavasoftusa.com/software/adaware)> or SpyBot - <<http://spybot.safer-networking.de/en/index.html>>. These two are free and usually make small work of detecting and eliminating spyware. These programs, just like your antivirus should be updated and run regularly.



# News Brief

## Ergonomics for the elderly

By Dr. Herbert A. Goldstein, Editor, Sarasota PC Monitor, Sarasota FL PC Users Group (<[www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)> - <[pcug@comcast.net](mailto:pcug@comcast.net)>)

As baby boomers reach retirement age the ratio of employees to retirees will equalize over the next twenty years. Considering that the foundation of Social Security benefits is generated from the workers it is evident that benefits will be inadequate for future retirees. In order to endure, the elderly will be forced to keep working beyond the current retirement age.

As our increasing knowledge of the aging process brings about breakthroughs in life extension technologies, the elderly will come to play a greater role in the productivity of our economy. Upcoming ergonomic developments will be critical in order to accommodate the elderly as viable and productive members of the workforce.

With the physical restrictions that naturally come with age we can expect that many elderly would be regarded as having disabilities and the ones who are not

technically disabled could be considered physically and mentally compromised to some degree. Therefore, any workplace modifications that serve to overcome limitations in strength, coordination, endurance, sight, hearing and shift adaptability will accommodate the elderly into the workplace.

Visual restrictions can be overcome with a greater dependence on verbal communication with regard to instructions and assistive technology such as audio recorders. Labels should be in large, clear print with large, high-resolution computer monitors. Voice recognition software is also helpful. Other modifications include paper holders and bookstands that allow for optimal positioning of written materials, voice mail systems for messages and raised edges along the sides of work surfaces to prevent objects from falling off.

In personnel with hearing limitations any audible information should be supplemented with some form of visual presentation. Whole body vibration transmitted to chairs should be minimized by utilizing anti-vibration seating surface. Am-

bient noise should be minimized through workstation design, isolating noisy printers, sound dampening etc. Workers should have vibrating pagers, visual call indicators and sound amplifiers on telephones.

The elderly should have their work environment arranged in such a way as to avoid unnecessary reaching, lifting and carrying. Storage systems with pull out shelves and workstation carousels help to keep frequently used materials within 18 inches of the body. Containers should be provided to break loads into manageable units and the employee should have the means to slide any materials over 2 pounds. Mechanical reaching devices should be available for accessing supplies beyond the reach of the worker.

With the preservation of their mental faculties and the advent of ergonomic innovations for staff, the elderly will find themselves continuing to play a dynamic and productive role in society into the later years.

## Is DOS Really Dead?

By Charlie Paschal, PPCC


Microsoft official made the break with DOS with Windows 2000. Although it tried to "fake" out the public by saying that Windows ME did, it wasn't true. With some information off the Web, a true bootup diskette can be made that will access ME with a floppy.

That's not true with 2000 and XP, which makes a true break with DOS -- you can't start either operating system with a boot disk. You can, though, bootup an ill-acting system with a boot disk that contains the correct files out of your root directory.

Both 2000 and XP use an NTFS file system -- if you use the native file system the system expects -- that supposedly can't be accessed with a floppy. There are

certain floppies -- available on the Internet -- that can be used to access NTFS volumes.

Another floppy, also available on the Internet, allows a user to boot from it to a version of Linux that allows someone to access and change the administrator's password. It's useful for someone who has forgotten the administrator's password.



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## Windows XP, Part V

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.

**W**hen you create a new user account, WinXP automatically assigns a picture to it. You can change the picture by clicking Start, selecting Control Panel, and double-clicking User Accounts. Next you must click your account to display a list of tasks you can perform and select Change My Picture to see thumbnails of the default options. To select a different image, click Browse For More Pictures and navigate to the folder that contains the image you want to use, select it, and click the Open button to return to the User Accounts screen.

### Service Pack (SP) 2

WinXP SP2 may make it more difficult for computer users to keep their machines up-to-date with the latest patches. The problem results from the new Windows Firewall, which will be installed by default when systems get SP2 through Microsoft's update mechanism. Patch management systems that use so-called agentless technology to roll out patches will find themselves powerless to patch newly firewalled WinXP systems. For more information see [www.eweek.com/print\\_article/0,1761,a=134133,00.asp](http://www.eweek.com/print_article/0,1761,a=134133,00.asp).

### Sounds

If you find the WinXP sounds irritating turn them off. To turn off sounds, click Start, Control Panel. Double-click Sounds and Audio Devices, select the Sounds tab, click the down arrow under Sound Scheme, and select No Sounds. If you want to use some of the Windows sounds, and drop others, follow the same procedure. For example, to remove the Asterisk sound under Program Events, click Asterisk. At the bottom of the window, under Sounds, click the down arrow and select None. When you have things set up the way you want them, click Save As under Sound Scheme, enter a name for your new sound scheme, and click OK. You can also customize sounds. There are many sound sites on the Internet. If they don't have download

instructions for a particular sound, right-click the sound and select Save Target As. You can save it in any folder. On the Sounds tab, click the event, such as Asterisk, then click

Browse. Navigate to the sound you downloaded, double-click it, and click Apply, OK. You can also record and use your own sounds. A microphone can be used, along with Sound Recorder in Windows (Start, All Programs, Accessories, Entertainment, Sound Recorder). You can also use the free program Audacity at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>.

### Start Menu

If your Start menu has gotten large, there are a couple things you can do to reduce its size. Right-click the Start button, select Properties, select the Start Menu tab, and click Customize. In the Customize Start Menu dialog box make sure the General tab is selected. To reduce the size of the icons in your Start menu, click the Small Icons radio button under "Select An Icon Size For Programs." If you'd like to reduce the number of programs that appear in the bottom half of your Start menu, change the number in the "Number Of Programs On Start Menu field." When you're finished making changes, click OK.

### System Tray Applets

You can shut down the following system tray applets/icons, or delete or hide them, without fear of disabling a critical Windows function.

**Clock**- right-click the Taskbar, choose Properties, and uncheck "Show the clock."

**Microsoft Outlook**- right-click the icon and choose "Customize Notifications," select the icon in the current items list, and then choose "Always hide" from the behavior list.

**Mozilla/Netscape Quick Launch**- right-click the icon, select "Disable Quick Launch," and then click OK.

**Musicmatch Jukebox**- right-click the icon and choose "Disable QuickPlay."

**Network Status**- click the icon once, click the Properties button, and uncheck "Show icon in notification area when connected."

**OpenOffice.org**- right-click the icon and deselect "Load OpenOffice.org during System Start-up."

**Power** - launch Control Panel's Power Options, click on Advanced, and uncheck "Always show icon on the Taskbar."

**QuickTime** - right-click and choose QuickTime Preferences, choose "Browser Plug-in" from the drop-down list, and uncheck "QuickTime in system tray."

**Roxin Drag-to-Disc** - right-click, choose "Settings," and uncheck "Show an icon in the system tray."

**Roxin Audio Central**- right-click, choose "Options," and uncheck "Enable AudioCentral" icon in system tray.

**Unplug or Eject Hardware**- right-click the icon, choose "Unplug or eject hardware," and uncheck "Show Unplug/Eject Icon on the Taskbar."

**Volume control**- right-click, choose "Adjust Audio Properties," and uncheck "Place volume icon in the Taskbar."

**WildTangent Driver**-click the icon, select "Recent Messages, Welcome to GameChannel," click the Options tab, and uncheck "Keep icon in system tray."

**Winamp Agent**- right-click and choose "Disable Winamp Agent."

**Windows Messenger**- right-click the icon, select Open, click Tools, Options, select the Preferences tab, and uncheck "Run this program when Windows starts."

### Task Manager

There are several other ways to call up Task Manager in WinXP. One is to right-click on the Taskbar and select Task Manager from the context list. A second is to click on Start, Run and enter "taskmgr" without the quotes. The third is to use the keyboard combination Ctrl+Shift+Esc.



## Taskbar Tray

The new Taskbar tray in WinXP, which is the "notification area" near the clock, lets you selectively hide items or see them all with the click of a button. To hide icons, you can right-click the Taskbar and choose Properties. Under "Notification Area" on the Taskbar tab, uncheck "Hide inactive icons" to get the old Windows behavior or keep it checked, and then click the adjacent Customize button to control the status of each icon.

## Time Limits

If you want to restrict your teenager from using the computer to specific time periods during the day,

first, log on to the computer using the Administrator account. Next, click Start, Run, in the Open box, type CMD, click OK and you're no longer in Windows. At the prompt, type "net user teenagename /time:M-F,5pm-7pm" without the quotes and replace "teenagename" with your son's Windows XP username. Now, your son/daughter will only be able to log on to the computer between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Logging him/her off is up to you. You can also set limits per day. For example, look at the line:

```
net user teenagename /time:M,4pm-5pm;T-F,1pm-3pm. By typing this at the command prompt, your son or daughter could log on to your computer Mondays between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. and Tuesday through Friday 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
```

## Troubleshoot Driver

If you're having a problem with one of your drives (hard drive, floppy drive, CD/DVD drive etc.), open Windows Explorer by right clicking the Start button and selecting Explore. Locate the specific drive, right-click it, and select Properties. Now select the Hardware tab, click the Troubleshoot button, and follow the on-screen instructions.

## User Accounts

WinXP enables an entire family or small office to share a single computer. Because everybody has a user account, Windows keeps track of each person's settings. The same computer acts like five different computers for a family of five. The computer even keeps track of everybody's programs while

different people use the computer. Switching users is fast and easy. While holding down the Windows

key, you press the letter L. The Welcome screen pops up, letting another person use

the computer for a time. After you finish using the computer, hold down the Windows key and press the letter L. The Welcome screen pops up again, letting a different user log on to the computer.

## Utilities

There are three useful utilities included in WinXP Professional and Windows 2000 Server. Microsoft now includes with WinXP Professional a new utility called Pathping.

It combines the functionality of ping and tracer. It also puts together a targeted series of traffic statistics designed specifically for network troubleshooting. Syntax is simple: just enter "pathping" then "-n" or one of the other seven switch letters and finally "targetname," which is the name of the server.

If required, you can get complete Pathping syntax help from Microsoft's Technet site. Once you've pointed Pathping at a target server, the utility not only establishes basic connectivity with the target device, but it also lists all the IP addresses of every router between you and the target server.

It further fleshes this out with latency and lost packet statistics for every hop in the sequence. Another new utility in Windows XP Professional is TaskKill. It allows you to stop any task that's running, be it on a local machine, or a remote one. You'll need to know either the name of the task, referred to as the ImageName or the PID (process ID) for the task in order to use TaskKill. This information is easy to get using the Task Kill, stopping a task is simply a matter of opening a command prompt and typing in "taskkill" followed by "/IM imagename" or "/PID processed."

This utility also has a large number of additional switches. These include the ability to enter passwords required to access certain tasks, enter filters to include or exclude specific tasks, and forcefully terminate both primary as well as child tasks.

The third utility, Diruse, comes from the Windows 2000 Resource Kit and is aimed at monitoring network directory usage statistics. If you have a few hundred network users each with a personal directory, user guidelines might clearly state that users shouldn't put unnecessary files on the network, but there are always a few immature computer users out there who ignore such edicts.

Finding these culprits, however, can be a real waste of system administration time if it's done inside something like Win-

dows Explorer. Running Diruse will give you not only the location of the directory, but its overall size and the size of all its sub-directories. It can also help determine the actual size of files being compressed via NTFS compression.

You can easily make Diruse part of a Windows management script, basically allowing a periodic polling of your entire directory structure. This information can be dumped into a log file and then manipulated with something like Excel allowing administrators to easily shape their data in order to find trouble spots on the network.

You can find out more about Diruse and download the utility without the Windows 2000 Resource Kit. The combination of WinXP Professional and Win2000 Server or Windows Server 2003 is much more powerful and intricate than Windows NT Server and the older Windows client operating systems.

## Volume Control

To put the volume control back where it belongs on your computer screen, which is right next to the little clock in the bottom right corner of the screen, click the Start button, open the Control Panel, and click the Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices icon. Next you must click the Sounds and Audio Devices icon and select the Place Volume Icon in the Taskbar check box. When a little speaker appears next to your clock, click OK to close the window. Now, if you need to turn the sound up or down in a hurry, click the little speaker by your clock. A sliding volume control appears, which lets you turn the sound up or down by sliding the control up or down. To turn the sound off completely, you need only click the Mute box.

Finally, there are many Web sites on the Internet with WinXP tips and tricks such as <<http://www3.sympatico.ca/rdinning/WindowsXP.htm>>. If you are looking for a particular tip/trick, check out this site.

## STUDY GROUPS

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



## Hard Drive HouseKeeping Is Vital

by Dennis Schulman, Tampa Bay Computer Society

Dennis Schulman, known as the PC Miracle Man, has been a practicing field consultant in Largo, Florida for over 22 years. He has been a member of the Tampa Bay Computer Society for over 15 years and was the editor of its sometimes 40-page newsletter for 5 years. He can be contacted at <dschulman@myrapidsys.com>.

For those of you who surf the net on a regular basis - and that includes those who use dialup access as well as cable or DSL - it is absolutely crucial that you take your hard drive housekeeping more seriously than you ever thought necessary. Many users think that by having a suite of utilities, such as Norton or McAfee, that you are protected. You might be, but I seriously doubt it for so many reasons I won't go into it now except for three:

You use auto update and auto scan. This requires that your computer be online at the time to run the auto update. In the case of cable or DSL, that is possible, but the computer has to be on at the time also. In the case of dialup, the computer won't go online unless your password is saved and used automatically. That, of course, defeats keeping friends and annoying children from messing up the computer without your knowledge. So, you might want to run your antivirus update manually, just to make certain it worked and there were no errors.

The second reason is based on the fact that if you did not clean house before scanning, you risk the possibility of the antivirus finding a virus it could not delete or quarantine and you did not know it. You also risk the possibility of not knowing if the auto update was not run successfully for one of many reasons (and time and space won't permit that discussion at this time) and consequently your subsequent full system auto scan may not be able to recognize the latest nasties you have managed to acquire.

There is a third, more obtuse, reason. If you don't really know if your system is truly clean and clear of all the bad stuff, how will you know what to do when you get a message that says something to the effect: "It has been determined that your computer has been sending messages infected with the \_\_\_\_\_ Trojan horse virus to what appears to be the e-mail listing of your address book. If you do not take appropriate action immediately, your e-mail service will be discontinued. If your anti virus program has failed to protect you, please download the following Trojan horse removal tool and run it immediately."

So, here is a housekeeping procedure I use - which is manual - because then I am more certain that I know the status of my files

than most of the "suite" programs. And it doesn't use much - if any - of my system resources except when I use it. Just in case you think you have all the utilities you need, let me comment that I am not an expert on your system, but I spend more time now than ever before on systems that have too many over-burdensome utilities that are truly unnecessary and in some cases more dangerous than what they claimed to be designed to do. What I am proposing is basically using 3 little free utilities that only work when invoked, along with utilities that already come with your computer.

Run Disk Cleanup (under System Tools under Accessories on the Programs menu) and process all options (don't worry about compressed files, but do them at a later time when you have nothing else to do, since it could take quite a while if you haven't done it the first time.)

Clear your browser cache (In Internet Explorer go to Tools, Internet Options. Delete cookies and delete all offline files.) In Netscape Communicator go to Edit, Preferences, Advanced, Clear Memory Cache and Clear Disk Cache)

Open Windows Explorer (right-click on My Computer, select Explore), Select the folders/View option and select show all files except system files (You can leave it this way.) Find any folders called tmp, temp, or cookies. Unless you have a good working knowledge of what cookies you need or do not need, you probably don't need the contents of any of the temp, cookies, or temporary Internet folders except the index.dat file (you might want to save the contents of the History folder)

Empty the Recycle Bin.

Update and run the latest core version of Adaware SE Personal Edition (currently version 1.05). Once the scan is complete, click on an object found, right-click a lined item and select all, click next and remove all.

Update and run the latest version of Spybot (currently version 1.3.) Before running the scan, run immunize. Then run Look for Problems. Once problems are found, select them all and click on Fix Problems.

Note: Some spyware may be associated with programs you want to use, so read the help section for a further understanding of the fea-

tures and options on both of these programs. These spyware objects detector utilities can be downloaded from download.com or majorgeeks.com.

There is a third utility, called a hijack remover. There are many available, but I like CWSshredder.exe (current version 2.00) (use [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) to find the program) Just make certain you are not online and that your browser is not open when you run it. You may be surprised and pleased if it finds something and fixes it (generally really bad stuff).

Now you should be able to update and run your antivirus more successfully than ever before. The only catch is that it takes time. Once you figure out about how much time each step takes, you can determine whether you can walk away and come back later when it is done.

I recommend running housekeeping at the end of every day you go online - if you can manage it. (cough! cough!) Otherwise, run it every 3 days for certain.

Now, if you know your computer is clean and pure, then this is the only condition to justify running the defragmentation utility (once a week or twice a month). Defrag does not "fix" anything. It enhances the performance of a healthy environment. If you attempt to defrag a "sick" system, you could make it worse to the extent that the computer will fail to boot or run. If you have Windows 2000 or Windows XP, you can run defrag directly. If you have Windows Me, 98, or 95, run it in Safe Mode. I prefer running Defrag in Safe Mode as I have a UPS and the computer can complete the defrag, even if the lights go out in the house.

Now that you have successfully learned the housekeeping routine and understand its importance without the need for complex and sometimes dangerous free software utilities that can cause conflicts, you can set up the program scheduler to run your housekeeping routine for you and just check up on it from time to time to see that it is accomplishing your wishes.

Feel free to e-mail me for further details and other fine, free utilities available for keeping your hard drive and system performing at its best.





## Freeware & Shareware

### Tim Hoke, Alamo PC

Tim is a long-time member of Alamo PC and writer for the PC Alamode. He also served on the board of directors for many years.

This month I've included several shareware and freeware programs that I hope will interest you. Since spyware is an ever-increasing problem I start with a few programs that will help rid the evil spies from your computer. I follow that with some offerings that may just make your computer time more fun and useful.

Windows AntiSpyware (beta) is a security technology that helps protect Windows users from spyware and other potentially unwanted software. Known spyware on your PC can be detected and removed. This program helps reduce negative effects caused by spyware, including slow PC performance, annoying pop-up ads, unwanted changes to Internet settings, and unauthorized use of your private information. Continuous protection improves Internet browsing safety by blocking more than 50 ways spyware can enter your PC. The worldwide SpyNet community plays a key role in determining which suspicious programs are classified as spyware. Microsoft researchers quickly develop methods to counteract these threats, which are automatically downloaded to your PC, so you stay up-to-date. It is absolutely free at [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com).

Although I've mentioned Ad-Aware SE Personal before, I include it again because it is spectacular. I run it several times a week, and am I ever glad! Ad-Aware SE Personal is a popular utility from Lavasoft that finds adware and spyware on your computer. These are the nasty little programs that automatically report back to someone else (such as Aureate, Alexa, Comet Cursor, Gator (now renamed Claria), Lop.com, NetNanny &c.) about what you are doing with your computer and other system-crippling malware (such as Hotbar). Ad-Aware SE Personal identifies files, cookies, and registry entries. Removal of stuff from your hard drive is entirely under your control. The new version adds upgraded heuristics that more effectively identify hidden or stealth items. You can find out more about this excellent program and get it free at <http://www.lavasoftusa.com/software/adaware>.

Twice awarded PC Magazine's Editors' Choice for anti-spyware software, Webroot Spy Sweeper 3.5 protects your PC from the consequences of spyware in two powerful ways. Proactive shields guard you against spyware before it infects your system, while an advanced detection process quickly finds and disables existing spyware infections so you can safely remove them without the risk of harming your PC. New Spy Sweeper 3.5 combines enhanced detection for the most vicious spyware, including CoolWebSearch, with sweep speeds that are now 30% faster. It's free to try and \$29.95 to keep at <http://www.webroot.com>.

CWShredder 2.1 is a small utility for removing the nasty CoolWebSearch browser hijacker and its ever-changing variants from your hard drive. For 9x/NT/2K/XP. The tool specially made to remove the CoolWebSearch spyware/hijacker. CoolWebSearch has become so common (and CWShredder sufficiently refined) that it would behoove computer users to run this whenever they suspect possible parasite infestation. You'll find it at Intermute, located on the web at <http://www.intermute.com/products/cwshredder.html>.

Google Deskbar enables you to search with Google from any application without lifting your fingers from the keyboard. Search your own computer with the power, ease, and speed of searching Google! You can preview search results in a small inset window that closes automatically. The program installs easily in your Windows taskbar. Note: Access Google from any application by typing Ctrl+Alt+G and use keyboard shortcuts for multiple Google searches? for example, Google News (Ctrl+N) or Google Images (Ctrl+I). It's free at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

Take the power of Google with you anywhere on the web with the Google Toolbar. It enables you to search the web from any site, block unwanted pop-up ads, fill in forms with just one click, search within the pages of any site and highlight the words you searched for on a page. The Google Toolbar is free and

installs in just seconds. Get one click closer to the information you want to find. Download the Google Toolbar. Version 2.0.113 allows you to search by names instead of URLs in your browser's address bar. Will any other search engine in the world give you the results that a few seconds on Google will usually give you? I don't think so. This bar builds a Google search field into your browser C and more. Probably its coolest feature is the option to search only on the present site C it will usually prove a far superior (and more user-friendly and faster) search tool than whatever search feature the visited site has. You may, however, want to disable the pop-up blocker and turn off the "Advanced Features" (which report some data back to Google). Add extras like the Page Rank and Page Info menu (and especially add the Search Site feature on the More options menu). You'll find it at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

The Windows Media Bonus Pack for Windows XP is stocked with utilities, PowerToys, visualizations, skins, sound effects, and much more for an enhanced experience. The bonus pack features tools like, Plus! MP3 Audio Converter LE offering the ability to double the amount of music you can store on your PC by converting your MP3 files to Windows Media Audio (WMA), Windows Movie Maker Creativity Kit, futuristic media skins and more. It's free at [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com).

Finally, if you are a clipart junkie you can get about 1000 pieces interesting clipart for free at [http://register.freeze.com/\(cf5fkb55wj0rnbvviadkw455\)/index.aspx?&pop=1&s=clipartsample&f=19818](http://register.freeze.com/(cf5fkb55wj0rnbvviadkw455)/index.aspx?&pop=1&s=clipartsample&f=19818).

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## Is Microsoft Longhorn a Longshot?

**Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)**

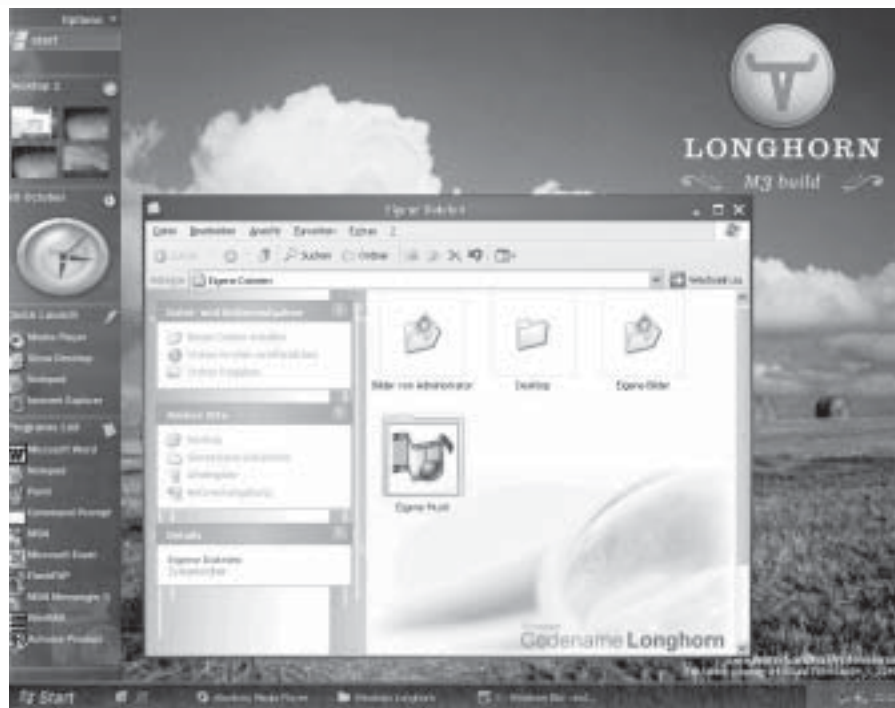
Shane uses PCs. He gets e-mail at [shane@vpwn.com](mailto:shane@vpwn.com).

On August 27, Microsoft announced it's cutting features from the next version of Windows, codenamed Longhorn, scheduled for release some time in 2006. Initially, proposed operating system advancements were in four key areas: the Windows File System (WinFS); the Avalon user interface; the Indigo communications subsystem; and application programming interfaces (APIs) designed to improve power management, driver management, application installation/deployment, and digital rights management (DRM). Combined, these areas were to integrate into a new programming model known as WinFX.

However, Microsoft decided this feature set was too ambitious to meet their 2006 deadline. Longhorn is now expected to consist primarily of incremental improvements, perhaps similar to the upgrade from Windows 98 to Windows 98 Second Edition. It now has a new focus: "We've heard loud and clear from customers that they want improved productivity, easier deployment, increased reliability, and enhanced security, as well as the many innovations we've been working on. We've had to make some trade-offs to deliver the features corporate customers, consumers, and OEMs are asking for in a reasonable time frame," said Jim Allchin, vice-president of Platforms Group at Microsoft.

The WinFS component, providing an indexed database to allow easier file access and management, will be released separately from Longhorn. Other WinFX technologies, including the Avalon 3-D graphics interface and the Indigo communications module, will be separated as well. By separating these components, their functionality will become available for Windows XP and Windows Server 2003 in the form of patches. This availability allows developers to write applications that take advantage of these features while leveraging a larger installed base of operating systems.

At this point, the final feature set of the Longhorn operating system is still



up in the air. Microsoft is pushing to re-vamp their code to produce a functional BETA. Surprisingly, many of the features reported to be forthcoming are actually already available through third-party applications. An article in Maximum PC recently highlighted how anyone presently running Windows XP can take advantage of these features now.

First, the user interface, as implemented in the current BETA of Longhorn, may be reproduced using a new type of Windows theme, called skinning. The application making this possible is called WindowBlinds and is available at [www.windowblinds.net](http://www.windowblinds.net). There are shareware and retail versions of this program. Once installed, simply download the WindowBlind's Longhorn Slate 4051 skin to emulate the Longhorn interface.

Additionally, the new version of Windows Media Player, now in its tenth iteration, also uses the slate interface of Longhorn. This software is available for download free of charge from Microsoft at [www.microsoft.com/mediaplayer](http://www.microsoft.com/mediaplayer).

Longhorn is also equipped with what is called the sidebar, which is similar to the

old Taskbar except that it can be used to display various types of information—not just a group of currently running applications. The sidebar may contain news feeds, performance data, a clock, or virtually any other type of data. This is due to its fully programmable and customizable design. The sidebar may also be broken into panes, where individual components may be viewed, hidden, or even deactivated independently. This functionality is available for Windows XP users by downloading SmartBarXP from [www.smartbarxp.com](http://www.smartbarxp.com). This program is freeware.

Finally, even the new WinFS functionality is available in some form through a program called dtSearch from [www.dtsearch.com](http://www.dtsearch.com). This software scans the files on the hard drive, creating an index from both the file's name, as well as the text from within the file. It provides searching in a more contextual fashion, providing more than two-dozen methods for locating information. For instance, one method, known as "fuzzy searching," allows a user to conduct a search for "animal pictures," as an example.



# The Switcher



## ...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac Virtual PC 7 for Mac

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

It's been an interesting couple of months in the Mac world for me.

I got a letter from a reader, asking questions and sharing her PC-switching trials with me. This is exactly what I'd been hoping for. I wasn't able to answer her questions, but I think we made some progress together. I'd really like to see our own Alamo PC-based Switcher support group form through interaction like this. Keep the letters coming!

Her problems dealt with maintaining her PC-based Outlook profile. She felt we had two options: migrate the profile into Microsoft Entourage 2004 for Mac or use Microsoft Virtual PC and continue to run some version of Windows and Outlook on her new G5.

We soon discovered that Microsoft's failed to provide an easy migration path. The PST file, which contains mail and contacts, can't be imported into Entourage. We also determined that Virtual PC 6 (the current version) is incompatible with the G5 processor. Our best hope is a new version, Virtual PC 7—the focus of this article.

### What is Virtual PC 7 for Mac?

Virtual PC emulates an Intel x86 environment on the Mac desktop. Though Microsoft hesitates to promote this, you may configure most any operating system that runs on a standard 32-bit PC. That includes Linux, as well as Windows.

Virtual PC creates a "virtual machine," which acts like a real PC without the additional hardware requirement. This PC may be launched in a Window or used in full-screen mode.

**NOTE:** I played a joke on a Mac friend of mine several months ago by configuring Virtual PC to run at OS X startup and to load a Virtual Windows Server 2003. Fortunately, my friend's minor heart palpitations weren't REALLY a heart attack—so no expensive hospital bills!

### Who should use it?

Microsoft intends Virtual PC for Mac users who access Windows-only programs (i.e., Microsoft Outlook). It can also provide access to peripherals (i.e., printers

and scanners) that don't have drivers available on the Mac.

**NOTE:** My reader needs to connect her HP Office Jet 6100 to the G5 and use it as a networked printer. HP tech support claims it can't be done. We'll see!

### What Macs does Virtual PC 7 run on?

Microsoft's minimum requirements are a 700MHz PowerPC G3 or later. The OS must be OS X v10.2.8 or later, with at least 512MB of RAM. As with my experiments on Virtual PC for Windows, the more RAM installed, the better performance will be. The system also needs enough hard drive space to support the virtual hard drive images.

### Can existing virtual machines upgrade to Virtual PC 7?

Yes—if the existing machine is supported and already running on Virtual PC 5.x or 6.x.

### Can files be transferred between platforms?

Virtual PC 7 includes three ways to transfer files. The first allows drag-and-drop between the Mac and Virtual PC. Second, the clipboard may be used to copy and paste files. Virtual shared network folders may also be configured.

### Is this different from Remote Desktop Client (RDC) for Mac?

Virtual PC runs programs directly on your Mac. RDC involves connecting a Mac to an entirely separate Windows-based computer.

### Does Virtual PC make the Mac vulnerable to viruses?

While the Mac itself doesn't become more at risk to Windows-based viruses, the virtual machines themselves have the same vulnerabilities as a regular PC. To avoid unnecessary risks to virtual PCs, install the latest Windows patches and maintain an up-to-date anti-virus program on each instance of an operating system.

### Printing with Virtual PC 7

Microsoft provides added print functionality with Virtual PC 7. The new Virtual Ma-

chine Additions Printer driver allows printing to a Mac configured printer. To take advantage of this feature, the Mac must be running Mac OS 10.3.x or later and the virtual machine must be officially supported by Virtual PC 7. According to Microsoft, it's as simple as specifying the VM Additions printer driver as the printer in Windows.

### The Toolbar

The updated toolbar contains information and shortcuts to perform tasks quickly on virtual machine. A sample of the features included: eject a CD, share a folder, access a USB device, or monitor CPU usage.

### Virtual PC 7 Upgrades

Microsoft provides several scenarios to guide previous users of Virtual PC through the upgrade process, giving advice on which Virtual PC package to purchase.

**Scenario 1:** If upgrading from Virtual PC 5.x or 6.x and current virtual machines are supported (i.e., Windows 2000 Professional, Windows XP Professional, or Windows XP Home Edition), then buy the Virtual PC for Mac Version 7 Upgrade.

**Scenario 2:** If upgrading from Virtual PC 5.x or 6.x with unsupported operating systems, buy Virtual PC for Mac Version 7 with a supported OS pack.

**Scenario 3:** If upgrading from a version of Virtual PC earlier than 5.x, and wanting a supported OS, buy Virtual PC for Mac Version 7 with a supported OS pack.

**Scenario 4:** If upgrading from a version of Virtual PC that is earlier than 5.x and installing virtual machines independently, buy Virtual PC for Mac Version 7 (without an OS).

**NOTE:** Versions of Virtual PC earlier than 5.x won't run on OS X, so file transfers from old virtual machines may not be available. The user would need to establish a virtual network connection between the Mac running the earlier version of Virtual PC and the Mac running Virtual PC 7 with OS X.





## Blogs

The Lazy Webmaster

### 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!

**B**LOG is short for Web Log and is a free and easy way to get timely information onto the Internet. It is a combination of software tools and web hosting that allows anyone to keep and maintain an online journal without having to learn complicated computer or Web design skills. It's a personal publishing system that gets your thoughts into cyberspace instantly. There's no way to count the number of blogs, but estimates start at a million and go up from there.

Seeing a blog is more enlightening than reading about them, so have a look at my newest blog at <lazywebmaster.blogspot.com>. In fact, you can finish reading this column there.

The first thing that you will notice is that it is arranged chronologically, with the newest entry on top. This diary format is the defining characteristic of blogs. They are intended for instant and frequent communications.

I found that the service called Blogger <www.blogger.com>, owned by Google, is the easiest to use, especially for beginners. Another good free service is Journal Space <www.journalspace.com>.

With all of the blog services the first thing to do is to set up a free account, which essentially means giving the service your name and e-mail, selecting a password and a name for your first blog.

The blog name will become part of the address - <yourblogname.blogspot.com>. In Blogger, you can have unlimited blogs. Journalspace gives you one, and your user name becomes your blog address, so pick it carefully.

So you don't get confused, Blogger is the name of the service and the address you visit to manage your blog. Blogspot is where the blog is actually hosted, and the address that your visitors use. They are the same service.

The other required action is to pick a blog template, or the look and feel of your blog. The service will give you a set of templates from which you may choose (and easily change if you change your mind.)





More experienced users can download other templates from third-party sites, design their own templates or modify the ones provided (they are created in HTML and Javascript: you have access to the code.)

That done, start blogging! Each entry is called a post. You type in your post, then publish it (click a button) to make it go live onto the Internet. If you want, add a few hyperlinks and format the text, just as you would with a word processor. There's even a spell checker (hint, hint.) That's it. You can master the basics of blogging in about five minutes.

But why stop with the basics?

Most blog hosts allow you to post pictures onto your blog. Blogger doesn't have an innate photo capability so you have to use a third-party program or service to transfer photos to your blog.

Hello, from Picasa Software, is a free program that is installed on your computer. You can download it from <www.hello.com>. Hello is sort of an instant messenger optimized to facilitate sharing photos with friends, but an added feature is a "bloggerbot" (bot is shorthand for robot) that sends pictures to your blog. It's quite simple to use. Master this in about a half hour.

Another way to add photos to your blog is through another blog (are you confused yet?) BuzzNet is a photoblog, sometimes called a Moblog. The MO stands for mobile: many people use these to share photos taken on their mobile phones. You can send photos by e-mail over the wireless access protocol, or WAP, as well as using BuzzNet's easy Web-based interface.

After you set up your free account with BuzzNet you can upload up to 60 photos per month. If that's not enough, you can buy more photo storage (100 more images in a month for \$5; \$15 for 300 images, or go for it and get their premium service – no banner ads, custom templates, password protected galleries and 250 photos a month – for \$36 a year.)

BuzzNet is optimized for photos rather than text; it's set up more like a gallery, although there are ways to add comments to photos. One of the options is "Blog This!" which will send a photo and text to your Blogspot blog with the click of a button.

BuzzNet is especially handy if you are traveling and are using someone else's computer – at a cyber café, for example. Since the interface is Web-based, you don't have to worry about installing any software. Hint: if you do a photo blog while traveling with a digital camera, get a USB-based card reader (something like the SanDisk 12-in-1 Memory Card Reader, about \$35) so that

you can read your memory card directly into the alien computer. If you are in the US and taking photos with your digital camera this is not necessary.

I set up a BuzzNet account: you can see my moblog there at <susanives.buzznet.com>.

If photos aren't enough, how about audio? Both Blogger and Journal Space allow audio blogs, which are sound files that you call in from any telephone and are automatically posted to your blog. These work through 3rd parties and are considered "add-ins" to the blog. You can listen to one at <lazywebmaster.blogspot.com>. I used a service called audioblogger <www.audioblogger.com> which is free and lets you post an unlimited number of 5-minute long messages by calling them in over your phone.

Some other audioblog services allow much longer posts – up to an hour! – and allow you to record them on your computer using a microphone. Some people are actually doing full-length "radio" shows using audioblogs. Sometimes this is referred to as "PodCasting," as people download the audio from the blog onto their MP3 players (an iPod, for example) so that they can listen to it away from their computer. Video blogs (Vblogs) are also starting to show up. Look at <www.audioblog.com> for more info; their service is \$50 a year.

This really just skims the surface of blogging. You can set up team or group blogs that multiple people can post to. You can enable a feature that allows others to add comments to your blog. There are blog communities that interact with each other.

Most blogs, including Blogger, will automatically set up an RSS (syndication) feed for you.

If you have your own Web space, Blogger allows you to integrate it with your web content so that it uses your URL.

Blogging can be serious business.

Last summer, Express-News military reporter Sig Christenson maintained a daily blog from the battlefield in Iraq. They can also be silly and superficial. What you blog is up to you.

For personal use, a blog can be used for vacation photos – while the vacation is still happening! They can be used for family photos – a wedding? New baby? Or even just to post your musings. If you have the Google toolbar installed, there is a Blog button on it. If you click it, it will automatically post a link to the page you are currently viewing to your BlogSpot blog. Many people use this feature to share interesting sites with friends.

But blogs can be used for business, too. They are an excellent way to get current news up onto the Web fast; even someone with no technical skills can do it without waiting for the office Web guru to fit you into her busy schedule.

Here's a warning. Any free service, blogs included, can go out of business. Weblogs, a free service started by blog pioneer Dave Winer, suddenly shut down last summer, leaving thousands of bloggers homeless.

Give it a look. A blog might be all you need, or it could be a trendy and useful add-on to a full-blown Web site.

do you  
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wanna learn how?  
Alamo PC Learning Center  
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\$15 members; \$20 nonmembers  
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A blog is short for weB LOG, a combination of software tools and web hosting that allows anyone to keep and maintain an online journal without having to learn complicated computer or Web design skills.  
We'll learn about the blogging phenomenon and get everyone online with their own *free* blog on Blogspot. As time permits, we'll set everyone up with a photo blog on BuzzNet and an audio blog through Audioblogger.  
Instructor: Susan Ives  
technical rating: Class size limited to 14  
Pre-registration required: 210.736.0080





## On the Trail of Dust

**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>.

One of the biggest enemies of effective scanning and photo graphic retouching is dust. Dust on the scanner, dust on the original, dust in the digital camera all conspire to leave those ubiquitous little white dots and squiggles all over your scanned image. You can easily spend hours working on a photo-composite or retouch project and feel that it is perfect, but when you output the image to a high-resolution printer you are bedeviled by those little spots. We will never be able to completely get rid of dust. High-end graphics shops have tried, using clean rooms, ionizing the air, employing anti-static brushes and compressed air with varying amounts of success, but most of us cannot afford such extreme measures. This month, we talk about simple things we can do to alleviate this graphic arts menace.

The first and simplest thing is to try and keep your workstation clean. Computer stores sell those little cans of compressed air (usually for blowing out your keyboard), they are great for blowing some dust off your scanner surface and the originals you will be scanning. On flatbed scans, dust will appear white; but on transparency scans from a film scanner, dust will be black. Swiffer-type cloths also work well for wiping down your computer equipment. It will be a constant struggle since we all know how much dust computers attract, but keeping a clean area for your scanning will save you time in the long run. On a flatbed scanner, be sure to clean the glass using a streak-free cleaner, but be careful not to get the spray inside the scanner.

There are two types of flatbed scanners with regard to dust: open and closed. Most older flatbed scanners are of the open variety. They had vents in the body to cool the interior of the scanner. Unfortunately this also allowed dust to get inside the scanner, onto the underside of the glass, the light source or the CCD element. Occasionally with older scanners it may be necessary to disassemble the scanner (carefully) and dust out the interior. Dust on the CCD manifests itself as a fine line running down the length



Figure 1

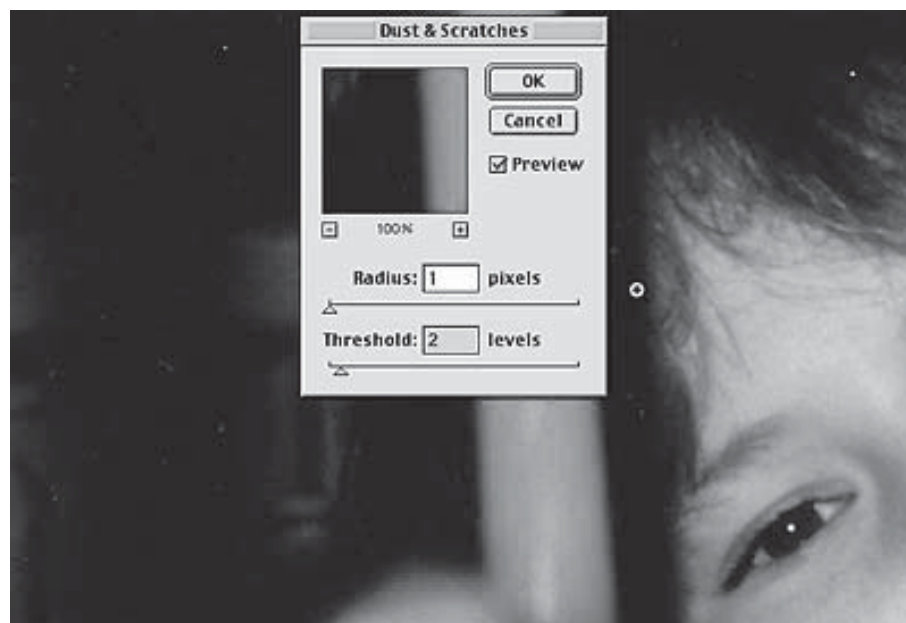


Figure 2





Figure 3

of the scan. Newer, closed scanners run cooler so they do not need to be ventilated in the same way. This is a good thing to look for when purchasing a scanner.

Upon making a scan, no matter how fastidious you are, there will be some dust spots on the image (fig 1). After sharpening the image (in Photoshop select Sharpen: Unsharp Mask from the Filter menu), you will see more dust spots. It is important to view the image at 100% (in Photoshop se-

lect View: Actual Pixels or double click the Zoom tool). This will allow you to see all the spots that need to be removed.

There are two basic ways to remove spots, the Dust & Scratches filter or the Clone or Rubberstamp tool. The Dust & Scratches filter (select Noise: Dust & Scratches from the Filter menu) does an effective job of removing spots at the expense of image sharpness (fig 2).

A high radius amount will eliminate larger dust spots, but will also smooth out the actual detail of the photo and can make somewhat of a watercolor look (fig 3). The Cloning tool is much slower but more precise. It is important to choose a source point similar enough to make the spotted area blend well.

Since viewing the image at 100% often makes it much larger than the size of your monitor, start cloning at the top-left corner of the image and work in a tiling manner. Use the page down key or the scroll bar to move down one screen and retouch out any spots. Once you hit the bottom move the scroll bar right and work on the next column going up until you have covered the entire image.

A combination of the two tools is often the best; you can use the filter at a low radius for the small stuff and then go in manually with the cloning tool to take out the bigger chunks. It is also possible to mask off simple background areas where a high radius Dust & Scratches filter would not be noticeable and then do the subject with the Clone tool. Used in combination, these tools can save you a lot of time.

You cannot stop dust from getting into your images, but you can create your own digital version of perfection. It is important to carefully look over every scan before you print it. No image should go out all spotty.

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# Windows Accessories "System Tools" Backup Your System

Ron Ingraham, Space Coast PC User Group

Ron is a member of Space Coast PC Users Group. Instructions in this column were created on a Windows 98 system. e-mail him at <ringram728@earthlink.net>

If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times "BACKUP, BACKUP, BACKUP" figure 1. Microsoft has provided a tool to enable you to do just that. When you have created an important document or data files, you should back them up as a precaution against inadvertent loss, such as (perish forbid!) a hard drive failure or other catastrophe. When you activate Backup, the window in figure 2 will appear.

As you can see, the first option is to create a new backup job. Having selected this, we say OK and proceed to the next step. For this example we'll back up a folder containing some pictures we don't want to lose. It could be anything else. When the Backup Wizard Opens, as seen in figure 3, there are two options. We will select the second, since we don't at this time want to do an entire computer backup. You should note that the latter is an available option. The next window is where we select the folder we want to back up, figure 4.

Once this is accomplished, the wizard offers two more options. The first is to backup All Selected Files. That is the natural preference in this case. If we were backing up something like Quicken files or a database, we might

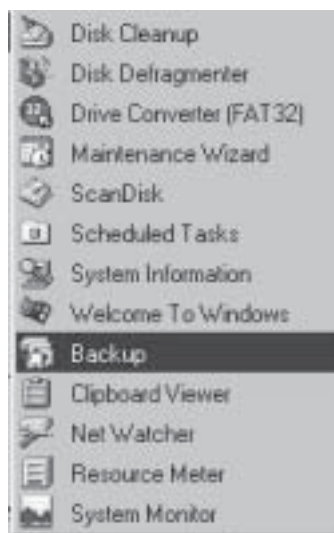


Figure 1

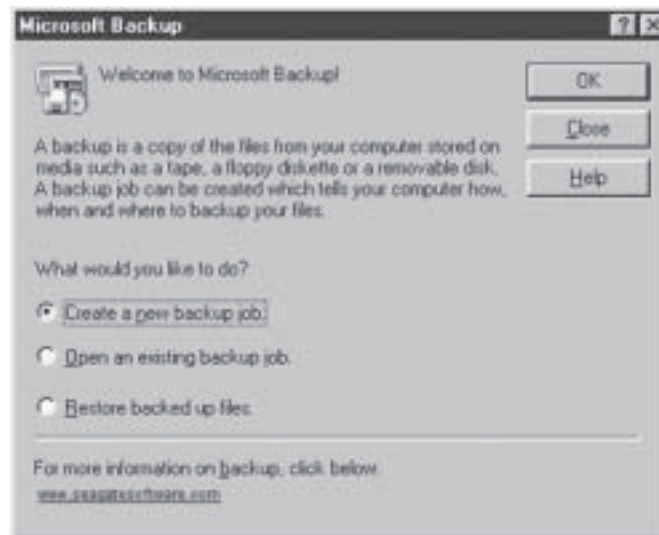


Figure 2



Figure 3

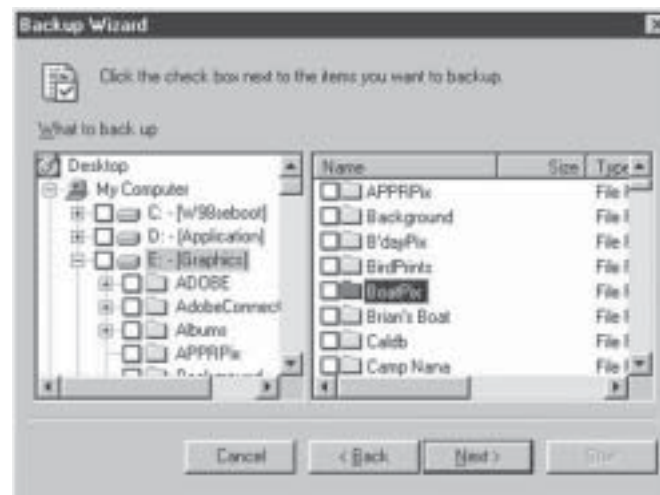


Figure 4



opt for the second option, to just backup New or Changed files. Having made our selection, we are presented with the next window seen in figure 5 where we must designate the desired location for the backup files.

Since I have a separate physical hard drive, I will place the backup there, so that in the event of what some say is the inevitable hard drive failure, I will still have a copy of the backup. We are next presented with choices of how to backup. First, we may elect to compare the original to the backup files, to verify that the data was successfully backed up, figure 6. Then we may elect to compress the backup file in order to conserve space.

Having made our choices, we are now asked by the Wizard to give our backup a name, figure 7. Obviously, we want to be able to find this file after a period of elapsed time. Pick a name that will be easily remembered, and perhaps make note of the name in a separate location.

We have now reached the final step. Click on the Start button and the window below will appear. In this case, the progress bar fills in rapidly, the whole process being completed in 4 seconds, figure 8. Larger files would take proportionately longer. A quick check of Explorer shows that the file is in place on the "I" partition as MyBackup.qic. Clicking on the file will reveal the backup file "BoatPix". Next month we'll see how to restore from a backup.



Figure 5

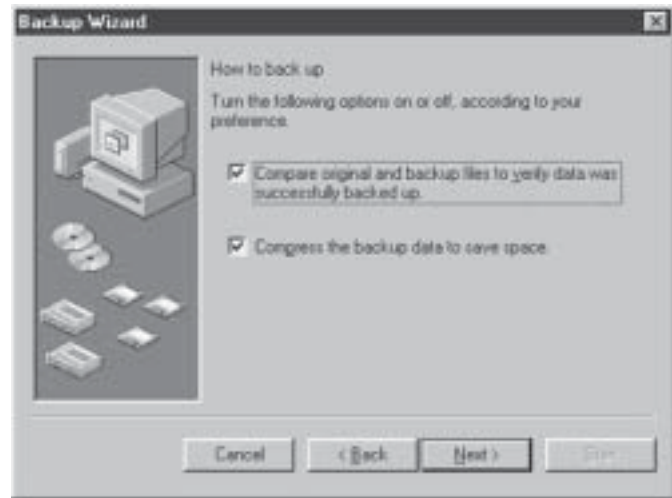


Figure 6

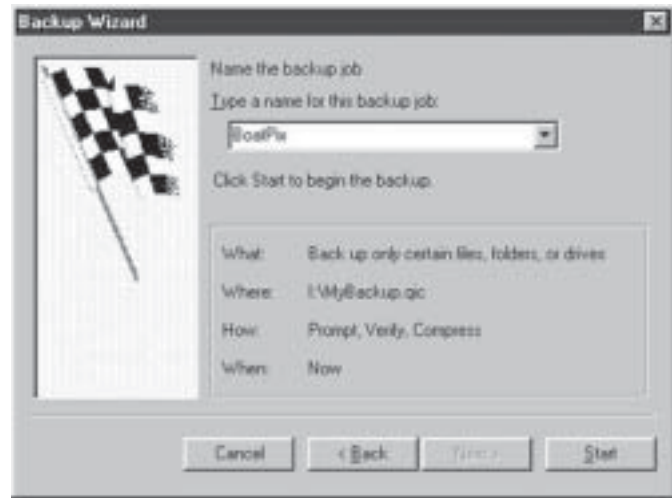


Figure 7

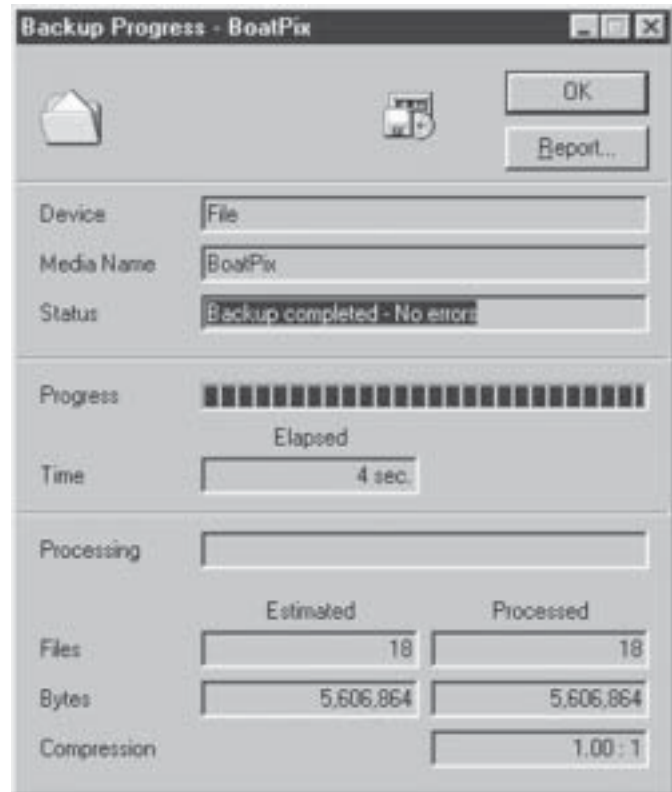


Figure 8



# Ponderings

Meredith Poor

One of the little tidbits of information coming across the transom is that the net worth of Americans collectively is \$46 trillion. One can find this by poking around in the Federal Reserve statistics at <www.FederalReserve.gov>.

Corresponding fishing around in the Census Bureau website <www.census.gov> suggests that there are around 105 million households (or occupied residences) and that annual income (which is the sum of wages, sole proprietorship earnings, interest income, dividends, rents, etc. is

\$43,000. Dividing \$46 trillion by 105 million households suggests that the average household net worth is about \$430,000. People in San Antonio might find this number difficult to grasp, however for someone owning a condo in NYC or San Francisco this isn't a stretch at all.

For those of you twenty-somethings who are convinced that there's no future in Social Security, make up the following spreadsheet.

	A	B	C
1	2004	1.03	43000
2	=a1+1	=b1	=c1*b2

Paste Row 2 on down until column A reaches 2042, the year the Social Security website says that the Social Security 'trust fund' will start to run deficits. Column B signifies productivity growth at 3% per year. Column C is the effective purchasing power at present. Compounding productivity growth at 3% per year over 24 years doubles effective purchasing power (in short in 2028 the average person will be earning \$87,000 in today's dollars. By 2042 it is roughly triple today's value.

This suggests that at present, the 3.3 workers that support one Social Security dependent earn a total of about \$141,000, and the recipient receives about \$9600 (or \$800 a month). By 2042 there will only be two people paying in for each person drawing funds, but at that point those two individuals will be earning purchasing power equivalent to \$272,000.

If you believe that productivity will increase at least 3% per year over the next 40 years then you might be persuaded that Social Security is in less trouble than we think. Of course, Social Security alone is a pretty miserable retirement, but given how many baby boomers are in hock up to their ears, the solvency of the system might be non-trivial.

You might wonder whether such productivity increases are sustainable, given the so-called exodus of jobs from the US to China, India, Russia, and Lower Slobbovia. One might have to ask, in this context, whether China, India, et. al. will still be 'third world' countries in ten or twenty years, given what happened in Japan after WWII, or on South Korea in the 1980's, or Brazil in the 1990's. If China and India, with a combined population of 2.5 billion in say 2014, started to spend as profligately as Americans do now, our trade deficit would reverse in a hurry. If they behave the way Japan and other South East Asian manufacturing economies do now, they would be subsidizing the American lifestyle by loaning us what would be, at that point, trillions of dollars a year (the present number is about \$600 billion). Or, more likely, the whole issue would become irrelevant.

When I look at processes that have resisted automation, what I find are the people landscaping my yard, repairing my house, running pipes and wires in new construction, and washing the dishes left over from my restaurant meal. Could we automate lawn mowing, weed pulling, and table bussing, dish washing, plumbing, and electrical work? Would this be the 3% per year productivity increase we're expecting? In short, what does it cost for you to take care of your residence, and what would you do if this cost declined substantially?

One of the curiosities of productivity improvements is that they fall heavily in the direction of discretionary consumption. We have mechanized agriculture as much as possible since it is so essential, and we have poured enormous amounts of capital into oil rigs, power plants, refineries, and pipelines so that we don't have to cut firewood from the trees in our back yard. These were automated a long time ago and haven't changed much since.

We used to go to theaters to watch plays, and then we went to watch movies, now

we just watch the movie at home. The entertainer had to travel from town to town to eke out a living, then they got a take of the gross from the movie, now they get 'residuals' from years of subsequent re-releases or media sales. Of course, a lot of stuff gets stolen, too, but one can make a living if even 10% of the customers are honest. This aspect of the economy is changing as we speak, and further change is obvious and expected.

How much of your house is 'essential' and how much is discretionary? A typical house in the 1930's was 800 square feet. The average of those built in the 2000's run around 2400 square feet. Did our families triple in size? We can automate and componentize the manufacture and maintenance of our living spaces. Therefore, we assume, we can all live in physically bigger spaces, although such spaces might be 'cookie cutter' when seen in satellite photographs. Do we decide, at some point, that we have too much house? If we do, we might start reducing our profligate habits. A smaller house has less furniture, fewer and more compact appliances, better energy efficiency, and lower maintenance costs. We would either be able to direct discretionary spending on clothes, cars, health care, or government services; or we could save it or attempt to invest it in future earnings.

At some point 'discretionary' service consumption becomes indistinguishable from 'essential'; the automated landscaping becomes automated agriculture. Such process feed back on themselves at an accelerating rate, suggesting that 3% per year growth is conservative for the remainder of the 21st century.

## 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.



# Gmail - Google offers e-mail service

*Dr. Herbert A. Goldstein, Editor, Sarasota PC Monitor*

Sarasota FL PC Users Group <www.spcug.org> <pcug@comcast.net>

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Gmail is a new, free, web based e-mail service from Google, the people who brought us that remarkable search engine. Gmail, as offered today, is an experiment in a new kind of e-mail. Similar to Hotmail, it has some important differences. Its foundation is the concept that e-mails need never be deleted, and you should always be able to find any message at any time by searching for it.

There are several major reasons why Google's concept of how e-mail should work is suspect. You get one gigabyte of storage space for your Gmails. No other Internet Service Provider offers even one-tenth of this amount. With this quantity of space available, deleting mail seems less urgent.

In Outlook, when you delete an e-mail message, it really isn't deleted. You're simply transferring it to another folder. Deleting it permanently from that folder requires confirmation on your part. Outlook doesn't make you go to the Recycle Bin to finish the job, but some Internet Service Providers aren't so considerate.

With Gmail it seems much easier to let the messages accumulate, and use the search feature to find what you want when you need it. Even if you decide to delete the message, it may not be gone. Google says that deleted messages will remain on the system, and they will be accessible at the company's web site for as long as Google cares to keep the information.

Because of a new law in California, Google was forced to admit that the company would be pooling any information you give them from any of their services. They will keep this information not only as long as they wish, but they reserve the right to give it to whomever they wish. Don't worry, however. Google probably has confidence that its intentions are good. Its corporate motto is "Don't be evil". It says so in their corporate IPO filing to the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Upon close examination, Google's privacy policies aren't any different from Amazon, Microsoft, and others. Their good guy image derives from their unconventional corporate culture coupled with their astonishingly successful search engine.

Most people have no idea what's in the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, and why should they? Most people aren't legal scholars. One of the Act's provisions says that after 180 days, e-mails are no longer protected. Their status reverts to just another record in a database. Any level of government, from local to national, can force Google to release your records armed with nothing more than a subpoena.

Google has never issued any statements about its relationships with other countries, and this should give you cause for concern. Check out the language in the agreement you have to make with Google when you sign up for Gmail. You are giving permission for Google to release your Gmail records to any official from any government, U.S. or otherwise, who requests it for any reason. Would you even want to send an e-mail to someone who has a Gmail account, knowing that your e-mail may be examined by a foreign government?

Google has also stated that your e-mail will be scanned so that you can receive advertising and links to relevant web sites. This applies to both incoming and outgoing e-mail. Nothing in any of Google's policies or public statements applies to those of us who don't have Gmail accounts. There is nothing in Google's privacy policy that would prevent them from storing a list of keywords scanned from incoming e-mail, and associating these keywords with the incoming e-mail address in their database. Google has promised their advertisers won't receive any information that would allow personal identification, but what's to stop Google from keeping this information for some other future use? No one except Google knows if the company has deleted any of the data they've collected since going online. The cookie they dropped on your hard drive doesn't expire until 2038, and it's kept track of every search term you've ever used. How's that for scary?

We don't know for certain if Google will build a colossal database derived from keywords associated with e-mail addresses. If that does turn out to be the case however, there is incredible potential for abuse. The RIAA has sent out thousands of "John Doe" and "Jane Doe" subpoenas to Universities and Internet Service Providers to identify people who

download MP3 files illegally. If the RIAA can force AOL to comply, they can do it with Google.

Would an intelligence agency make anything sinister of keywords like "Send us the secret Martha, it's only a recipe, not a nuclear launch code"? Much more ominous would be combinations like "jihad" coupled with "assassination". All kinds of patterns can be generated from keyword combinations. We're beginning to sound like paranoid conspiracy theorists, but the potential for abuse is real and should not be ignored. What makes Gmail appear so suspicious, sinister, and frightening is the enormous storage capacity that Google offers, combined with its super efficient search engine.

There is also the problem of inappropriate ad matching. Stories abound about online merchants who send themselves e-mail for testing, and discover that something in their e-mails generates ads for their competitors. The "Backspace" section of the October 5, 2004 issue of PC Magazine shows a juxtaposition of an advertisement for an all-inclusive vacation in the Caribbean along with an ad that says "Just say no to all-inclusive".

Gmail was launched presumably as a response from Google users complaining about the poor quality of their current e-mail services. Be careful what you wish for.



## GOOD MOUSEKEEPING

the seal of approval for computer tips

When you want to eject a CD from your CD-ROM drive, do have to reach way across the desk - or even under it - to push the eject button? Save your energy for more important things.

In your My Computer or Explorer window, right-mouse click on your CD-ROM drive and select Eject. — out comes the CD!

Send your Good Mousekeeping tips to:  
Susan Ives, [suives@texas.net](mailto:suives@texas.net)





# IRS Again Offers Free Online Filing Services

By Ira Wilsker

Ira Wilsker is the Advisor for Region 8, APCUG Representative & Bylaws Chair for the Golden Triangle PC Club, a columnist for The Examiner in Beaumont, Texas, and has two radio shows. He also graciously shares his articles with the APCUG editors.

We should have received all of our W-2's, 1099's, and other tax forms by now. Many of us struggle filling out tax forms manually, trying to decipher forms that have so many links and connections you feel that you have to be a genius octopus to connect all of the parts. Some of us use one of the popular tax software packages such as Tax Cut or TurboTax, and others use accountants or commercial services to prepare our most dreaded of forms. For those looking for an alternative, the IRS is again coordinating a variety of free online filing services.







The logical starting place is the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). At the top of the page is a link "Free File – Start Here for Free Online Filing". Clicking on the link opens a new page with pre-filing tips, step-by-step instructions, and a "help center" with frequently asked questions. While the free filing services are coordinated and regulated by the IRS, the services themselves are provided by a number of individual profit seeking companies or non-profit organizations. Any company listed is prohibited from mandating the purchase of any additional services, and the listed services must be absolutely free to those qualified to use the services.

The IRS site also states, "IRS Free File does not endorse Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs) or any other advance refund banking products". The site also states that your privacy and financial information will be protected by the providers listed, and that these providers must meet commercial privacy and security standards, and be certified as such by a recognized issuer of privacy and security certifications. The process of getting started is a rather simple three-step process. First is the "Start Now" button on the "Free Online Filing" web page; second is a determination of eligibility, as different providers have different requirements; finally the third step is linking to the private provider's website, separate from the IRS site. If you find that you are ineligible for a particular company's free offerings, simply return to the IRS site and repeat the process by selecting another likely service. It should be noted that while millions of us are eligible for these free services, many of us will find that we are ineligible for any of many reasons. Once a satisfactory service has been selected, then the tax return information is completed online, with the completed documents being "e-Filed", or electronically filed with the IRS.

Fifteen online providers of free filing services are listed. Each has its own requirements that may be based on residence, income, age, military status, and other factors. While some services are clearly for lower income individuals, some of the free services are available for individuals who have an adjusted gross income (AGI) of up to \$100,000. Some are available to residents of specific states, regardless of income level. None of the listed services offered free filing to Texas residents without regard to income level, though an even dozen of the services are available at no charge to Texas residents who meet other requirements. One of the services,

FreeTaxUSA, is listed as available to all Louisiana residents at no charge.

Several of the companies listed provide free service to all active duty military personnel, regardless of residence or income. Some services provide unrestricted service based on age, either younger than early 20's, or older than 62 years of age.

For those unsure about which service to consider, a button on the IRS page "Guide me To A Service!" uses a simple form to direct the user to appropriate services based on a short series of personal questions. These questions are age, estimated adjusted gross income, state of residence, number of W-2 forms, possibility of using a form 1040EZ, probable eligibility for the "Earned Income Credit", and military service. Once completed, a list of likely service providers is presented, allowing for the user to easily choose a provider.

All of the providers in what the IRS refers to as the "Free File Alliance" provide for electronic filing of tax returns. E-Filing, as the IRS calls it is relatively safe and secure, and, according to the IRS website, can generate refunds in as little

as 10 days, with faster refund service available to those who select having their refunds direct deposited to their bank or credit union accounts.

While these services are freely available online at no charge to many, they may not necessarily be the best alternative. Even if eligible to utilize one of these free services, the onus of decision making is solely on the individual, as most provide no comprehensive tax advice, meaning that it is quite possible for the user to miss deductions or credits that he may be eligible for, thus overpaying. It is also the responsibility of the user to accurately and completely enter data, as there is no one to verify the accuracy of the data entered. To use an early cyber cliché, "GIGO", which means "Garbage in – Garbage Out", the final return can only be as accurate as the information entered.

Clearly, the free filing alternatives may be attractive to many individuals, but for many others the more traditional tax preparations resources may be a superior alternative. The choice is yours; choose wisely.

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## News Brief

# Advice from the IRS

Extracted from <<http://www.irs.gov/faqs/faq-kw27.html>>

**Question:** I purchased a computer last year to do online day trading part-time from home for additional income. Can I deduct or depreciate the cost of the computer or internet connection from my investment income?

**Answer:** You may deduct investment expenses (other than interest expenses) as miscellaneous itemized deductions on Form 1040, Schedule A line 22, Itemized Deductions. This would include depreciation on the portion of your computer used for investment purposes, and the portion of your internet access charges used for investment purposes.

The entire acquisition cost of a computer purchased for business use can be expensed under Code section 179 in the first year if qualified, or depreciated over a 5-year recovery period. Under section 179, you can elect to recover all or part of the cost of certain qualifying property, up to a dollar limit, by deducting it in the year you place the property in service. You can elect to expense the cost of qualifying property instead of recovering the cost by taking depreciation. To claim the expense in the first year, the property must be used more than 50% for business use (as opposed to investment use), and meet the other requirements for expensing. One of those requirements is that the total cost of qualifying property you can deduct after you apply the dollar limit is limited to the taxable income from the active conduct of any trade or business during the year. Any cost not deductible in one year under section 179 because of the business income limit can be carried to the next year.

The 2003 Jobs and Growth Act raised the aggregate cost that can be expensed for any tax year beginning after 2002 and before 2006 to \$100,000. The new law also expanded the definition of Code Section 179 property to include off-the-shelf computer software. See Code Section 179 for the expanded definition. If the business use falls to 50% or less in a later year, these tax benefits may be subject to recapture. See Publication 946, How to Depreciate Property for additional information on the section 179 deduction.

Because these deductions are for investment expenses rather than for business expenses, these deductions must be reduced by 2% of your adjusted gross income. Use Form 4562 Depreciation and Amortization, to compute the depreciation for the portion of your computer used for investment purposes.

**Note:** Unless the computer is used more than 50% for business purpose (as opposed to investment purposes), you cannot claim section 179 expensing of the computer or claim accelerated depreciation (including the special depreciation) for it. For more information, refer to "Listed Property" in Publication 946, How to Depreciate Property.



# eBay Hints and Tips

By Cathy Margolin, North Orange County (CA) Computer Club

## Buying on eBay

eBay is the largest global marketplace with very low entry cost. Tons of new and used and collectable items are bought and sold every day as there are millions of sellers putting up items that you may not be able to find anywhere else! Last year, eBay users exchanged some \$9.3 billion worth of goods. On an average day there may be over 1 million sales occurring.

First off you should start watching some auctions to get a feel for the process. Once you get used to the process, get an eBay id (do not use your E-mail name as your user-id, the spammers will get it!). Then start bidding on small items to learn the process and develop positive feedback. It all runs on feedback. Also multiple user Ids are still ok. Some people use one for selling and another for buying, so as not to let people know their sources.

## How to Find What You Want

You can search titles and descriptions such as: Haviland -johann -theo\* (which means look for haviland with no johann and no theo\* which is a wild card to ignore any theo-----). You can also look under categories to find an item, but remember not everyone puts their article for sale in the correct categories.

When the seller has tons of items and you want to only search Palm Pilot, go to seller search, go to the bottom of the page, enter Palm Pilot, and under Multiple sellers, put the person's eBay id (or several IDs).

## Bidding

Make sure you check the seller's feedback-too many negatives and neutrals is

not good. Beware of a seller with no feedback and a large dollar item for sale, they may be good or bad or just not know the ropes yet, but you do not have enough information to trust them with your hard-earned money.

If you have a concern about the seller, ask them a question a few days before the auctions end (such as cost of shipping, do they take Paypal, etc.) to see how they respond. Use odd numbered cents, such as .99 since the bids go up in increments of 50 cents, \$1 (depending on the value of the bid), you may win an item by just one cent.

Think of any auction you have been to - it is only the last price at the close of the hammer that counts! Always snipe - which is bidding at the last minute.

In this auction format, it is only the highest bidder at the close of the auction that wins. If you bid during the week, you keep driving up the price, but bidding at the last second masks interest and usually results in a lower cost. You can use a service (www.esnipe.com which charges a fee or hammersnipe at hammertap.com which does not) or use a program on your own computer. Bid the maximum amount you want to spend (proxy bidding - only goes up to this amount if someone places a bid against you). Be aware of the Terms of Sale (TOS) for each seller. They differ greatly.

## What form of payment do they take?

What is the shipping cost, as this can be very high! The Post Office uses zip codes to price shipping, so it is now less complicated. Check out seller feedback and what type of items they usually sell. A set of tips is at the Vendio site (which also has an online bulletin board about eBay auctions). <<http://www.vendio.com/service/tipsandtactics/index2.html>>

## How to Pay

To help protect yourself, use a credit card, if possible, Paypal, check or lastly a money order. If the transaction goes wrong, you can stop payment on your check and it is easier to get reimbursed (chargeback) if you use a credit card.

When the item has arrived, don't forget to give feedback to the seller. eBay is where the market is in online auctions - it is an ever-changing marketplace, where change is constant.



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# AmiBroker version 4.50 and AmiQuote version 1.55

By Lloyd Mizer, North Orange County Computer Club

**A**miBroker is a shareware program that provides an alternative to high cost charting programs. You can download and use the program for 30 days; you must then register the program to continue using it.

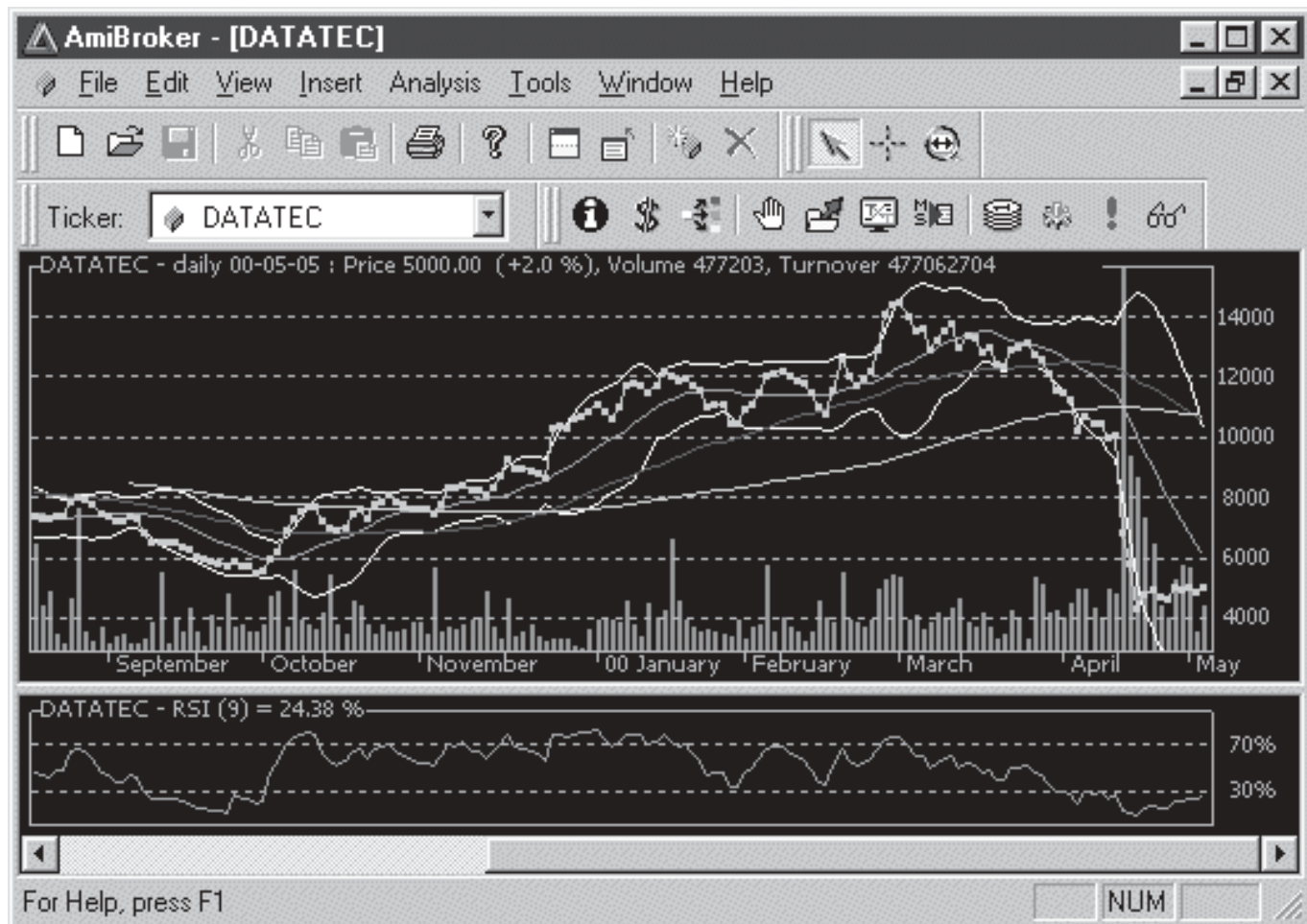
AmiBroker does not give refunds so you should use the evaluation period to make sure it fits you needs before you purchase the program. It comes in two editions, the standard edition is for End Of Day (EOD) charting, and the professional edition is used for real time charting. When you pay the registration fee you will receive the personalized keyfile by e-mail, this is the only delivery method supported by AmiBroker.

AmiBroker was awarded 3rd place in Stocks&Commodities 2003 Readers' Choice contest in the "Standalone analytical software, \$200 or less" category. I only used the standard edition so this review does not include an evaluation of the professional edition.

I find this program reliable, easy to use, the documentation is excellent, the performance good and, for \$129.00, it is a real bargain. AmiBroker includes AmiQuote, a download program that allows you to download free EOD data from over 50 worldwide exchanges. It includes the most popular indicators and Bollinger bands, trend lines, Fibonacci retracements and time zones, parabolic stop-and-reverse.

When you register the program you will get the keyfile, which allows database saving, and one year of free upgrades. You get access to the members' only area with the weekly tips newsletter, monthly Stocks&Commodities Traders Tips. The latest private version of AmiBroker, extra AFL formulas for indicators, commentaries and trading systems are also included. It also contains a 50% discount on future upgrades and free technical support.

AmiBroker 4.50 includes Portfolio-Level back testing and optimization. It includes multiple time frame support, window linking, and an enhanced reporting system. AmiBroker provides an excellent set of documentation. There is an excellent troubleshooting guide, and





a current online AFL reference. There is a web forum, a tips newsletter, frequently asked questions, trading systems mailing list, and starter's guide. There are video tutorials on how to install AmiBroker, how to setup new database with eSignal RT feed, how to use AmiQuote in manual mode, how to setup INTRADAY database using free data from Lycos, how to add a custom indicator, how to customize price chart, how to write your own exploration, how to use chart sheets and layouts. The eSignal RT feed is used with the professional edition. There is an Amibroker support message board at Yahoo and it is a great resource for new ideas, trading formulas, custom indicators etc.

AmiBroker includes its own Formula Language (AFL) to allow users to develop and use their own custom indicators. It has an easy to use formula editor. Technical Analysis of Stocks & Commodities includes in the Traders' Tips section each month code to implement trading techniques in AFL. In the May 2004 issue the code discussed the coding of the Inverse Fisher Transform, by John Ehlers. This code is also available on line at the AmiBroker web site. AmiBroker includes a scripting interface, which allows you to control AmiBroker using JScript/VBScript so you can automate time-consuming database tasks. The Import Wizard makes importing data

easier, and the Portfolio Manager takes care of your investments. You can write your own DLLs and use external ActiveXes in custom formulas.

AmiBroker runs on the following Windows operating systems: Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows ME, Windows NT 4.x, and Windows 2000. If you are using Win95 you must have Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher installed on your computer. The vendor's web site is <http://www.amibroker.com>. The standard edition single user license is \$129.00. The professional single license is \$199.00.

## News Brief

### What to Do If You Lose Your Purse or Wallet

By Bob McGovern, Macon User Group

We've all heard horror stories about fraud that's committed in your name, address, SS#, credit, etc. Unfortunately I (the author of this piece who happens to be an attorney) have first-hand knowledge, because my wallet was stolen last month and within a week the thief(s) ordered an expensive monthly cell phone package, applied for a VISA credit card, had a credit line approved to buy a Gateway computer, received a PIN number from DMV to change my driving record information online, and more.

But here's some critical information to limit the damage in case this happens to you or someone you know. As everyone always advises, cancel your credit cards immediately, but the key is having the toll-free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them easily.

File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where it was stolen, this proves to credit providers you were diligent, and is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one). But here's what is perhaps most important:

(I never ever thought to do this) Call the three national credit reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and SS#.

I had never heard of doing that until advised by a bank that called to tell me an application for credit was made over the Internet in my name.

The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit. By the time I was advised to do this, almost two weeks after the theft, all the damage had been done. There are records of all the credit checks initiated by the thieves' purchases, none of which I knew about before placing the alert.

Since then, no additional damage has been done, and the thieves threw my wallet away this weekend (someone turned it in). It seems to have stopped them in their tracks.

— Macon (GA) User Group

The national credit reporting organization numbers are:

**Equifax:** 800-525-6285

**Experian (formerly TRW):**  
888- 397-3742

**Trans Union:** 800-680-7289

**Social Security Administration:**  
(fraud line): 800-269-0271



# Using the Internet to Increase Buying Power

By Charlie Paschal, Editor, Palmetto Personal Computer Club, Columbia, SC

MONTHLY FEATURE

Buying on the Internet may intimidate some (not me), but the Internet can serve other purposes, such as a way to check prices against what you can find locally or in other nearby stores.

Ten years ago, I can't tell you the times, I would buy something and then two weeks later find it for \$50 or \$100 less at another store in another city or town. After the normal fussing, I'd blame myself for bad judgment, although in those days I had no way of avoiding it.

Now, though, with the Internet, there is no excuse. First, a couple of points to remember about the Internet:

- Items, in most cases, will be less expensive on the Internet.

- Shipping costs must always be added into the cost of an item.

- In some cases, you might save on taxes, but that depends on several factors.

- Chain stores, such as Wal-Mart, Target or Best Buy, usually charge the same for an item, even if it's in another state.

- Some items might be refurbished or reconditioned, so make sure that the item you're looking at is actually new because used items will be priced less.

There's several ways to check the price of an item, but you must do some homework first.

- Get the item's name and model.

- If you can't get all that information, get as much as you can.

- Plug that information into a search engine site, such as <www.google.com>.

- To get real people reviews of products, type that same name into <www.deja.com>.

Another way to use the Internet is to check the features of different models or the features of a model you're thinking about buying. This can reap dividends because while doing this research, you may find that the model

you're buying might not have the features you really need.

Let's take digital cameras, for example. While using a broad search at Google using only the term digital camera might bring up thousands of hits, it might turn up other digital cameras that have additional features you haven't thought about while shopping. As an example, you probably will find a site that lists digital cameras, feature-by-feature, giving you a better idea of what you need to look for in a camera.

Among those hits, too, could be information that can save you money in other ways. A good example is a modem, a device that hooks up to a telephone line to connect to the Internet. Most computers come with what's called a .soft modem, meaning it uses the computer's computing power rather than its own.

Although this might sound good, it's actually bad because these modems are cheap, cheap, cheap. If you're on a poor telephone line, you might want to get a .real hardware modem so you can have a better chance at higher-speed connections. By reading the information you get on modems, you could learn that a hardware modem is more expensive but in the long run, will offer considerably better performance.

Sometimes buying higher quality pays dividends. This also brings up another way you can use the Internet besides buying goods: reviews.

We all know the old saying about everyone having an opinion but on the Internet you can always find opinions and reviews of products. Despite everyone thinking the Internet is all about technology, the truth is that you can find information about every product known to man, including

cars, furniture... you name it.

The two sites mentioned above can help you find reviews of nearly every product or real time opinions about products. Remember, though, that you must weigh the opinions, reading several before making up your mind. There will be some fervent opinions on both sides.

To produce some of these, just type in the name of the product and the word review afterwards. For example, type in Ford Taurus reviews and hit search. Do this in each of the search engines to get not only reviews written by professionals but reviews written by real people who don't normally write for a living. Quite often, the real people reviews give you more information than the professional ones.

You don't always have to buy on the Internet to reap its benefits. Browse, search, research; all of them can make your life more interesting and safer.

- Palmetto PCC, Columbia, SC & APCUG, May 2004

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# Donating Old Computer Equipment

By Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Susan Ives is a past president of Alamo PC.

Donating your old computer equipment to a charity is a good thing, certainly better than dumping its toxic components into our landfills or having it take up space in a closet when it could be doing someone some good.

You might even be able to make a tax deduction. But don't get too excited: the rules on IRS deductions for charitable donations are restrictive and you could get in trouble for breaking them.

First, in order to deduct the value of any charitable contribution you must itemize your deductions. About one in three of taxpayers do so, according to the IRS.

Second, the contribution must be to a recognized charity – a 501(c)(3), for example – and not to an individual.

Third, the deduction has to be made in the year the donation was made.

Fourth, if the contribution is for \$250 or more, you must have a receipt from the organization acknowledging your contribution. If it's for more than \$5,000, you must have an official appraisal.

Finally, you can only deduct the fair market value of your donation.

It's the last rule that gives people trouble. How do you determine the fair market value of an old computer or other electronics equipment?

A similar scenario has been in the news lately, regarding donated automobiles, a practice that has become quite popular. Some charities, the IRS claims, have erroneously told donors that they can deduct the "Blue Book" value of their car. This is not so, says the IRS. Many factors go into the valuation of a car: its condition, mileage, and even the local market conditions. A similar reasoning would apply to computers and other electronic equipment.

They also emphasize that there is no simple depreciation formula that can be applied. You can't assume that your computer depreciates by 20 percent each year, therefore a 3-year-old computer is worth 40 percent of the price you paid for it new. Don't even think about it.



So how do you determine the value of an old computer?

One of the easiest ways is to see what they are selling for on eBay. I searched for "computers" and this is what I found:

A Packard Bell Computer, with color monitor, printer and keyboard. Windows 2000XP, 128 MB Intel Celeron 333MHz, 0.6 GB hard drive, CD-ROM, speakers and a network card.

What is the opening bid? Ninety-nine cents, plus \$24.93 to ship it to me. Ouch!

Here's another Packard Bell: KDS Visual Sensations 15" CRT Monitor, Intel Pentium Processor w/ MMX Technology [200 MHz], 82 MB RAM, 16X CD-ROM drive, 3.25 GB hard drive, Hewlett Packard CD Writer Plus 48X/16X/4X, 3.5", floppy drive, 56K modem, internal ethernet card, Windows ME operating system, 2 USB Ports, keyboard, mouse, speakers, and all cables/hook-ups Included.

Starting bid? \$10.00.

Here's what I'm getting at: your old computer probably isn't worth what you think it is worth. And the deduction you will get on your taxes isn't going to pay for your next vacation.

If you plan on taking a deduction you should read the rules for yourself:

<[www.irs.gov/publications/p561/index.html](http://www.irs.gov/publications/p561/index.html)>

Publication 561: Determining the Value of Donated Property

<[www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p526.pdf](http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p526.pdf)>

Publication 526: Charitable Contributions

But don't let that stop you from finding a good home for your old equipment. There are lots of kids in town who could make use of an old computer to type their homework or even just practice their keyboarding skills. A local school, non-profit or faith-based group can help you find an appropriate recipient.

One local organization, CRECER, refurbishes old computers and gets them into the right hands. Their Web site is as <<http://www.salsa.net/crecer/Default.htm>>.



# Is PayPal safe?

By Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Susan Ives is a past president of Alamo PC.

Let's cut to the chase: I think it is. I've been using PayPal for a while now and have never had a problem.

For those of you who have yet to use the service, PayPal is an Internet alternative to using a credit card or writing a check. PayPal (which is now owned by eBay) is not a bank or a financial institution. It provides a pass-through service.

PayPal helps small merchants who may not have the wherewithal to accept credit cards, which can have expensive up front costs and an ongoing administrative burden. Instead, a merchant (and that can be you and me) sets up a free PayPal account. The buyers pay PayPal. PayPal pays you (and takes a small commission on each transaction, 2.9% + \$0.30 for merchants who do less than \$3,000/month in business.)

Studies have shown that people are more apt to buy if they can click on a button and pay one the spot, instead of printing a form, mailing a check or picking up the phone and making a call. PayPal can increase sales.

PayPal also has elaborate security procedures to protect merchants from fraud. Nothing is perfect, but having PayPal review your transactions is more efficient than you, as someone who may be operating a part-time garage business, trying to figure out if this check will bounce or that credit card is stolen. They do it better than you can.

On the buyer side, PayPal is totally free. It's especially good for people who do not have credit cards, as they can direct-transfer money from their bank accounts. It's useful for credit card users as well. It can be dangerous to send your credit card information into the great unknown. You don't know what kind of security a small merchant might have on her server or whether he is trolling for personal information to re-sell. PayPal monitors its merchants and screens out the duds; it insures your transaction from fraud and its server security is top-notch.

So what's the down side?

PayPal isn't a substitute for common sense. There are some great security tips on the PayPal security center,



[https://www.paypal.com/us/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=\\_security-center](https://www.paypal.com/us/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_security-center).

One thing that is frightening is not the fault of PayPal but rather the work of crooks who capitalize on their good name. It's called "spoofing" and "phishing." It happens to other reputable Web sites but is especially scary with PayPal.

Phishing is when someone sends you an e-mail asking you to reply with personal, often financial information. It will say something like "PayPal needs to update your account information, so reply to this e-mail with your credit card number."

Phishing often is accompanied by spoofing, which is setting up a fraudulent Web site that looks exactly like the official site. An e-mail will direct you to a fake PayPal site and ask you to enter personal information.

Here's what PayPal recommends to protect yourself:

"Safe Log In: To log in to your PayPal account or access the PayPal website, open a new web browser (e.g., Internet Explorer or Netscape) and type in the following: <https://www.paypal.com/>

"Greeting: E-mails from PayPal will address you by your first and last name or the business name associated with your PayPal account. Fraudulent e-mails often include the salutation "Dear PayPal User" or "Dear PayPal Member".

"E-mail Attachments: PayPal e-mails will never ask you to download an attachment or a software program. Attachments contained in fraudulent e-mails often contain viruses that may harm your computer or compromise your PayPal account.

"Request for Personal Information: If we require information from you, we will notify you in an e-mail and request that

you enter the information only after you have safely and securely logged in to your PayPal account.

"Often, fraudulent e-mails will request details such as your full name, account password, credit card number, bank account, PIN number, Social Security Number, or mother's maiden name.

"If you think that you have received a fraudulent e-mail (or fake website), please forward the e-mail (or URL address) to <spoof@paypal.com> and then delete the e-mail from your mailbox. Never click any links or attachments in a suspicious email."

I just forwarded another spoof e-mail to PayPal. Some scammer sent me an e-mail saying that another e-mail had been added to my PayPal account and I needed to click on this link to verify it by providing some personal information. Wrong! Don't ever answer e-mails like this. A lot of people do.

Not everyone is in love with PayPal. Merchants have complained that PayPal has the ability to freeze their accounts for flimsy reasons (such as one unsubstantiated customer complaint) and that their arbitration procedures are inadequate. Buyers have complained that PayPal is hard to contact and slow to react when they have been ripped off by a merchant. Class action lawsuits have been filed in several states.

The vast majority of PayPal transactions are conducted without a hitch and PayPal transactions are much safer than dealing directly via cash, check or credit card with a small, unknown merchant or buyer.

But remember: if it's too good to be true, it probably is. PayPal is no substitute for common sense.



# The Government is Here to Help Your Computer

**By Ira Wilsker**

Ira Wilsker is the Advisor for Region 8, APCUG Representative & Bylaws Chair for the Golden Triangle PC Club, a columnist for The Examiner in Beaumont, Texas, and has two radio shows. He also graciously shares his articles with the APCUG editors

MONTHLY FEATURE

Our computers are apolitical inanimate machines not influenced by our personal politics. While we as individuals may differ in our beliefs of how much the government should be involved in our personal computing, there is an increasing amount of influence government agencies are having in our routine computer utilization.

Recently the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, acknowledging the role that our personal computers have in national security, announced a series of email alert services to notify us of potential cyber attacks and other threats to our cyber infrastructure.

As has been explained previously in this column, our computers and net access have become a potential target of terrorism, and can be utilized to launch cyber attacks without our knowledge. As I type this, the Utah based software company SCO, has had its net access shut down because it was one of the targets of a denial of service attack launched from countless thousands of computers infected with the "A" version of the MyDoom worm.

The free alert system from the Department of Homeland Security, coincidentally announced as the MyDoom worm infected millions of machines and slowed down the net, is available both online and by email subscription at [www.us-cert.gov](http://www.us-cert.gov). Warnings will be posted on this site, and emailed to subscribers as soon as they are released. The free email alerts are listed at [www.us-cert.gov/cas/index.html](http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/index.html) and distributed in four varieties.

Two of the alerts are highly technical versions, and two are non-technical "plain English" versions. If you decide to subscribe to these free alerts, be sure to follow the subscription instructions explicitly. In order to prevent the unauthorized "spamming" of subscriptions, a double opt-in process is utilized. When you send the initial email subscription, a confirming email will be sent by the email list server containing a unique reply code; be sure to follow the instructions exactly in that reply email in order to effect the subscription.

The "Technical Cyber Security Alerts", as listed on the US-CERT.GOV website, "...provide timely information about current security issues, vulnerabilities, and exploits." The other technical alert is "Cyber Security Bulletins" which "...provide bi-weekly summaries of security issues and new vulnerabilities. They also provide patches, workarounds, and other actions to help mitigate risk."

For those interested in less technical, but otherwise current and helpful information, a pair of non-technical alerts is available. One is "Cyber Security Alerts" self-described as, "...provide(s) timely information about current security issues, vulnerabilities, and exploits ... that affects the general public. ... (and) outline(s) the steps and actions that non-technical home and corporate computer users can take to protect themselves from attack." The other non-technical alert is "Cyber Security Tips" which "...describe(s) common security issues and offer advice for non-technical home and corporate computer users."

These alerts will contain a verifiable electronic signature to ensure that they are really valid alerts, and not some misleading spam intended to spoof authentic alerts and mislead victims. Despite such precautions, there has been some concern that these alerts can still be falsified, leading to the type of damage that they are intended to warn about. In a recent statement released by Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), "If I were a betting man, I'd put a few dollars down that the next virus that clogs computer networks is going to be transmitted through an e-mail that looks like one of these DHS e-mail alerts."

All four of these alerts, as well as the concurrent information posted on the US-CERT.GOV website, are intended to supplement, not replace, similar alerts already distributed by such cyber security companies as Symantec (Norton), Network Associates (McAfee), Panda, Sophos, F-Secure, Trend, and other publishers of antivirus, firewall, and internet security software and services.

In a less fearsome mode, there is a helpful service available from the quasi-governmental agency, the U.S. Postal Service, to assist businesses, organizations, and individuals who mail items using "Priority" or "Express" mail. Small quantity users can use a free online service "Click-N-Ship" available at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com) to generate and print mailing labels, complete with tracking number bar codes.

Larger volume users of Express and Priority mail can download a free utility, "USPS Shipping Assistant Software" from the Postal Service to generate mailing labels on their own computers.

Available for free download from [www.usps.com/shippingassistant](http://www.usps.com/shippingassistant), this interesting utility can be used to track and confirm deliveries, verify zip codes, create mailing labels, calculate domestic and international postage, calculate delivery times, create and store address books, and even generate merchandise return labels.

The labels themselves, complete with barcodes for tracking, are typically printed one or two to an 8.5 x 11 sheet of self-adhesive labels. Labels are available from the Postal Service website from a private contractor, our local office supply stores, or online.

I recently used both the free online label service, and the "USPS Shipping Assistant 2.2" I recently downloaded to prepare labels to mail merchandise to my kids. I found both were easy to use and produced excellent quality labels on my printer.

I then used both the free online tracking on the USPS.COM website and the online tracking service integral with the Shipping Assistant software to track the packages, and both worked equally well.

Now that computers have become a ubiquitous part of our daily lives, it is inevitable that we will see more governmental involvement and assistance with our daily computing.



# Simple But Powerful Tools Find Misplaced PC Files

By Gabe Goldberg <[gabe@gabegold.com](mailto:gabe@gabegold.com)>

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As PCs have gotten more powerful in every dimension -- faster processors, larger memories, and (especially) giant hard drives -- software developers have kept pace by bloating their applications. Where PCs once ran happily with 10-megabyte (not gigabyte!) disk drives, now most applications are many times that size, containing hundreds or thousands of files. As applications proliferate and users create their own blizzards of data files (documents, pictures, sound and video files, etc.) PC files become needles in a haystack.

Or, more annoyingly accurate, PCs are like gigantic haystacks hiding needles, since a PC's pile of files is always much more visible than the one file that's missing. Windows versions include a built-in tool for locating files. It's sometimes called Search and sometimes called Find; I guess that Finding sounds more optimistic than Searching. But they share problems: they don't search inside all file types (files' types are the second part of their names, what follows the dot, such as ".doc" for Microsoft Word files), they don't always find all copies of files, they may completely skip files, and they run slowly.

Picking a file search tool is like choosing a Web browser or your favorite ice cream flavor: a matter of very personal taste. The search tool (or browser or ice cream) you favor matters less than your knowing about choices.

Sometimes it's hard to escape an already-made choice, to try the unfamiliar -- though the pleasure of discovering a new favorite flavor helps the process along. This article describes two powerful utilities that can be your PC's lost-and-found. But remember that many other choices are available on software download sites such as

<[www.tucows.com/](http://www.tucows.com/)>.

Agent Ransack (a free download) and FileLocator Pro (\$25), near-twin-brother file-find utilities, greatly surpass Windows' native tools: they're faster, friendlier, more flexible, and more accurate. Both programs are easy downloads (less than two megabytes) and install by simply executing

the downloaded .exe file. They offer many tasty features. For example...

- 1) They display file lines containing your search string with their filenames: an overdue facility, and much more useful than displaying only filenames!
- 2) They can search multiple unrelated (non-nested) folders: what a concept, and so much better than having to repeat searches!
- 3) They can save and reuse search criteria. So if you ever repeat file searches -- for example, to find all files containing your family name -- you'll save time.
- 4) They allow saving and printing lists of files found: very helpful if a file search is the first step in a larger process which manipulates found files.
- 5) Both programs provide basic and expert interfaces. This choice allows using only simple search functions or enabling more detailed search criteria.
- 6) The programmer's tool "regular expressions" provide a more powerful wildcard notation than "\*" for specifying matching search strings and filenames. Nearly everyone gets along just fine without using these, but people who like them \*really\* like them.

You'll be encouraged to register Agent Ransack. This is optional but a friendly gesture towards the developer who makes the program available.

Big brother FileLocator Pro -- whose registration cost includes a year of updates -- adds several features: it searches additional file types (PDF, ZIP, etc.); it displays found file lines as they appear in the file, with customizable numbers of lines above and below each one; it allows immediate inspection of found files with a built-in viewer or

tailorable external editor; it provides a detailed status line with found-file statistics; and it's programmable via scripting and plug-ins.

While it's perhaps a little unfashionable, I appreciate the 24-page FileLocator Pro manual. Full of screenshots illustrating basic and advanced facilities, it's a quick read revealing tips and nuggets that might otherwise be missed.

After paying for and downloading FileLocator Pro, you'll be given a registration key that enables using the program past the free evaluation period. You'll apply the key by executing a small registry update file or by copying a string from an e-mail into a dialogue box. Note that while you're safe executing the registry update file from a trusted vendor, caution is required with such files and they should \*not\* be accepted and executed from strangers.

A minor oddity is that invoking either product via right-clicking a folder in Windows Explorer -- a handy facility -- starts a new copy of the search tool rather than making an open copy of the active window.

Until PCs can read our minds and do what we want without detailed instructions, tools like Agent Ransack and FileLocator Pro are great productivity enhancers. And don't neglect options available in Windows built-in search tools: they can tailor and refine searches to be more effective.

## Specifications

Company: Mythic Software

Programs: Agent Ransack, FileLocator Pro

URL: [www.mythicsoft.com](http://www.mythicsoft.com)

Price: Free (Agent Ransack); \$25 (FileLocator Pro)

OS: Windows 95 or newer

## 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](mailto:maynardb@juno.com)>



# The Digital Home

By Sherry Zorzi, APCUG

Will 2005 be the year your home entertainment goes digital? For many families, it will be. Welcome to the Digital Home!

In the digital home, you can listen to your PC's digital music on your stereo or home theater system, on your portable music player, or on your wireless notebook computer. In the digital home, you can view the photos stored on your PC on your TV or home theater, on your wireless PDA or wireless notebook computer, or on a digital picture frame.

In the digital home, you can access your broadband Internet connection from any PC in your home, or on your TV or home theater. In the digital home, you can access the videos or home movies from your PC or its DVD drive and watch them on your TV or home theater, or on your wireless PDA or notebook. In the digital home, you can view a video feed from a home webcam on your PC, a wireless PDA or notebook, or any Internet connection.

In the digital home, you can record live TV on your PC. You can program the PC to record every episode of a particular show or every show that features your

favorite actor. You can pause and playback live TV. In the digital home, you can play multiplayer online games wirelessly on your gaming console, PC, and notebook computer.

Does this sound like a futuristic dream? Well, the future is now, and it's surprisingly affordable! Here's what you'll need to make your home a Digital Home.

Start with a PC with an Intel P4 processor with HTT (hyper-threading technology.) This will give you the power needed to drive all that multimedia. The hyper-threading technology allows for parallel processing, making it speedy as well as robust. Use Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005 as your PC operating system. This gives you a simple, built-in interface for all your digital media experience and can be controlled by wireless remote.

Make that PC the hub of your home network. It's powerful enough to handle the digital entertainment, the network, and still be used for running regular computer programs – email, Internet browsers, word-processors, and the like. You can have other PCs and notebooks connected

to it with a wireless network router, or you can use a wired connection to other PCs. You'll need a broadband Internet connection for accessing online TV guides, digital music and video download sites, and online radio. Add a TV tuner card for connecting to your TV or home theater system.

You'll want a DVD burner if you'd like to burn recorded TV to DVD so you can take it with you for viewing on a notebook computer. A Digital Media Adaptor will allow you to stream your music, photos and video to any room in your house. You can use your current TV and stereo system so long as they are not antique!

To top it all off, throw in a portable MP3 player and PDA so that you can take all that media with you as you travel.

The beauty of the Digital Home is the seamless connection of the personal computer, Internet, TV, stereo (or home theater system), laptops and portable music and PDA devices. You can access any media over any device in any room at any time. Now that's entertainment!



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# Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

PRODUCT REVIEWS

## Concrete Hero, by Rob Kantner

Paperback, Harper Mystery, 1994, \$4.99, 394 pages

Detroit PI Ben Perkins, roped into auctioning off a free investigation in a public TV benefit, is "bought" by an Ann Arbor widow looking for assurance that her husband did indeed die by accident. Ben soon discovers that the victim was active in a computer bulletin board that traded x-rated photos and that several other BBS subscribers died under suspicious circumstances. Add a fading blues singer, a shady senatorial campaign and an old acquaintance with computer skills who is coming off a bender and you've got a recipe for an exciting mystery.

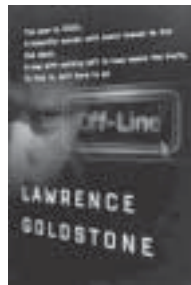


BBSs were still a novelty when this was written and Kantner does a nice job of explaining the technology. Also a sequence about recovering deleted files. Interesting characters that you can care about. This is a series and it makes more sense if you read them in sequence, but it stands up okay on its own.

## Off-line, by Lawrence Goldstone

Hardback, St. Martin's, 1998, \$22.95, 279 pages

It's the near future – 2020 – and computers have taken over most of society's brainwork, from school teaching to interior decorating, leaving people bored and restless. AutoDrive, ColorMatch, DecoTech, LandscapeMaster take care of all life's little details. When a beautiful employee of a software company is murdered in what



appears to be a routine sex crime, city detective Paul Gagliardi senses a mystery not detected by the databases and machines that control 21st Century police work. He decides – with the help of his ex-cop father – to bypass technology and investigate this case the old-fashioned way.

A fascinating science fiction mystery, even closer to current reality than it was when written six years ago. Technology is on every page and takes a starring role in the surprise ending. Recommended.

*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

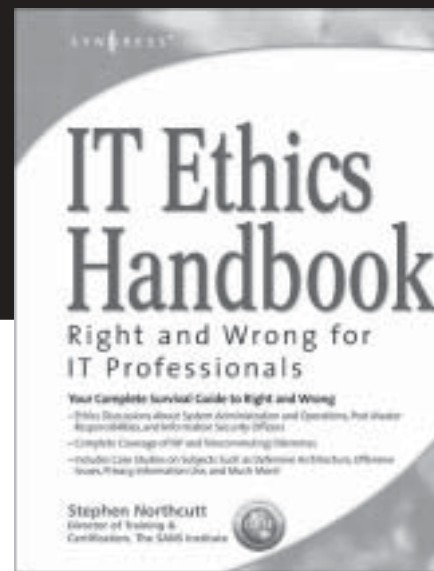
### IT Ethics Handbook: Right and Wrong for IT Professionals

By Stephen Northcutt

\$49.95

Published by Syngress

Reviewed by Susan Ives, Alamo PC



Here is a hypothetical ethical conundrum.

Let's say your local computer organization (for brevity's sake, let's call it Alamo PC) has been getting lots of free books from an up-and-coming computer book publisher (let's call them Syngress) to review in the club's monthly magazine (let's call it the PC Alamode.)

A particular reviewer (let's call her Susan Ives) reviewed one of their books for the December issue (Let's call it The Mezonic Agenda), liked it a lot, and gave it a rave review. She eagerly picked up another of their volumes (let's call it the IT Ethics Handbook) anticipating another good read.

In her opinion, it stunk.

In the back of our reviewer's mind is the concern that if she gives the book a bad

review the publisher, in a fit of pique, could cut off the supply of free books and the organization would suffer: other reviewers may not have other, probably good, books to review and the readers of the magazine would never learn about these useful books. On the other hand, she feels an obligation to the members of her organization to give an honest evaluation of everything she reviews. There is also an unwritten code of conduct among reviewers: don't sell out.

Our reviewer has several options, among them:

- (1) Write an honest review, and suffer the possible consequences
- (2) Give the book a good – or at least inconclusive – review to keep the organization on the gravy train

(3) Weasel out of the dilemma by returning the book and having someone else review it.

I decided to take the first option: write the bad review and accept the consequences, if there are any. I also would have felt comfortable with the third solution, of requesting that another reviewer look over the book, either instead of or in addition to my own review, to make sure that my impression is not off-base. The middle option – lying to suck up to a supplier – was a non-starter. It's unethical.





cal because it's dishonest, it betrays a professional code of conduct principles and it breaks an implicit contract between me and the readers who rely on the integrity of my reviews. We'll turn back to this scenario later in this review.

The IT Ethics Handbook bills itself as "Your complete guide to right and wrong." It falls far short of this goal.

The book is abominably written in a breezy style rife with grammatical errors and indifferent editing. One example: the word "service" is misspelled in the chapter 9 headings. It reads like a hastily compilation of e-mails, not like a professional handbook. Based on the writing style alone, I would have trouble recommending it to serious business people looking for answers to weighty ethical matters. It may be entertaining as a discussion-starter for a bunch of young technicians having a bull session at the local watering hole, but barely.

It's biggest failing, though, is not in subject-verb agreement but rather in its failure to establish a generalized approach to ethical decision making; an overarching theory, if you will. Because it is missing this central core, it is a collection of unrelated – and often conflicting – scenarios.

It is apparent that the author has not had any formal training in ethics training or, if he has had it, failed to share this knowledge with his readers. Applied ethics is a formal and serious discipline, just as computer science is a formal and serious discipline and to gloss over the basics is doing readers a gross disservice.

The closest the book comes to providing basic tools for ethical decision-making is in furnishing "conservative" and "liberal" approaches to the scenarios described, categorizations that have no meaning in applied ethics and are, in some instances quite bizarre. As close as I can figure out, the "conservative" viewpoint is a strict application of ethical principles, based on a combination of unspecified ethical principles, business customs and the law. The "liberal" interpretation is "as long as you don't get caught and you can live with yourself, why not?" The two competing approaches are discussed in a summary, where the author provide his take on the issue.

Let's look at one example.

The scenario: you are hired as an independent auditor to examine a company's computer system and assess its vulnerability to outside attacks. You find flaws. You have a friend who has developed software that will fix the problems; if the

company buys the software, you will get a referral fee.

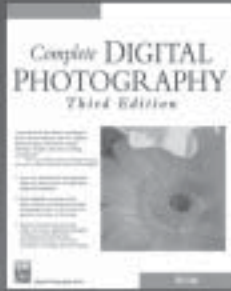

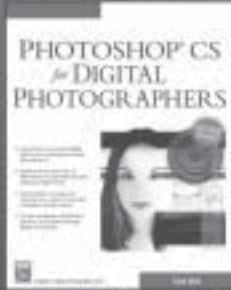
The dilemma: are you ethically obligated to disclose to the company that hired you that you get a kickback on the recommended software?

The "conservative" view, which I would endorse, is that in order to retain impartiality an independent auditor should never personally gain from the implementation of an audit. The "liberal" view is that as long as the software will solve the problem, there's nothing wrong with getting a referral fee and no reason to inform your employer.

The books cops out by claiming that this is a matter of "personal ethics." It offers no guidance, makes no recommendations, cites no laws, professional standards or customary practices. The purpose of a book like this should be prescriptive – providing information and guidance to help the reader grow in their ethical decision-making skills – rather than merely descriptive – listing the broad array of moral choices without injecting any moral evaluation.

The auditing example is especially disturbing as auditors often perform legally defined services, such as exam-

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ining a sensitive government system for security, assessing compatibility of systems prior to a merger or looking at medical or accounting systems for compliance with government regulations.

If you don't believe me, one of the main factors leading to the fall of Enron was the auditing firm Arthur Anderson's co-mingling their auditing and consultant functions.

Examples like this are rampant throughout the book:

-- Your company has some old technology that it can't use any more. Is it OK for you to sell it and pocket the money, without informing management? The book's response: if there's no company policy, it's your call. No its not: it's stealing.

-- Your boss asks you to fudge some of the financial data on a marketing report. Should you do it? The book's response: it is dangerous to actually alter data -- that's a matter of the law and your (ill-defined, says I) personal ethics but there's no problem in leaving out questionable data. I call it lying.

Then there is the answer to my ethical dilemma of the bad review. In their example, the software developer is also one of the magazine's major advertisers. The book recommends (and I quote

exactly here, so you can get a sense of the appalling grammar):

"Business is a very complicated matter and sometimes you have to bend the rules to stay in the game. Try not to inform the public to the best of your ability when writing positive product reviews for poor vendor solutions. There is always a way to communicate the truth without sounding negative, such as damning them with faint praise. Aspire to the highest possible ethic here, to be thought a leader requires the trust and respect of the public."

I think that what the authors are saying is that sucking up is an ethical business practice. It's not.

After slamming the author's grasp of the central topic it seems petty to criticize it on other fronts, but another beef I have with the book is it's mixing of ethical issues with other problems, such as legal disputes, office politics and even technological issues. For example, what is the best way to stop pop-up ads on the internet? How do you deal with a boss who imposes impossible deadlines? Should you interrupt you supervisor to ask an important question?

These are not ethical issues. Ethics involves choices between competing human values. It trivializes important ethical quandaries to lump them in with other

issues that, while important, do not involve ethics.

On the plus side, the author has an exceptionally broad understanding of the ethical dilemmas confronted by programmers, IT administrators and consultants. His examples aren't high-level issues like privacy and hacking but rather the everyday ethical problems that the average working stiff is likely to encounter. If he had teamed with a trained ethicist, this could be the best book in the market. As it stands, it is one of the worst.

I did a quick search of Amazon and found several books that appear to be better, in that they combine the anecdotal, case study method with a solid grounding in ethical theory.

*Morality and Machines: Perspectives on Computer Ethics* (Jones and Bartlett Series in Philosophy) by Stacey L. Edgar (1997)

*Computer Ethics and Professional Responsibility: Introductory Text and Readings* by Terrell Ward Bynum, Simon Rogerson (Blackwell, 2003)

*Case Studies in Information and Computer Ethics* by Richard A. Spinello (Prentice Hall, 1996)

*Susan Ives is a past president of Alamo PC and a bit of a Goody Two-Shoes.*



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## Book Review

### Mac OS X Panther Edition: The Missing Manual

by David Pogue

\$29.95 US

Published by O'Reilly

Reviewed by Shane Hicks, Alamo PC



It's time to find out what Apple should have placed in a user's manual for OS X 10.3. To do this, we turn to David Pogue's Missing Manual series <[www.missingmanuals.com](http://www.missingmanuals.com)>.

The book contains 21 chapters divided into six sections for 763 pages.

Before the book even begins, Pogue does a good job of bringing former and non-Mac users up-to-speed on what features are provided in OS X 10.3. He defines fast user switching and talks about graphics control updates. He talks about how this OS is capable of using more than one processor and how better memory management allows multiple applications to run at the same time, without adversely affecting one another.

#### The Mac OS X Desktop

The first three chapters demonstrate windows and folder options, discuss how to organize your files in these folders, and provide an overview of the desktop, dock, and toolbar. These chapters are full of in-paragraph tips to help users take advantage of each feature. His thorough explanation of the different folder views provides an easy way to determine what your viewing preferences might be.

#### Applications in Mac OS X

These chapters talk about launching programs and handling file associations, using legacy Mac OS applications, how to move information between OS X and OS 9, and the use of AppleScripts to automate certain tasks. Perhaps the most talked about feature in OS X is Exposé. Pogue does a great job defining Exposé and showing how to use its features. He highlights some excellent keyboard shortcuts available in certain types of Mac applications. In the scripts section, Pogue assures the reader that they don't have to be a programmer to take advantage of the power scripting adds to the OS. Apple includes several built-in scripts and there are several sites (some supplied in this book) where additional scripts can be found and downloaded.

#### The Components of Mac OS X

Pogue walks the user through system preferences, the free programs included with the OS, and how to use CDs, DVDs, and iTunes. Pogue provides a helpful hint near the beginning of this section on how to manually set your mail and browser preferences in the OS. He also provides a tip on how to locally store Software Updates, the files used to install the latest patches and bug fixes to the OS, saving the packages for total system recovery at a later date. Another interesting section Pogue includes is on using iPhoto to arrange and share digital pictures.

#### The Technologies of Mac OS X

Pogue uses this section to outline user security features, networking options, printer settings, and the incorporation of speech and sound into the OS. He also includes three chapters on using the Terminal program to access the UNIX functions of OS X. In the section on creating user accounts, Pogue demonstrates how to customize the picture associated with a particular account—which I think is cool. The 3-D effect during fast user switching is also highlighted. In the network section, in addition to showing how to create file shares between various types of machines, Pogue also provides a tip on how send a network message (the equivalent of a Window's NET SEND command) to users connected to these file shares. He also shows how to change the default network setting from WORKGROUP to any name you choose when connecting to Windows shares. OS X also allows incorporation with Active Directory in a Windows Server environment. Pogue chose not to discuss this option. A cute hint in the UNIX section is about how to invoke OS X's built-in psychoanalyst to counsel you on whatever's bothering you.

#### Mac OS X Online

This sections covers setting up Internet, firewall, and .Mac, along with the built-in e-mail and Internet-based software (the iPrograms). The section on setting up

Internet connection sharing is useful, especially if you are in an environment where your main Mac is connected to the Internet via an Ethernet cable and you also other devices using Airport (80211.b/g) wireless network cards. You can use your Mac as a router! He even goes through how you can use multiple Mac machines to create an extended network, by bridging these systems together.

#### Appendices

Six appendices highlight installing OS X 10.3; troubleshooting the system; differences between OS X 10.3, earlier versions of Mac OS, and Windows; a list of keyboard shortcuts; and a reference section on where to go for more information. A very cool hint contained in Appendix A is how to install OS X 10.3 on officially unsupported Macs. Users of older versions of Mac OS will find Appendix C very useful. Windows users will find Appendix D equally useful, as it explains Mac in Microsoft terms. Pogue also supplies an excellent list of Internet resources that readers can use to further their education in the use of the Mac.

#### Summary

I feel that Pogue did an excellent job with this book. It is a great choice for those who are trying to wrap their heads around the features of Mac OS X 10.3. He writes in plain English that isn't too technical for beginners to understand. He laces his writing with humor, so this doesn't read like a textbook or reference manual. Though even the most technical individual is certain to find a gem or two of information in this book, it may be a little light if you've been playing with the OS for awhile, or if you're switching from a Windows background where you already have a great deal of technical knowledge. Still, I would highly recommend this book to anyone looking for an OS X 10.3 primer.





## Book Review

### Hardware Hacking Projects for Geeks

by Scott Fullam

\$29.95

Published by O'Reilly

Reviewed by Steve Devine, Alamo PC



Some people! They just can't leave anything alone. They're always "fixing it when it ain't broke". They'll go to garage sales and buy stuff for five bucks just for the fun of prying the lid off and having a look-see. What do you call these people? (Keep it clean, now!) Some call 'em "Hackers", but that word is controversial in some circles, what with one thing and another. When I am unsure of my audience's background, I call the people in question "Tinkers", and I'll do that in this article until we get comfortable with things.

Stop me if you've heard this one, but "there seems to be two kinds of folks in this world":

1) Those to whom the insides of a machine are best left tucked away inside a shell of metal and plastic and best never looked at or referred to directly, which is fine, because these people never wreck their stuff beyond repair by trying a crazy stunt to modify or extend its capabilities. These are Regular Folks and I'll always love 'em, but always from a distance, I'm afraid...

and

2) The second kind are those who are as comfortable using a machine "the way God intended" as they are popping the lid off and poking around just to see what's what, and maybe changing around a thing or two. Why, they might even try putting a couple of machines together to do what one machine can't do by itself (I'll get to an example, later, I promise). With all due caution, of course. Usually. And these people are the Tinkers.

Famous Tinkers include: Thomas Edison, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Hedy Lamar, Jacques Cousteau, and the crew of the Apollo 13 space mission who had to Tinker their way out of a serious jam just to survive!

This review concerns a book that is not for those timid to tinkering, no not at all, but beginners will find good inspiration and an excellent run-down on basic skills. The book is titled *Hardware Hacking Projects for Geeks*. It's by Scott Fullam, and it definitely lives up to its title. So if you are a technician from some branch of the Armed Forces, have some experience with fixing and building things, or just plain like to putter around with machines and things, building stuff from kits, and barely know which end of a soldering iron to grab, you will enjoy this book.

The book consists of fifteen projects divided into two sections: Basic, and Advanced. Each project consists of:

- An Overview
- Assembly Instructions
- Project Demonstration
- A Bill of Materials

Some projects also include:

- Suggestions for extending the basic idea
- A List of Resources to gather parts from
- And Schematics for the more complex projects

The book includes a bunch of tips, techniques and procedures to get a rank beginner on his feet; or her feet: Remember Hedy Lamar! Useful know-how includes: how to identify component values, how to get the gist out of a Data Sheet, and how to assemble a Tinker's Toolbox that will serve you in good stead.

The Projects are rated three different ways:

- 1) By Cost, ranging from \$10 to \$2,000
- 2) By Time, from a couple of hours to several weeks

- 3) And By Difficulty, from "Easy" to "Very Difficult" (diabolically complex!)

All well and good, you might say, but what projects are in the book?

There are a total of fifteen projects, divided into Basic and Advanced. The following list and rundown make up the rest of the review.

#### ***Basic "Hacks":***

##### **How to Build a Portable Laptop Power Supply.**

A very simple, useful project. It takes regular alkaline or rechargeable batteries and creates a power pack that will keep a laptop computer going for several hours. If you "Need a Win" – e.g.: a simple project to boost your confidence and give you something undeniably useful and well-nigh impossible to mess up, then this is your dream come true. It's at the beginning for a good reason.

##### **How to Build an Aquarium inside a Macintosh**

Slightly nuts-o, this project aims to plant a working aquarium right inside of an old Apple Macintosh computer case. The original Macintosh, used by the ancient Persian Empire to keep track of the vast herds of sheep and cattle, was an all-in-one design, with the computer and monitor built into the same plastic case, and colored in an innovative and attractive beige color. Since the old computer electronics are removed, there is no danger of electrical shock, and you will test the Plexiglas aquarium you will make and install so there won't be any messy leakage. This is most emphatically not a big time electronics project, so anyone handy with a toolbox should be able to get this one together without burning down the tool-shed. Those handy at crafts but leery of electrical work can try their hand at this one, no electronics are involved.



## How to Hack 802.11b (so called Wi-Fi) Antennas

Wireless Internet has been the “In Thing” for so long now that it’s starting to seem old, and I don’t even have it yet! This project includes two different kinds of range-extending antennas for your Wi-Fi enabled computer. The first is a little one: a tin can directional antenna, small and very portable. The second, Big One, is a modification to an old, discarded satellite dish antenna to give a Wonder Antenna capable of a six-mile range or so. Nice for exploring the airwaves in your neighborhood.

## How to Build a PC Water-Cooling System

Some computer enthusiasts are like the Hot-Rodders of the 50s and 60s, a semi-cult of hobbyists that love to push their machines to the limits and beyond! Over-clocking is the trick of the day with this crowd: making your computers’ CPU go faster than the original design specifications would seem to indicate is possible. While always 100% legal, this practice voids practically every warranty in existence, so don’t soup up your machine and expect the shop or the manufacturer to help you out of your jam if you “throw a rod” so to speak. Since the over-clocking technique causes the CPU chip to heat up beyond its normal limits, this project was born as a fix-up for that. It involves making a water-cooling radiator system for you machine. **SAFETY TIP:** since the chip can get hot enough to catch fire, and the water cooling system involves running a water tube through an electrical machine, this one has to qualify as the most hazardous hack in the book, for my money. Fun, but crazy. Count me out. Make sure your homeowner’s insurance is paid up to date and drop me a line if you try this one, folks!

## How to Hack a Furby (and Other Talking Toys)

In the late 90s a toy came out that was a little fuzzy gremlin that could utter various cute phrases. Some versions could also record and play back sounds such as what the owner said into it, or other noises from the environment. The eyes blinked and rolled, and the little mouth moved in time to the pattern of speech to complete the illusion that the “little darling” was actually talking. When someone at CIA headquarters demonstrated that the toys could be used to record the sound codes that opened secure doors into restricted areas and could be used to hack one’s way around the building, the toys went onto a “no-no” list of things you couldn’t bring into the building, and new security measures were instituted.

Ahh: such is life. If you make this project, just don’t bring it into any Top Secret Areas and you should be fine. This is one of the most complex and time-consuming hacks in the book.

## How to Build a Video Periscope for Your Car

Another one of the “nuts-o” projects. This one involves a camera outside your car that leads to a screen inside so you can (according to the author, who I’m starting to seriously wonder about):

See what’s up ahead of you in traffic when you can’t get out to look.

See how much space you have when you are parking your car.

Watch out for people behind you when you are backing out of a parking space.

Look over the SUV you are stuck behind in traffic.

Look out over traffic to find the friends you are caravanning with.

I could almost see building one of these things if it included a targeting reticule I could use with the rocket launcher I’ve always wanted in my pick-up truck, but outside of that I would have to grade this project one of the least useful in the book, and the last one was hacking a talking gremlin doll, fer cryin’ out loud....

## Advanced “Hacks”:

After getting a few hacks under your belt, as well as the wisdom to avoid the truly crazy stuff, the next section gives a short crash course (no theory, all practice) in very basic electronics to prepare you for the more advanced projects. Ahem, these projects include:

## How to Build a Digital Video Recorder

ReplayTV, TiVo, and I believe, some new project by MicroSoft, are all varieties of a home video recording device called a PVR – a personal video recorder. They combine an embedded computer, modem, a hard drive, and video compression/decompression hardware, and allow the user to record television programs onto a hard drive and program future recordings using an on-screen program guide. One interesting feature is live pause, whereby a TV program can be paused and resumed, for bathroom breaks, or fixing yourself a sandwich in the middle of all the action. Outside of that the basic feature is the usual time-delay recording that they all have, where you can set the machine to record your

shows and watch ‘em whenever you want.

## How to Build A Building Sized Display

In 2001 a group of German hardware Tinkers created a project called “Das Blinkenlights”. The project took a twelve-story building and put a bright light in every window. The lights were controlled from a computer (which could be accessed by cell phones of all things!) and did things like place text messages, rudimentary animations, and even a game of Pong in lights right on the side of the tall office building for the whole city to see. A dazzling example of the Tinker’s art in public spaces, if you ask me, and since you’ve read this far, you may as well have. This project is another two version project, the first a small one for the side of your house, and the second one a full scale version for your local Adam’s Mark or Frost Bank building. Make sure to get the owners’ permission before rewiring the office building, now.

## How to Build A Cubicle Intrusion Detection System

For the Dilbert in all of us, this project results in a machine that will tell you if someone has entered your work cubicle, and also how many times it has been entered. It used an “electric eye” unit much like the one that sounds the chime when you walk into the APCO Learning Center at Crossroads Mall. While it sounds a bit paranoid, this project can be used with a different intention to see if your pet wants in from the yard, or to count how many folks pass by a point for crowd control.

## How to Build an Internet Toaster

Here it is: the craziest (but safe!) project in the book. A bit of background: it seems a student in the U.K. has designed a toaster. Ohhh, but not just any toaster! This one has a small set of stencil templates inside of it that slide over the morning’s soon-to-be-toasted piece of bread. After downloading a weather report from the Internet (Oh, it’s comin’: break out the Prozac, everybody!), the device selects a stencil corresponding to the day’s weather prediction, and ... drum roll please ... burns the day’s weather report into the toast! Our fine neighbors and allies, the British, are notorious Tinkers, and this one pretty much takes the cake. Reading the weather report off of your breakfast toast? Hoo-boy! These are the same people that invented radar and the computer. Lord only knows what

else they have that they haven't released to the world yet, hmmm? This one just plain boggles the mind. I threw my hands up when the chapter went into how to load the software onto your toaster.

### How to Build a Home Arcade Machine

In the 1980s the video games were upon us. It seemed like every convenience store, mall, and gas station had a blooping, beeping machine that would defend the earth from alien attack at 25 cents a throw. This project results in a full size (!) machine capable of reproducing any video game ever made. At a total project price estimated at \$500 to \$900, you can count up your quarters and see if you're saving any money. I think you might be able to concoct an Excel Spreadsheet to do just that in Bill Eastridge's Class! That's one of my APCO favorites (hiya Bill!).

### How to Build a Remote Object Tracker

This is one interesting project. By wiring a handheld GPS position sensing receiver to a good range walkie-talkie, and a PDA hand computer to the walkie-talkie's mate, you can fashion your own piece of James Bond equipment that acts like something right out of Q's gadget lab: a hand-held map display showing the location of your GPS unit, attached to your Rolls Royce, I guess. Track the use of the family car, follow someone around while hiking in the wilderness, and watch the progress of a bicycle racer or cross-country runner. Just be sure to tell the person being tracked that their location is being traced, to stay inside the law.

### How to Make Radio Controlled Cars Play Laser Tag

The author once worked at a consulting company specializing in toy design. In this exquisite project the idea is to make a pair of radio controlled toy vehicles that shine infrared pulses at each other with a special "Fire" button added to the remote control. The infrared is the same stuff that comes out of your TV remote (the "clicker") and is 100% safe. The little cars have detectors on board that count when they get hit by an infrared pulse from the enemy vehicle, and the software that the project includes (modifiable, of course!) sets up the game rules like so:

- Each car gets fifteen shots per game round.

- Getting hit for a short time is as a "near miss", and makes the running lights flash.

- A longer hit counts as a direct hit against your ration of four points.

- Taking four hits disables the vehicle – it has been "destroyed", and the game resets.

This project has some of the more interesting project extensions such as:

- Adding a sound effects chip
- Adding a wireless camera to the vehicles
- Adding additional sensors, such as a light sensor to enable the car to seek out darkness on its own

### How to Build a Wearable Computer

Here it is: the pride of the projects. This one is the "piece de resistance" – it is also pricey, time consuming, and demanding of technical skills. It is a fully functioning PC computer that will fit into your clothing. The exact justification of this project is difficult for me to grasp, but I think it involves walking around like a character out of a science fiction movie and amazing the passers-by. It's an awful lot of trouble to go to, but it would be useful for some purposes or other, I just can't quite figure out WHAT. It would be pure crack for people who just can't seem to let go of the computer. Hmm, maybe I'd better check that parts list and start saving my money....

Commercial wearable PCs cost many thousands of dollars, this one is cheaper by far: the full blast version is only \$2K.

The CPU, battery, and hard drive fit on a wide belt. The keyboard and mouse/trackball mount on your sleeve. Many types are examined in the book. The

monitor is a one-eyed display and is hacked up from the viewfinder from an old camcorder. Store bought heads up display goggles are also available, but come on folks: this is a Tinker's book after all, why go for store-bought when you can rig up something yourself? Sources for speech recognition equipment are listed if you want to dispense with the whole keyboard + mouse thing. Other stuff you may wish to drape your robot self in are mini-cameras (for a genuine "eye in the back of your head" effect!), a GPS card if you've been playing Solitaire for so long you're forgotten where you've been walking to, wi-fi capability, and maybe a cell-phone modem. Ray-gun and propeller hat sold separately, I guess.

### How to Build an Internet Coffee-Maker

Such sweet sorrow: the last project in this wonderful, if a bit kooky at times, book! This one wires up a regular old coffee machine with a pair of sensors that detect:

- the coffee temperature
- the level of coffee in the pot

The upshot is that you will never have to go out of your workshop over to the coffee machine and find either that the danged thing's empty or it's cold. Now you can just check the coffee machine over your network and .... Aw heck, doesn't anybody just make a fresh pot anymore?

*Steve Devine comes from Tallahassee, Florida, and has been in San Antonio for two years now. He does database and other small computer consulting, as well as a wide assortment of odd jobs. He can be found on the internet at: <<http://respektek.com>>. He has been tinkering around with things for a long time and just between you and me he's pretty mediocre.*

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## Book Review

### Macromedia Flash MX 2004 Game Design Demystified

By Jobe Makar and Ben Winiarczyk

\$49.95

Reviewed by William Morgan, Alamo PC



PRODUCT REVIEWS

The title of this book raises a question: why would anyone write a game using Macromedia's Flash MX 2004? It seems ridiculous to assume that anyone would be waiting impatiently for the next version of Doom to come out in Flash MX2004. The game does not meet the standards for today's video games. Since, Flash was never designed for standalone programs, although it can be done, instead it was designed for web context enhancements. When used online, a game programmed in Flash 2004 will rival almost any game written in any other programming language. The development time is much shorter, it is easier to learn than other languages, and allows all members of the development team to add directly to the game.

The book has three parts with two appendices. The parts are "Getting started with Flash game design", "Examining the nuts and bolts", and "The games". The two appendices are developer resources and other games. The companion CD-ROM has the examples and the program files that the book text refers. It also has trail versions of various Flash development programs.

The first part of the book is introductory. It exposes the reader to the different game views, general terminology, and game genres. The first chapter ends with the pros and cons of Flash game development. The second chapter is about "making games fun". The factors in making a game fun are the demography of the audience, playback specs of the audience's computers, the concept and theme of the game, the storyline and characters, and the basics of the games.

The second part, "examining the nuts and bolts" comprises about 75% of the book. These twelve chapters deal with most of the game factors that must be programmed to have an enjoyable game. The subjects of chapters three and four are math and physics. A simple game like Pong would be almost impossible to play if the ball sprite was to move totally randomly. Most of the math is trigonometry, and the physics is classical. The authors include some examples of "just good enough" programming. For example, a

routine to handle friction requires looping many times to stop an object and therefore slowing down game play. There is a short cut, but as the authors point out, the object never stops.

Chapters five and six are about collisions. Most programming languages require extensive skill to detect a collision and the following reactions. However, in Flash these problems are solved handily. Chapter seven and eight deal with the game views that are tile based or isometric based. The next three chapters deal with the minor points of levels, high score lists, and artificial intelligence. Graphics and sound, chapter twelve and thirteen, are very important to game play. The best game design is nullified if the sight and sound of the game is poor. Since the forte of Flash is web interaction, chapter fourteen deals with the special problems of multiplayer games. Multiplayer games have become extremely popular because of the human-to-human interaction.


Part three includes four chapters that deal with each of the games included on the CD-ROM. The games are Word Search, Multiplayer Chess, 501 Darts, and Gone Crazy. Each chapter starts with game rules and overviews, the game coding and logics, and points to remember about the game programming technique. However, Multiplayer Chess has an additional section about the aspects of multiplayer games.

At a cover price of just under fifty dollars, it is a rather expensive computer book given its size. Look for it to be showing up in bargain bins at bookstores- especially if a new version of Flash appears this year. However, since the book deals with the game design process rather than Flash itself, it needs to be in the libraries of all new and old game programmers.

*William Morgan lives in Kerrville, Texas and has been a member of Alamo PC since 1994.*



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## Software Review

### WordPerfect 12

\$89.99 - \$299.99

Published by Corel

Reviewed by Clarke Bird, Alamo PC

This is the 7th iteration of WordPerfect that I have used since 1986. I began with WordPerfect 5 DOS (remember those good old days?). Each new version of the program had several new features that I felt greatly enhanced my productivity in an office. With version 12, the new features are more subtle.

- With Version 12, it is easier than ever to open a Word document, an Excel spreadsheet or a PowerPoint presentation in WordPerfect, QuattroPro and Presentations. In other words, Corel is admitting that the “office world” belongs to Microsoft but with WordPerfect, there is room for a compatible suite of programs to co-exist within this world.

- No more WordPerfect Central. With this version, you have to use MS Outlook's Address Book to access names and addresses for creating envelopes and labels. With the magazine deadline rapidly approaching, I've not been able to figure out how to set Outlook as my default mail client but I'm still working on it.

- There is a new Workspace Manager wherein you can customize your user interface, shortcuts and keystrokes to suit your individual needs. Law offices can select the old WordPerfect 5.1 interface, which has always been a favorite.

- Drawing Tools have been expanded to create impressive graphics within documents.

- You can generate a PDF document from WordPerfect 12 (and Presentations 12) without having to purchase Adobe Acrobat (which is listed at \$299 on Adobe's Website). This is an impressive addition to the suite (Figure 1).

- PerfectExpert is back with Version 12. This feature is similar to Word's Office Assistant and is a great help to attempt a task with which the user is unfamiliar. For instance it will guide you through a detailed project such as creating a resume or a smaller task such as how to insert a clipart image into your document (Figures 2 & 3).

- A new feature named Wireless Office Suite offers two-way SMS text messag-

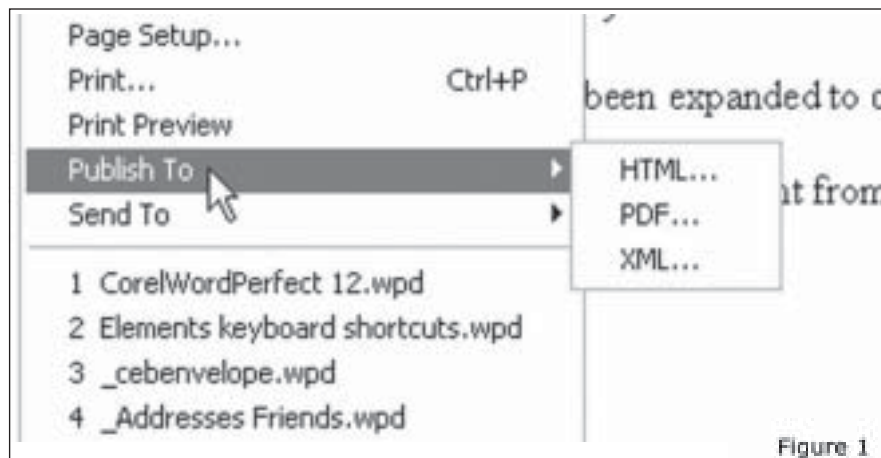


Figure 1



Figure 2

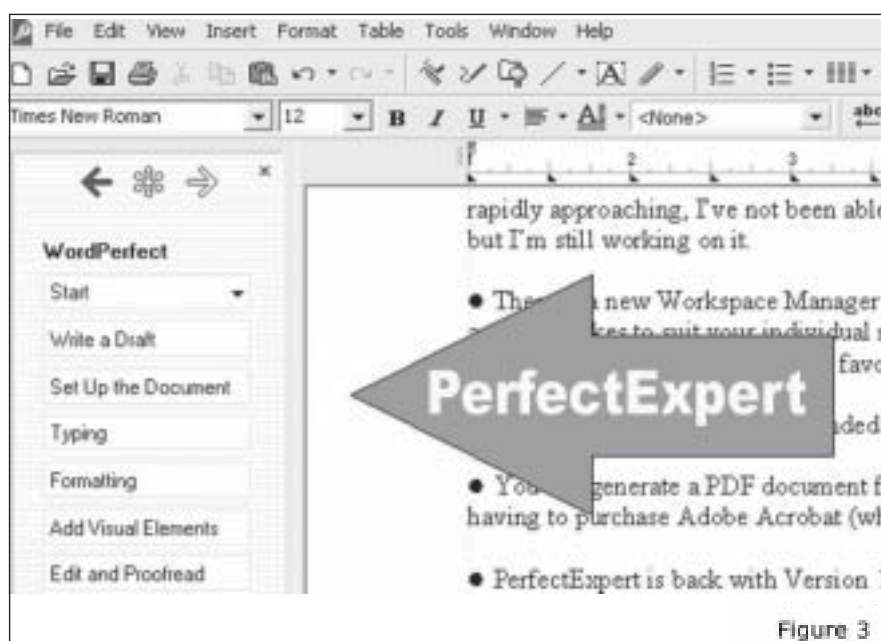


Figure 3



ing to a cell phone. Reportedly you are able to send e-mail and instant messages no matter where you are located but I was not able to test this feature (my office is not wireless).

There are over 40 new templates to help the user get a jump-start on projects such as business cards to monthly calendars. In fact, I'm looking at a nice looking calendar on my office wall that I created with WordPerfect 12 (Figure 4).

For those who just need to have a Microsoft Office feel, two clicks will transform WordPerfect, Quattro Pro and Presentations into rough approximations of Word, Excel and PowerPoint. The Microsoft Office workspace feature in WordPerfect Office 12 puts features, toolbars and menu items exactly where you would expect to find them in MS Office.

To use WP12, you will need Windows XP, NT, 2000 or Win98. Corel recommends 128 MB RAM, a computer with a 166 MHz CPU, 195 MB hard disk space and of course, a CD drive.

Why would someone want to use WordPerfect 12? There are two reasons:

- **Reveal Codes.** This feature, unique to WordPerfect, lets you quickly format long or complex documents. The codes are inserted as you add text and other formatting to a document. The Reveal Codes are displayed in a separate window immediately below the active document (see Figure XX). Now the mystery of why a line of copy is acting in a strange way can be quickly solved by looking at the formatting codes immediately preceding the line in question (Figure 5).

- **Competitive pricing and liberal licensing agreement.** WordPerfect Office 12 is about \$200 less than MS Office Standard. The Corel licensing agreement allows the user to install the program on both a business PC and a laptop or home system, as long as it is used on one PC at a time.

### Free Classes

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

Corel's Website indicates the following pricing:

WordPerfect Office 12 Suite — \$299.99 in a box. A download version is \$239.99. You can upgrade to version 12 for \$149.99 or download the upgrade version for \$129.99. The download versions are without CDs or printed materials.

WordPerfect Office 12 Home Edition sells for \$89.00 which, in my opinion, is the best software deal ever created. If you buy a new Dell computer, it comes bundled with WP Office 12 Home Edition.

*Clarke Bird is a long-time WordPerfect user and could not do without "Reveal Codes".*

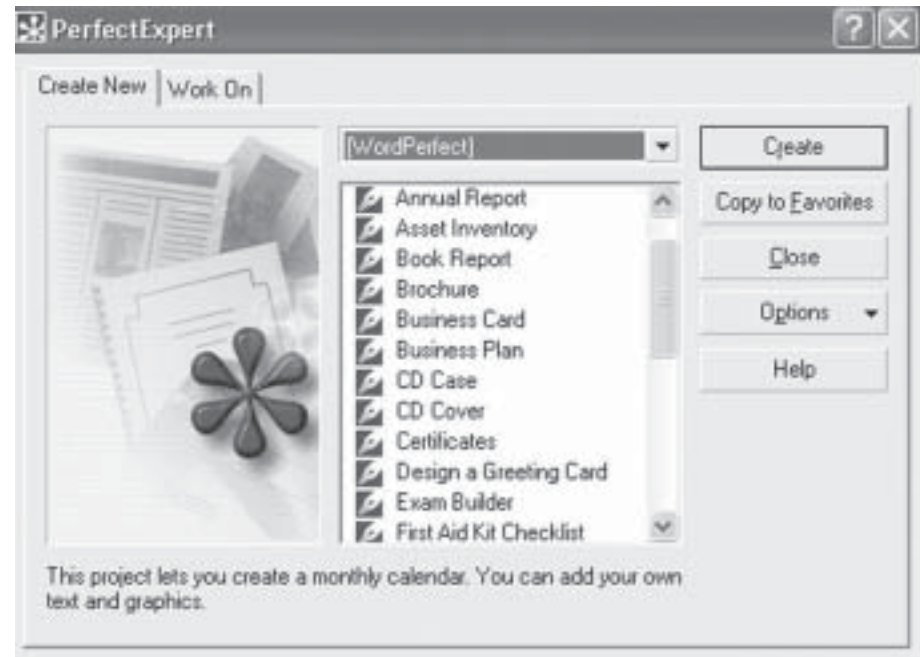


Figure 4

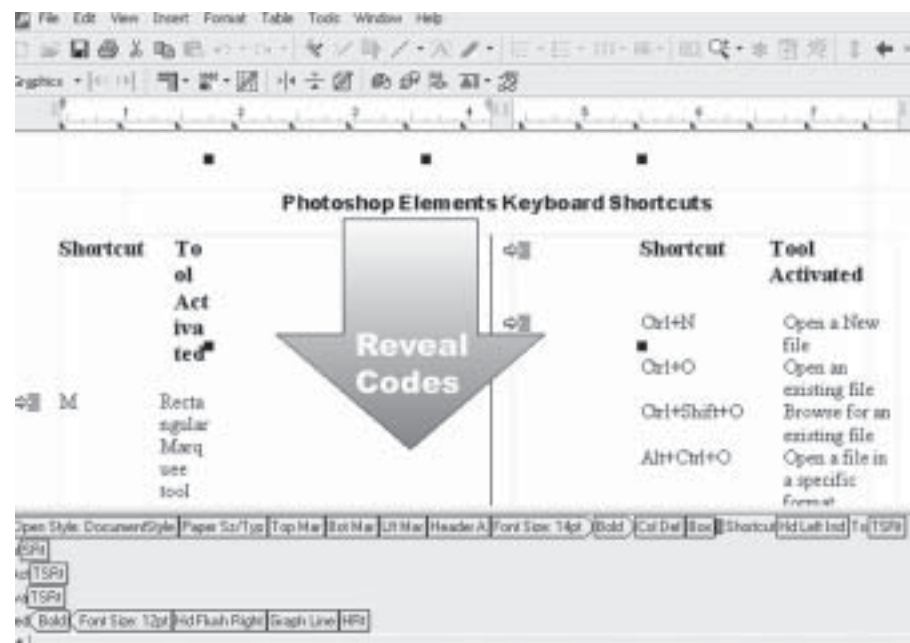


Figure 5





## Software Review

### Display Resolution Manager \$14.95

### I Hate That Key \$9.95

### QuickFolders is \$19.95

Published by ByteGems

Reviewed by William Hunsicker, Alamo PC

ByteGems develops human interface tools intended to make the keyboard and display functions more accessible and manageable to the average computer user. They currently offer three small utilities to help us navigate and control the Windows® API.

The first tool is “Display Resolution Manager” (DRM). If you often share your computer, or are a gamer that needs different resolutions for different games, you will really appreciate DRM. It allows each user to set their preferred screen resolution. When a user logs in, DRM automatically sets screen resolution, color gamma, brightness and contrast preferences to that user’s pre-determined values. It means that people with bad eyesight won’t have to deal with a high resolution where the icons and type are so small on the monitor they can’t be easily seen.

Their resolution can be set lower while a user with excellent eyesight can choose to have small icons on their display. DRM works well with families, since the majority of children’s games run in 640x480 and while many adults opt to keep their desktop at 1024x768 or higher.

If you cannot agree with your family (or co-workers) about screen resolution or brightness, then Display Resolution Manager can help you too! And you don’t have to worry about the icon placement on your desktop.

This program keeps icons where you put them after changing screen resolution. Note – the change occurs when you log in. DRM does not interfere with the normal display control functions that can be accessed by right clicking on the desktop.

The second tool that ByteGems markets is “I Hate This Key”(IHTK). IHTK can customize any system-wide keys on any keyboard. This means deactivating a key completely (a very

popular option for the Caps Lock), customizing keys (for example, activating Caps Lock only when pressed twice or held down), setting F-Lock inversion option for the functional keys (F1 through F12), forbidding the deactivation of Num Lock or any other key, and/or allowing game users to block the infamous Windows Logo key along with system-wide key combinations (like Win+D) while playing games. The following keys are controlled by IHTK:

- Windows Logo key: this key can be completely blocked or optionally blocked only when you playing full-screen games; Windows Logo key combinations (like Win+D) can be blocked along with the Windows Logo key (note-if you’re using the old-fashioned Terminal Services Client, then I Hate This Key will map your Windows Logo key to Alt+Home combination);
- Apps key: the context menu key can be blocked out;
- Caps Lock and Num Lock keys: these keys can be completely blocked or set to activating only when pressed twice or held down for a while ( note-you can also forbid deactivating Num Lock);
- F-Lock key: if you want to turn on F-Lock key at startup, then this program will help you. You can make it so your functional keys will work even when the F-Lock is turned off!
- Power and Sleep keys: you can choose to deactivate the Power and Sleep keys on your keyboard or to make it ask you what to do instead of just having your computer sleep or shut down without a word!

Like Display Resolution Manager above, all keyboard settings are user-specific, meaning when another person logs onto the computer, the keyboard layout will be set to that person’s preferences, if he or she has used IHTK to customize their keys.

The third tool is “QuickFolders” (QF). QF adds menus into the standard system menu of the “Open” and “Save File As ...” dialogs. So that you can see a list of recently visited folders, as well as, opened or saved files, and also, a list of favorite folders by just right-clicking any place in the dialog’s title bar, or while the Open (or Save File As) dialog is open by pressing the ALT+SPACE keys, or by clicking the QF icon on the dialog tool bar (The QF icon is a folder with a star on top).

With QF you can create a list of the favorite folders that will be available in a single mouse click. In addition, recently visited folders and opened or saved files will be placed in the menu too, so you will be able to open a recently visited folder or file in one click.

In short, QF turns the Open File dialog into a full-featured file browser. You can use all the power of your IntelliMouse® Explorer, or compatible mouse, in these dialogs: just click the Back and Forward button of your mouse to browse to last visited folders.

If you do not have an IntelliMouse® Explorer (or compatible mouse), you can still use the keyboard shortcuts (ALT+LEFT and ALT+RIGHT) or you can choose to use the emulation of Back and Forward buttons. QF can make Open and Save File As dialogs transparent, so they will not consume screen space anymore.

With QF, you will be able to see the contents of the file you are working with or what the program may be doing while you are opening a file.

All of the programs worked as advertised on my machine. Installation was simple and straightforward. ByteGem provides a Key when you register that turns off the 15-day trial, be sure to back it up as well as print it out. You will definitely want an electronic version if you ever have to reinstall. But a second version that can be read and typed in is also a good idea.



All of the programs can be found at <http://www.ByteGems.com>. Each program is sold separately. Display Resolution Manager is \$14.95; I Hate That Key is \$9.95; and QuickFolders is \$19.95. If you want them to send you a copy of the program on CD it will cost and additional \$9.95. I would recommend you just download the one(s) you want and then burn your own CD along with a text copy of the registration key(s).

#### Minimum Requirements:

- Display Resolution Manager works under Windows NT, 2000, XP and 2003. Multiple monitor configurations supported only under Windows 2000, XP and 2003.
- I Hate This Key works under Windows 2000, XP and 2003.

- QuickFolders works under Windows 98, Me, NT, 2000, XP and 2003.

#### Vendor Information:

ByteGems.com Software develops and distributes software for home and office use using a try-before-you-buy model with online delivery and purchase. They may be contacted at <http://www.ByteGems.com>. QuickFolders, Display Resolution Manager, I Hate This Key, I Hate This Key Deluxe Edition are trademarks of ByteGems.com Software.

#### Reviewer System Specifications:

Desktop Server: AMD Athlon 2400 (2.0 GHz) running Windows XP Pro, 1.25 GB Ram, 120 GB hard drive, 120 GB SATA Raid-0 Array, 64 MB ATI All-in-Wonder 9600, Lite-On DVD reader, Lite-On

DVD Burner, Sound Blaster Live card, HP PhotoSmart S20 film Scanner, , SOHO 100/10 Ethernet, Firewire (IEEE 1394), USB 1.1 and USB 2.0, DirectX 9.0b, LogiTech Trackball, keyboard, etc.

Local Net: US Robotics router, Ethernet and 802.11g w/256 encryption

*Bill Hunsicker is a retired computer scientist and software developer who dabbles in photography and genealogy. You can contact him at [whunsick@texas.net](mailto:whunsick@texas.net). He has a Web page at <http://whunsick.home.texas.net/>.*

## Hardware Review

### The Contour Design Safe Cases for iPod's

Published by Contour Design

Reviewed by Duncan "Doc" Martin, Alamo PC

Man, I hate the Gym. I mean I really hate it. Now don't get me wrong, I know that I have to do it once you reach that golden number of 40 for your health, but I really do hate going. You have no idea of what it is like getting up and trying to be in the gym by 5:00am, 5:30 at the latest and getting going. I am racing toward my mid-40's at warp speed and each morning the only other ones who are there besides me are the young college kids who are determined to look like Arnold someday; and the staff members who have to man the gym at that god awful hour.

So, of course, they are playing their music. And what do you suppose that I hear at the crack of dawn? Either some sort of Heavy Metal music that will turn your brain to pink mush; or some Rap song that has so much bass I do not understand it at all or it makes the bar bells jump. Since I could not deal with either of those kinds of music that is the reason that I bought my 60GB iPod; what a blessing!

For those of you who do not know what an iPod is, basically it is the hottest electronic accessory going at the moment. It is a very small hard drive that Toshiba makes for Apple, see figure 1. Apple in turn has added a small program and a

great interface to make it arguably the premier personal music player in the market today! At 60GB my little gem is only 3.5" Tall and 2" wide and less than .5" deep! With a great color screen and holds close to 15,000 songs! What a great toy! I was going to take it to the gym, with me on the plane and when I was working in the yard and any other time I could think of to use it!

But here is the funny part; I was afraid to take it to the gym! Good Grief! I was almost afraid to take it out of the house! When you spend close to \$600 on a toy, you want to protect it! I looked at the plastic sleeves that they were selling and some of the other cases, but none offered the protection that I wanted or access to the controls that I wanted as well. Until I found this: The Contour Showcase for the iPod, figure 2. At \$32.95 it is more than reasonable, it is essential!

I have only found this case available online at <http://www.contourdesign.com/showcase/> but be sure to check e-Bay as well have found several that are offered at substantial savings as well! The new Showcase for the 4th generation iPod is the first case that I found that offers solid protection while letting me enjoy everything that I love about the iPod. The elegant design, slim dimensions, and ultimate portability.



Figure 1

Contour Design has created a case with a clean, trim, seamless look that keeps the sleek lines of the iPod. The case feels like a natural extension of the iPod- providing a weightless, portable design that fits in your pocket or on your hip, figure 3. The case feels and looks like a natural extension of the iPod itself. The Contour Showcase lets your touch sensitive controls remain easy accessible



while protecting the body and the screen of the iPod.

At the same time, it provides convenient access to connectors, headphone jack and hold switch. You need never remove the iPod from the case since you can hook up the sync and charge firewire cable through the case. The design allows you to open your Show-case like a book, making it super easy to remove your iPod from the case, but why would you want to?

The clear faceplate and the clear back panel gives you a visual of the steel back and the information etched there as well as the screen, while preventing finger prints and scratches. The latch reminds me of the latch on a hermetically sealed jar or one you would find on a tool box. That gave me a deeper sense of security since I have seen cases that will fall apart at the slightest jar. The belt clip is fully removable and is mounted horizontally for maximum comfort. With the clip being removable it is dressy enough that I have no shame in taking it to the office (after all I do want to show off the new toy!) and then putting the clip back on either for the gym or when I go out to walk the dog!

The case is made of hard, impact-resistant plastic and shock-absorbing rubber that will protect the iPod from even the clumsiest of us--trust me on this! I have dropped the case any number of times from fiddling with it on the Stairmaster to trying to get it into my gym bag and dropping it on the tile floor of the men's locker room!

And while the case is beginning to look a little dinged up and scratched up I have to look at it this way; if your going to pay \$250 and up for a new iPod, it's almost criminal not to pay another \$33 for a suitable case that will protect it from dings, scratches and other motion-related mishaps.

The case comes in two colors either Black or White but I say keep the white case to keep the clean lines of the iPod! Lets face it people, Life happens and we all know that our technology is important to us; so we really have a responsibility to protect it! And with the Case from Contour Design, that is just one less item that I have to handle like a Faberge Egg!

*Duncan "Doc" Martin is the Resident Head Geek at Niblock Realty and Team Leader for the RESupermen Team. He is a self-professed Tech Junkie and part of the National Technology Review Committee for the National Board of Realtors.*



Figure 2



Figure 3

## WaterWare

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## SWRI is Hiring!

### Software Engineering (Division 10)

Southwest Research Institute is in need of 40 computer programmers; prefer Degreed in Computer Science to be hired between now and April. GPA of 3.5+ if no experience, or 3.3+ with 5 years or more experience.

If anyone is qualified and interested, contact:

**Bernard J. Siegel**  
senior research analyst  
6220 Culebra Rd  
San Antonio, Tx  
phone 210 522-2347  
fax 210-522-5885  
<bernard.siegel@swi.org>



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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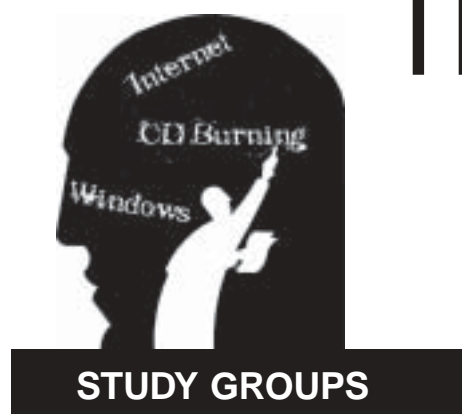
<http://www.sanantoniojobs.com>



# Alamo PC Monthly Planner

## February 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																											
		1 Word 2000	2	3 .NET HGSi Photoshop Practice (Adv)	4 Dr. is In HTML SBS 2003 Photoshop Practice	5 CC++ Computer Lit MCSE Adv																																																																																											
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27	28 CorelDRAW 1 PowerPoint	<div>Jan 2005</div> <table><tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td></tr><tr><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr><tr><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td></tr><tr><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table> <div>Mar 2005</div> <table><tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr><tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr><tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td></tr></table>					S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1	2	3	4	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						S	M	T	W	T	F	S				1	2	3	4	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	
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# 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

<stephentechr@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 ★

www.alamopc.org



### 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:** 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://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



## Advertisers Index

A.A.C.I.S.	56
AllGen Computer Warehouse	9
Anderson Company	50
BJ Associates of San Antonio	43
Charles River Media	45
Computer Experts	46
David's Essential Domains	43
Holiday Ink	46
Inksell	BC
Laura B. Grover, E.A.	33
Micro-Fix	27
Mr. Notebook	38
New Life Toner	IBC
PC Pro	11
RoadRunner	BC
San Antonio College	IBC
Texas Recharge & Toner Company	27
United Service Association for Health Care	51
Wagner Supply House	11
WaterWare	56
Young Living	14

February 2005

## Classified Ads

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

- For Sale** Hewlett Packard Laser Jet 1100se black and white printer with extra unopened Laser Jet Toner Cartridge. Used occasionally for 3 months. No problems. \$65 total. Contact Doris at 494-2402
- 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
- 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: [<ejslearn@netscape.net>](mailto:ejslearn@netscape.net)
- Wanted** Someone to teach me Publisher and Access, will pay. Contact [<jwoody39@netzero.net>](mailto: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

63

# 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.

## Monthly Meetings

Every month you can attend a presentation meeting, which is open to our 2,500 members. Local and national companies provide the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

## Award-Winning Magazine

When you join Alamo PC, you'll receive its award-winning magazine, *PC Alamode*, each month. You'll learn of group activities 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.

## Special Interest Groups and Classes

Alamo PC offers more than 30 Study Groups and classes on specific software programs for beginners to expert. 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. There are groups for word processing, Web design, 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 age 45 or older and not into computers or the Internet yet? Let us help. Contact Alamo PC today and sign up for the very next class. Classes are hands-on at a pace to match your learning style.

## 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](http://www.alamopc.org). Your \$45 dues covers your entire family! You may use your credit card or send your personal check. 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!**

**GIFT MEMBERSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE: Call 210-736-0700 for details.**



### 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 - \$45 ☐ 2 Years - \$85 ☐ 3 Years - \$125 ☐ 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 and address and phone to selected vendors

PCA JAN05