

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

July 2005

\$4.00



Corel Painter IX
page 51



**General Meeting:
Corel Word Perfect
and Paint Shop Pro**
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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 Alamode* or have questions about your **membership** e-mail:

Sandra Bloom at: membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

Learning Center number **210.736.0700**

If you have comments about classes call

John Gaddis **210.494.9449**

If you have questions about advertising call

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

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

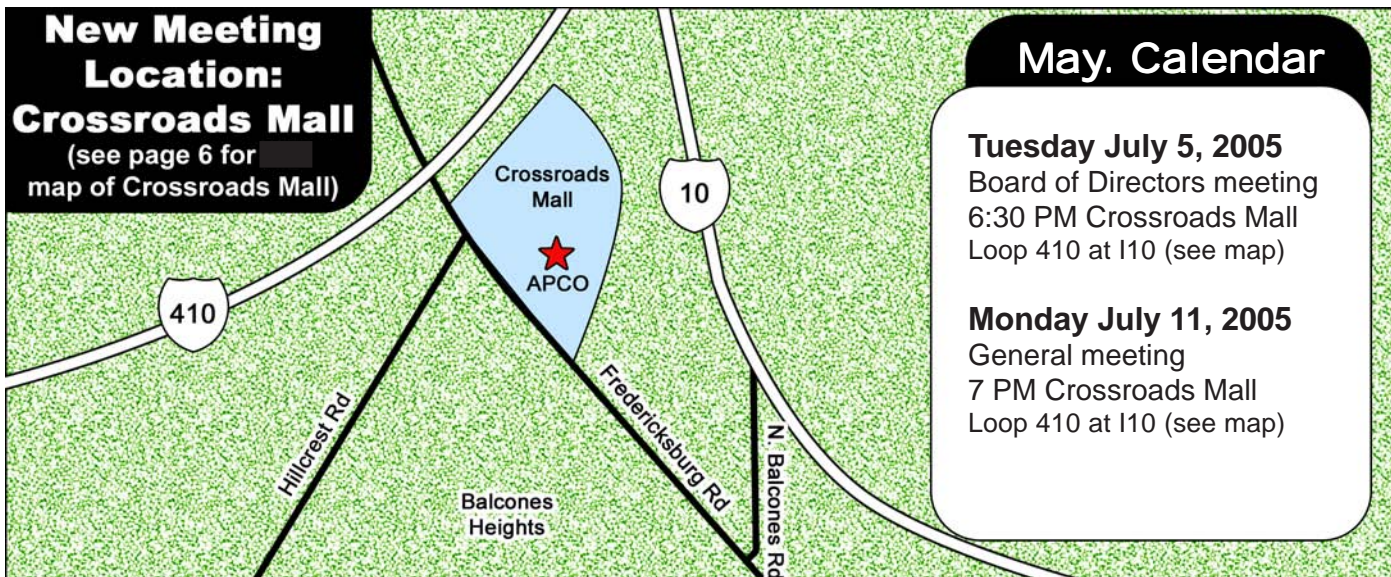
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

Meetings

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

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

New Meeting Location:
Crossroads Mall
(see page 6 for map of Crossroads Mall)



May. Calendar

Tuesday July 5, 2005
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday July 11, 2005
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

R U Photogenic?

... or is that just good image editing?

columns

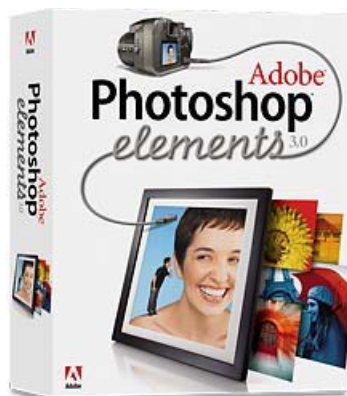
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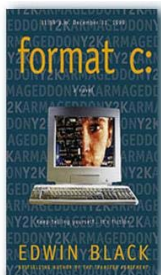
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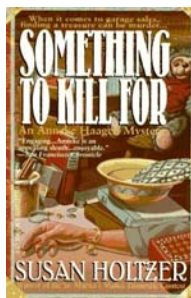


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PC Alamode

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

editor@alamopc.org

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Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
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*Consecutive months

**To be paid in advance

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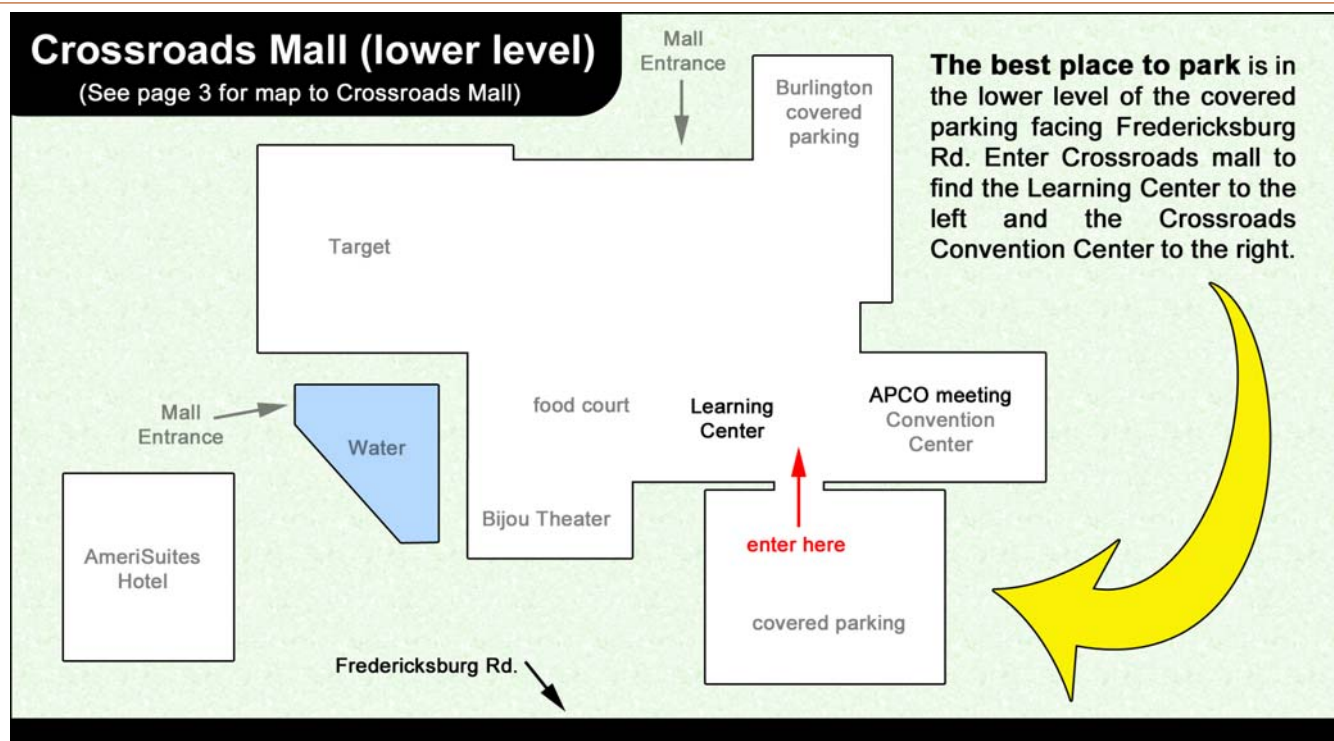
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736-0700

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For Study Groups and Classes or for SeniorComp classes, phone: 736-0080



PC Alamode Photo Contest

*Runner Up
Martha Nakamura*



*1st Place Winner
Wenda Gorman*

“Squirrel with Bread”

“Here is a squirrel who likes his bread.”

“Longhorn in Flowers”

“The photo was taken in the spring of 2003 near Floresville. I used a Kodak EasyShare LS443 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.



We had twice as many entries this month as last month for the Photo Contest – 2! Please send in your photos of your summer vacation or other cool pictures.

You will notice the likeness of PC Alamode's former editor, Clarke Bird on the cover this month. Clarke created this self-portrait in Corel's Painter IX. Clarke spent hours learning the new features of Painter IX and experimenting with a variety of techniques. Read more about how he did that on page 51.

Corel will demonstrate their two top programs, Word Perfect and Paint Shop Pro, at this month's General Meeting. Check out page 9 for more details.

Our theme for the July issue of PC Alamode is Digital Photography. We have a collection of great articles and reviews for your enjoyment. Hope the information in this issue will prompt you to take many great photos... send a few to the monthly Photo Contest!

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.

STUDY GROUPS

Call the Learning Center for schedule information 736-0700 or see page 60-63.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

And So It Goes!

In my last article, I tried to use the story of "Snow White and the Seven...." to relate to our daily work at The Alamo PC Organization. "The Seven arose each day and marched off to do the 'WORK' they had to do.... When Snow White came into their lives she helped the Seven, and the Seven helped her. That is as it should be - everyone helping."

I also referred to the story of the Musketeers of old and how they probably expressed it best by the phrase, "All for One, and One for All. Essentially it is the group doing what is best for each individual comprising the group, and each individual comprising the group doing what is best for the group."

I mentioned that "Truly successful groupings of people, whether in business, sports, clubs, organizations, etc., when scrutinized carefully, will be found following these basic principles. If they 'do not,' or come to a point in time when they 'are not,' the group/grouping will cease to be successful, may fail, and finally may cease to exist."

I also stated that "It is no different in a computer user group environment (i.e., Alamo PC Organization). How do I know this? Because there are user groups who have traveled this "down hill" road to the end and user groups who are apparently on the road now. If you don't believe it, let me cite just two examples of user groups who are apparently on this "down hill" road now, and are trying to reverse their direction."

I included a couple of articles as examples of other user groups making appeals to their members for help in "Making Things Go," within the respective group. The first was an article by the now past president of the Coastal Area Users Group (CAUG) <caug.org>, that meets in Corpus Christi, Texas. The second was a notice from the Twin Cities PC User Group (TC/PC) <tcpc.com> that meets in the area of Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota.

Both had the same basic underlying theme - "HELP - We can't seem to get anyone to step forward and fill positions!"

In the remainder of the article, I also tried to convince our members that our theme is no different. To date (late June) I have not received an E-Mail, call, or indication from any of those who are currently serving the organization that anyone has been willing to take a step forward and volunteer for anything.

But, we don't appear to be any different than some of the other groups. The following article, again from the past president of the Coastal Area Users Group (CAUG) <caug.org>, that meets in Corpus Christi, Texas (a follow-up to his previous article) should help convince you.

"LIFE SUPPORT

This is an important appeal...."

The first of this year I stepped down as president, I did so for a number of reasons, the least of which having served for ten and a half years, I was positive one of our caring, responsible members would step in to take over. Much to my surprise and the boards' nerves, that has not happened.

Let me tell you what being president involves, short answer is 'everything' the long answer is; the president is the cheer-

leader, always talking about the organization, promoting it no matter where he/she goes. As in business, they must gain (notice I did not say have) a working knowledge of every duty in the group. The reason is because when someone needs to be replaced the president must fill in till he/she finds a willing soul to help out.

The president must be a Shepard, we are all volunteers, some need reminding about duties, help or training, it should be done in as gentle a manner as possible, but it must be done.

CAUG desperately needs a President, Membership, and Program person. We just held the board meeting for May at which much was discussed, one option was to disband CAUG, I am very Strongly against that for a number of reasons such as our very successful SIG groups and other programs, not to mention the great difficulty in getting the 501(c)(3) status, corporation etc.

So it was decided by the board, that I would write this one last plea for volunteers, and if none step up by our July social, we the board (I am on the board as past president and registered agent with the IRS and State Secretary of Texas even though I have stepped down as president) will put CAUG on 'Life Support' until such time we get members willing to take some of these key offices. What does that mean? There will be no general meetings, we will continue as a organization, publish the news magazine, website, 510 groups, TV show etc. and of course have a monthly board meeting to handle the business of the group, but without the key officers listed above we can not maintain general meetings.

At one time, when a person needed help for whatever reason, health, storm, new baby... we as a community pulled together to help one another, that has always been the ideal and purpose of CAUG to educate and support one another in a vital area of the expanding human experience, yes everything will sooner or later be computerized, it is a skill set we all must learn, not to mention cope with, I assure you it is much easier with CAUG than it would be without.

No matter what may happen I hope all of you will continue to support CAUG, we will need members even more if we go to life support, because then all that will be keeping this organization alive are your dues, which for benefit received ... is a very meager amount, have you been to the gas station or grocery lately?

I welcome all comments....

Corpus Christi Advanced Technologies <www.ccatech.com>; Computer Corner on KIII-TV (ABC) Thursday mornings on Early Edition News www.kiitv.com; Coastal Area Users Group, Inc. a 501(c)(3) non-profit computer education organization www.caug.org; Del Mar Senior Education <http://www.dclmar.edu/specserv/seniors.html>"

President's Message Cont.

The Alamo PC Organization doesn't want to be one of the numbers either, but it may become a "Use to Be" if no one steps up to help.

July is Alamo PC's annual month for nominations for expiring Board positions. Members will be responsible for identifying individuals willing to serve at the BOD level, and may submit names at the July 11th General meeting. Once the Election Committee and Floor nomination list of proposed names has been consolidated, individual biographies will be submitted for inclusion in the August PC Alamode. During August, the online election process will be conducted to determine the list of new Board members for Oct 2005 - Sep 2006. (Currently we need a President Elect, Treasurer, Communications Specialist, Public Relations and some officer positions. Interim fills currently have been made, but the positions need long term fills.)

Once again I ask each member to commit to being a little more involved with the Alamo PC Organization. Keep your member info current, especially your E-Mail address for periodic notices (update both on the web-site, via password section). Also, keep track of when your membership expires, and renew well in advance, to save the organization an expense. Also, attend some of the monthly general meetings where presenters provide information about current and future computer related issues.

Membership renewals and new member interest continue to do reasonably well. However, we are still not retaining members at the level that we would desire. If you do not choose to renew, we would appreciate knowing "Why?" (Send an E-Mail to membership@alamopc.org) or to me. I welcome all comments!

Volunteer of the Month Barbara Whaley



June Program

David Steward

Corel shows off Word Perfect and Paint Shop Pro

July will be a very special month for the members of the Alamo PC Organization, for at the July General Meeting, we will be visited by one of the finest and most widely known companies in North America. Yes, I am talking about Corel. After many years of sabbatical from visiting San Antonio, Robert MacDonald and Tamara Brown will bring the Corel show to our meeting.

Robert MacDonald brings over five years of experience with Corel products from several different roles within the company. From his time as a sales engineer to his current role as the manager of the product training team, Rob really understands what makes his audience tick. His down to earth attitude and passion for Corel products really shines through.

Tamara Brown is an enthusiastic presenter with a flair for making her audience smile. As a product specialist, she has the opportunity to travel the world, meet customers, conduct seminars, and chat with user groups. With over seven years experience with Corel products, she brings a wide breath of knowledge to the table.



Rob and Tamara will be showing us the great features of WordPerfect 12, and introducing us to a great new line of graphics programs from their newest addition, the Jasc family of products. Jasc has long been known to have one of the most widely used graphics programs, Paint Shop Pro or PSP. Paint Shop Pro contains most, if not all, of the great features contained in programs costing many hundreds of dollars more, yet still retails for only \$99. In addition, Tamara will demo Paint Shop Album.

Be sure to bring your credit cards, as Corel is going to be making a great offer to the attendees of the meeting. And, of course, there will be door prizes and other goodies.

So, if you want to see one of the year's best presentations, plan on being at the Cross Roads Convention Center at 7:00 PM on July 11th. Come early, as all of the best seats will go quickly. And who know, there might even be a surprise at the meeting. See ya there.

Significant Happenings...

John Gaddis, Education VP

Video Editing and Web Design courses to be offered

Alamo PC has two new classes in the making. Lindy Lindemann has a good review of the Pinnacle Pro video editing program in (this issue?) If you do not have a digital video camera and would like to convert your old tapes to the new digital format, you will want to read his review, attend Pinnacle's August program at the Learning Center and sign up for Lindy's class which is expected to begin in September.

Lindy has taught Apconians digital camera classes over the past four or five years. They have all been highly acclaimed and many members have asked for repeat classes. This promises to be one of his best as he shows attendees how to edit clips, arrange them into a movie, add a music sound track and then add a narrative track. Each sound track will fade in and out independently. It will be a fun class and you will certainly enjoy your home video a lot more when your pictures and music fade in and out the way they do on TV and at the theater. If you already have a newer digital video, you are one step ahead and will complete the process faster.

Bill Hudson has been a leader in our SeniorComp group for several years and has taught many of their classes. He has now volunteered to teach one of the computer subjects which he loves best, Web Design.

Bill is developing an "Introduction to Web Design" course. The course will provide twelve hours of instruction on basic Web design techniques ranging from determining initial site

requirements, through site "publication" with a Web hosting service, to the maintenance and update of existing sites. Students will learn to understand and effectively modify HTML code. They will be introduced to the issues affecting the choice of frames, tables or CSS to construct the site's pages. The students will discuss Web graphics topics such as "web safe colors", navigation buttons, logos, and photo albums. Students will also learn where to find support, information and tutorials for Web designers on the Internet, including free Webmaster tools ranging from javascript menu and banner creators, Web calendars, and forums or "Message Boards", and FTP programs. Finally, students will create a personal Web site, ready to publish, as they complete their study of the Web design fundamentals discussed in this class.

NOTICE: As always, Alamo PC needs volunteers to teach classes and help at the Learning Center. One of the newest jobs which we desperately need to fill is a telephone bank of Apconians who will call members when their membership has expired to ask them if they overlooked renewing or did not get their renewal information when we ceased publishing the PC Alamode. We are discovering that many members have been lost in this change over to our new operating procedure. This is a very important job and we need you even if you can only give a few hours a month. Please, call the Learning Center at 736-0700 and sign up. We need YOU badly!

Senior Comp Schedule

Bill Hudson, Senior Comp Instructor

Senior Comp Summer Schedule of Classes

Basic Introduction to Windows

Andy Roca and Donna Dudley
Wednesdays 10am -12pm
Aug 24, 31, Sep 7, 14, 21, 28

Introduction To Windows

Don Robinson
Mondays 1pm -3pm
Sep 12, 19, 26, Oct 3, 10, 17

Introduction To Windows

Audrey Henkin
Tuesdays 1:30pm – 3:30pm
Aug 23, 30, Sep 6, 13, 20, 27

Introduction To Windows II

Bill Hudson
Tuesdays 10am - 12pm
Sep 13, 20, 27, Oct 4,11, 18

World Wide Web and E-Mail

Don Robinson
Wednesdays 1pm - 3pm
Sep 14, 21, 28, Oct 5, 12, 19

The Print Shop / Greeting Card Design

Jane Montgomery
Wednesdays 1pm - 3pm
Aug 24, 31, Sep 7, 14, 31, 28

Intermediate MS Word

David Henry
Fridays 1pm - 3pm
Aug 26, Sep 2, 9, 16, 22, 30

Senior Comp Practice Lab

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

This schedule is subject to change.
Please check with the Alamo PC
Registrar at 210-736-0700

Classes meet for six two-hour
sessions. Pre-registration is required

Cost \$60.00 (class materials included);
\$40 to repeat a class Senior Comp
classes are specifically designed to
assist Adults (age 45 or older) to learn
how to effectively use their computers.

Senior Comp is backed by eight years
of proven success.

ComputerFest is a collection of local and statewide dealers under one roof offering rock-bottom prices on all your computer needs. All of our dealers are independent wholesalers, so each conducts business separately. Most of the dealers will accept credit cards, but with cash you can usually get the best deals. And new products are almost always backed up with a warrantee, so you and your wallet can always feel comfortable with your purchases.

What you can find at the show:

New Complete Systems
New Hardware
Newest Software Titles
Printers, Monitors, Scanners
Ink-Jet Recharge Kits
Imaging Devices
Internet Services
Used Hardware
Multimedia Upgrades
Shareware
Diagnostic Equipment
Cables & Connectors
Bare Bone Systems
Computer Related Books
Refurbished Systems, Monitors

Location:

Airport Civic Center
8505 Broadway @ Loop 410
San Antonio, TX.

Show Dates and Times:

check dates at <http://www.pcshows.com/>



Geeky Gourmet

Since summertime is the usual time for family get togethers and reunions, the Geeky Gourmet is soliciting your favorite picnic foods and casseroles for such events. Just send your recipes to the attention of the geeky gourmet at alamopc.

Shrimp Con Queso

- 3 lbs. Shrimp, cut in pieces
- 1 stick margarine
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped green onions (tops included)
- 1 cup diced bell pepper
- ½ to 1 can tomatoes with green chilies
- 1 16-oz. Pkg. Velveeta, cut up
- 1 can cream of celery soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup

Boil shrimp in salted water. Drain and set aside. Shell and chop when cool. Sauté celery, onions, and bell pepper in margarine and drain. Add remaining ingredients. (This is a good place to stop if you are making the dish ahead of time.) Heat mixture over low heat just until cheese is barely melted. Add shrimp 5 minutes before serving.

If you leave the shrimp whole, you may serve hot over boiled rice. A tossed salad and crunch garlic bread go well with this.



Snowball Cake

- 1 pkg. Cake mix, any kind
- 1 small carton sour cream
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 carton Cool Whip
- 1 cup coconut (optional)
- ½ t. vanilla

Prepare the cake mix according to directions. Mix remaining ingredients and spread on cake. Enjoy.

Stay cool and please send in those favorite recipes so we can all enjoy a great time with our families this summer.

Bon Appetite

The Geeky Gourmet





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.

*Purchase Dates For Hard Drives

I quickly heard from readers expressing their displeasure about the HD warranties I wrote about last month. I didn't like the fact that a HD warranty starts on the build date either and I don't know where the purchase receipt is for a new drive I bought (shame on me). I may be able to find it, but this HD has been lying around here for a while. Your purchase receipt for a Western Digital drive means you're covered, but I don't know other manufacturer's policies. When I opened the box for a new Western Digital 80 gig HD the other day, the warranty wording for it was inside its box, under the drive, printed on the bottom layer of the box. The warranty is "for one year from the date on my original purchase receipt." That works, but also included was a card to purchase a three-year extended warranty for \$14.95. Stores don't let you open the box to read the warranty but they might show you a copy or refer you to a URL.

*Email Problem Fixed

I got the run-a-round from Earthlink tech support trying to get my old Eudora e-mail program back in operation when it stopped working. They said port options could not be changed for their new servers (true). I downloaded Eudora's version 6.2.1.2-sponsored (free) e-mail program to try. Eudora has a link to Earthlink's own Web site for a tutorial to set up the Eudora product, but it still didn't work right. I later bought the paid version and Eudora's tech support walked me through steps to make the change that Earthlink's tech support said couldn't be done in ver. 6.2 either. It involved copying and pasting a file to get the option. That can also be done on the sponsored version. That info is on their Web site. In all, Earthlink's tech support was no help and hard to understand, although apologetic; and they were wrong. Its working, but I still have a minor problem I hope to iron out.

Remember "CameraMate VideoSafe" and "CameraMate Real Time Video" by Zio Corp. from last month's column with rebates (sticker on the product's box bought from the retailer) extended through Sept. 30, 2005.

*Popular Deal Revived

Twice in the past few years I have featured a discount on products purchased from InkSell.com, and both times I featured it, the deal was quite popular. I am not familiar with prices on inkjet products so you should do your own research. Bryan Hawkins, marketing manager, has offered to repeat this deal for us and it is as follows: "We are going to do a promo code for your readers. The code is for 15% off all compatible "inkjet" products. OEM cartridges are excluded. The promotion starts today (5/16/05) and runs till a year from now. The code is "pcdeals2005".

Their Web site is <<http://www.inksell.com>> for product information. To order, go to checkout and put in the shipping information then click on the "continue" button. After putting in the billing info, there is a place to enter in the your e-mail address for e-mail confirmation. Below that is the coupon promotional code field for entering the code "pcdeals2005", then click "apply." Or; Mon- Fri. 9am - 6pm CST order by phone at 1-800-255-0483.

*Why Not The Latest Locking System For You

I thought the battery-operated lockset that opens with a keypad was great technology for the door to my house, but I like this product better. How about just laying your finger on a pad and having the lock automatically open. You can also set it up so a different finger performs another action, such as opening your garage door. eKeyUSA Systems offers biometric fingerprint technology for everything from home to business, and its possible to even track who enters, and the times. I was impressed with this product when I saw it.

Get more information at <<http://www.ekeyusa.com>>. You don't need a computer for the lock to operate, but eKey can be used with a computer to keep a log of the users. The weatherproof reader can be used either inside or outside to trigger a device such as a door striker plate or garage door opener. Keep in mind that eKey only provides the biometric fingerprint products to operate electronically controlled locks, but they do not sell locks. However, you might find locks to work with this product at <<http://www.smarthome.com>>.

Home models offered include:

1. Ekey TOCAhome with 1 output for a door/gate (1 relay) – MSRP - \$699
2. Ekey TOCAhome 3 with 3 outputs for doors/gates (3 relays) – MSRP - \$899
3. Ekey TOCAhome pc with 3 outputs for doors/gates (3 relays), incl. RS232 interface, cable and PC-Software – MSRP - \$1149

Each model can be trained for up to 99 fingerprints (in case you have relatives staying with you). DealsGuy readers are offered a 30% discount from those prices. Contact them at Hassan.Hares@ekeyUSA.com or (941) 782-1227. To get this discount, use the password "dealsguy05."



The USA Patriot Act Revisited

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. E-mail him at <johnb@jnbrewer.com>

In 2001, Congress passed and the President approved the USA Patriot Act. The Patriot Act gives law enforcement broad powers that are targeted for the "war on terror." It actually, it goes far beyond that purpose. It is reported that approximately 10% of the Act "sunset" in 2005 unless Congress extends those provisions. A sunset provision in a law means that a provision "expires" on a date certain unless the legislative body extends the date of the provision.

One aspect of the new Patriot Act legislation is a hot topic. That topic concerns expanded authority to use administrative subpoenas. Search warrants are normally issued by courts after a showing that the warrant is justified. However, a number of agencies also have administrative subpoena power. Administrative subpoenas are similar in effect to search warrants and do not require court oversight.

A recent article in the San Francisco Chronicle reports that "the Bush administration and Senate Republican leaders are pushing a plan that would significantly expand the FBI's power to demand business records in terror-related investigations without obtaining approval from a judge. The proposal, which is likely to be considered next week in a closed-door meeting of the Senate Intelligence Committee, would allow federal investigators to subpoena records from businesses and other institutions without a judge's approval if the investigators themselves declare that the material is needed as part of a foreign intelligence investigation. The proposal, part of a broader plan to extend anti-terrorism powers under the law known as the USA Patriot Act, was formulated in recent days by Republican leaders on the Senate Intelligence Committee in consultation with the Bush administration, congressional officials said."

The proposal has also generated some concern from other members of the US Senate who do not sit on the Senate Intelligence Committee. "Support for the idea among many Democrats and some Republicans in Congress is uncertain, and the Senate Intelligence Committee's plan to push the proposal could set off a struggle with the Senate Judiciary Committee. The Judiciary Committee has joint authority for oversight of foreign intelligence surveillance law -- which would be expanded under the current proposal -- but its members have shown some reluctance to expand the FBI's counterterrorism powers.

A Judiciary Committee aide said that Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., who leads the Judiciary Committee, wanted to study the Intelligence Committee's proposal closely to determine whether it was warranted. 'Being a former prosecutor, he understands what tools are needed for law enforcement, but he also understands that there are serious concerns about ensuring people's liberties,' said the aide, who spoke on condition of anonymity, for fear of provoking tensions with the Intelligence Committee."

The Chronicle article reported further that "with 16 provisions of the Patriot Act set to expire at the end of the year, the Bush administration has made the permanent extension of the law one of its legislative priorities. But critics are seeking to scale back provisions in the law that they say are vulnerable to abuse, and more than 380 governmental bodies, including seven states, have adopted formal resolutions voicing concerns about the broad reach of the law."

The first Act passed with little latitude to permit debate. "One of the most striking features of the USA Patriot Act is the lack of debate surrounding its introduction. Many of the provisions of the Act relating to electronic surveillance were proposed before September 11th, and were subject to much criticism and debate. John Podesta, White House Chief of Staff from 1998 - 2001, questioned what has changed since then. "The events of September 11 convinced ... overwhelming majorities in Congress that law enforcement and national security officials need new legal tools to fight terrorism. But we should not forget what gave rise to the original opposition - many aspects of the bill increase the opportunity for law enforcement and the intelligence community to return to an era where they monitored and sometimes harassed individuals who were merely exercising their First Amendment rights. Nothing that occurred on September 11 mandates that we return to such an era.

One has to chuckle (but not too loudly) at the popular title of the Act, "the USA Patriot Act." How could anyone be opposed to a law with that title? However, the Act has nothing to do with patriotism and has everything to do with expanded powers for federal law enforcement. In some instances, these powers intrude upon protections guaranteed by the US Constitution. Everyone favors stronger efforts to apprehend persons who are terrorists (they are remarkably similar to what historians call anarchists).

The real issue is whether the new laws have been effective in the war on terror. This author is unable to answer that question but is concerned with aspects of the Act. Congress acted hastily in 2001 primarily out of concern over the events of September 11. It would be prudent for Congress to move with appropriate speed but also with appropriate debate in 2005. Liberties that are surrendered are not easily regained. It is troubling that the Committee is meeting in secret to debate the Act. Some quotations that appeared in the New York Times following a recent closed door meeting of the Committee are interesting.

'You can fight terrorism ferociously without throwing people's rights in the trash can,' Senator Ron Wyden, Democrat of Oregon and a member of the committee, said after emerging from the meeting. Mr. Wyden said he wanted to see greater checks placed on the government's surveillance and investigative powers. He said he was concerned that giving the F.B.I. the authority to issue so-called administrative subpoenas, which would demand records in terror cases without a judge's approval, would amount to "a license to fish." He and other senators on the committee would not discuss details of the meeting because it was a closed session, disappointing civil rights advocates who said they thought the debate over the government's counterterrorism powers should be completely open to the public.

"I can't talk about anything that happened in there," Senator Carl Levin, Democrat of Michigan, said after leaving the meeting. "We've been read the riot act on this one."

Is it a "brave new world" or just "business as usual?" Time will give us the answer.



Computer Basics

Russell James, Alamo PC

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

Preventive Maintenance

Taking care of your computer is really pretty simple. There are a few basic rules that will help you with most of the problems that you might come across. They deal with two issues that you might have with your computer and only two. They are hardware and software problems. The rules are as follows. Viruses, Trojans and Hackers are bad. Antivirus software and

Windows Critical Updates are good. Heat, Dust and new noises are bad. Now you need to know what you need to do in order to follow the rules.

As we have discussed many times, you should not only have a current Antivirus program installed, but you should also have it set to update itself automatically. I like for my systems to check for updates on a daily basis. One of the readers e-mailed me with a question that I thought would be good to explain here. He said that he had installed Norton Antivirus 2004 but he could not find where to change the setup for the update interval. For those of you with this program installed you would go into your scheduled tasks for Windows and view the properties of the Symantec NetDetect task. Adjust the schedule of the task to whatever interval you choose and the update of Norton Antivirus 2004 will follow.

I would suggest that if your antivirus program is more than two years old you should buy the latest version to give you the most protection. There are a number of Viruses and Trojans that the older programs will not detect. After a period of time you will not be able to install the virus definition updates. McAfee 4.03 is one such version of antivirus program that falls into this category. Not only are there viruses and Trojans that it will not detect, you will also have to manually update the product to stay protected.

Windows Critical updates are very simple to deal with. If you are using Windows 98 or ME there is an update that will install a program to check for critical updates every time you connect to the Internet. If a critical update is found a screen pops up asking if you would like to download and install the update or be reminded about it later. If you are using XP or a similar operating system the default setting is to download any critical updates and notify you with an icon in the taskbar. This way the downloading takes place in the background and all you have to do is click on the button to install the update. You can also change the schedule and choose to have the updates installed automatically without the need for your intervention.

Let's take a look at the hardware rules that you need to follow. The first item on the list is heat. It is not a good idea to have a computer system in an area that has a lot of direct sunlight. Heat can also come into play with the other two items on the list, dust and new noises. Dust can cause the fans to not have the same amount of cooling power that they once had. If you are blowing air on a heat sink that is covered in dust, you are not getting the full effect that you could get if you were blowing the air directly on the heat sink. This means that the CPU is going to run at a higher temperature than it normally has to. You only have a certain amount of time before the dust gets so bad that either the fan fails or the CPU overheats and dies. When the fan fails you will find out about the new noises issue. If you start hearing noises then you need to find out what they are and fix the problem now. Later is usually a bad thing.

There is no way that I can give you a definitive answer as to how often you need to clean your systems out. Once a year would be the minimum unless you have some great filters in your air conditioning system. If you have never taken the cover off your computer and it is more than one year old, now would be a good time to learn the basics. You can buy a can of compressed air at most of the office supply stores in town. Take the cover off and use the air to blow the dust off of the CPU fan as well as the vent of the power supply fan and any case fans that your system might have. Some of you will be surprised at the amount of dust you will find.

There are many more things that can go wrong with computers that the basics will not be able to help you with. There is always the possibility that you could have a hard drive die or a video card or memory chip go bad. These are the types of failures that you will have no control over. All you can worry about is the things that you can control. Keep the hackers and dust out of your system and hopefully the only problems you will encounter are the problems that occur between the seat and the keyboard. You are on your own for those.

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Remote Control Nightmares

K. Joyce McDonald, Alamo PC

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

I had a vivid nightmare recently. My recent frequent PC Alamode articles on interface design may have come back to haunt me, as I don't recall ever before dreaming about bad interfaces.

I had gone to Vietnam to work a contract. My husband, a Vietnam vet, had decided to tag along. We were on a bus with a bunch of other contractors, and I was deep in conversation with one of them. Suddenly, I scanned the passengers and realized that my husband was no longer on the bus. I whipped out my cell phone to call him, but instead of my friendly Samsung™ flip phone, this phone looked suspiciously like our television remote control. The interface was so bad that I couldn't figure out how to look up a stored number, and I couldn't remember my husband's cell phone number. I was able to contact an operator who spoke English, but she was only interested in talking about herself. As the conversation progressed (or perhaps failed to) I began to panic. I was still in a state of panic when I woke up, happy to be home and in my own bed, but disturbed nonetheless.

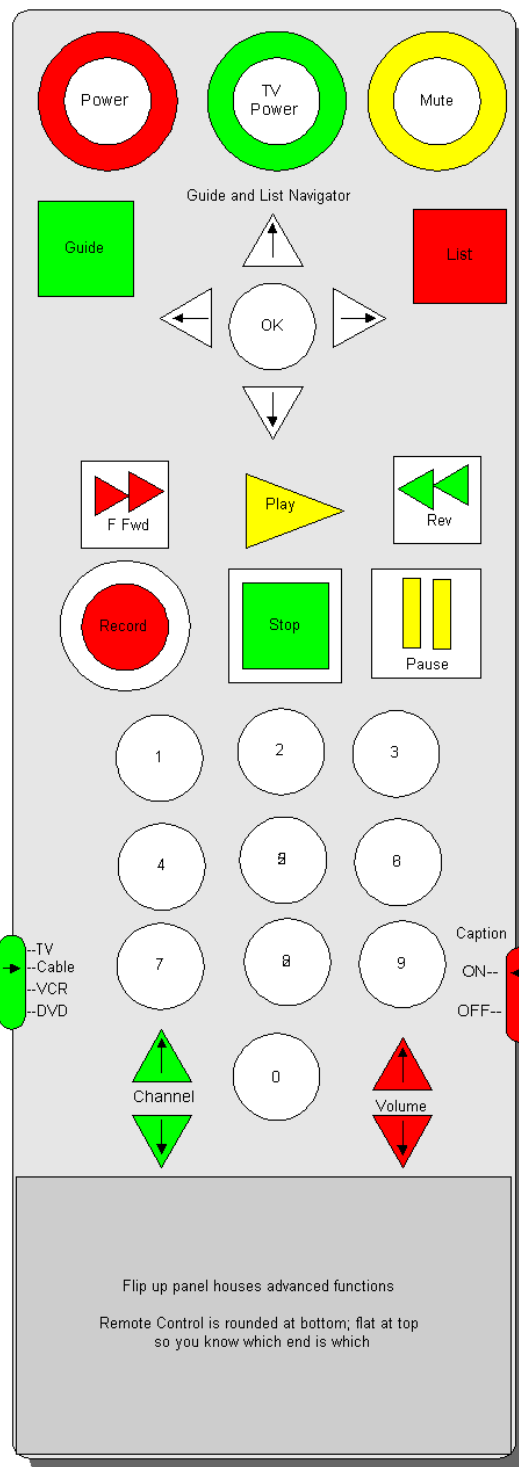
My nightmare had some truth in it, because remote control devices for our TVs and stereos drive me to distraction, especially when bad design challenges my failing eyesight and arthritic hands as well as the logic in my head. We have a Bose™ surround sound system; you know, the Bose™ that brags about its state-of-the-art engineering standards. Unfortunately, their persnickety standards apply only to the sound, not to the interface. A remote control should only duplicate the functions of the controls on the machine itself. In other words, whatever you can do with a remote, you should be able to do on the console, because the natural habitat for a remote control is between the cushions on the sofa. My Bose™ system console offers no "play" button. If the player is off and you turn it on, it will start playing the first CD track (sometimes). When the player doesn't start, or if you change CDs or shuffle the order of the tracks, you have to find the remote and press the "play" button. I could go on about the remote's tiny buttons and illogical button placement, but I think you get the picture.

Someone who complains as much as I do should offer some constructive suggestions, so I got out my Easter basket and hunted down fifteen remote controls. I studied them carefully and began to formulate some rules. The best remote came from our Toshiba™ television, so I used it as a template then altered its design to reflect my requirements.

Attached to this article, you will find a picture of my finished design. Any company that would like to copy my design has my permission as long as they send me a free copy of the finished product.

Here are some of the rules I followed in designing the remote.

1. You must be able to tell which end is which. The Toshiba™ remote had a rounded end for your hand and a flattened end that you point, with the pointing end slightly wider than the rounded end.
2. Buttons should be large enough to be readable. Color and placement should enhance one's ability to recognize the buttons and if feasible preclude the need to read the button labels, giving assistance to people who have difficulty reading small print in low light.
3. Buttons should be spaced well enough that you don't constantly hit the wrong button.



4. The channel and volume buttons, which require the user to press and hold, or strike repeatedly, should reside close to the handle to afford enough stability to operate with one hand.

5. One button should have one purpose. Except for the Channel and Volume buttons, no buttons should require the user to press twice or press and hold for two seconds, or press two buttons at a time.

6. Sliding buttons on the sides of the remote should replace the "buttons you press repeatedly". On my design the one on the left allows the user to tune in the VCR, DVD, Cable (or satellite) or TV without having to guess which one has been selected. The most important reason for this is to alleviate the problem of changing the channel on the TV when you meant to change the channel on the Cable or satellite system. My 87-year-old father still gets confused when he accidentally changes the TV channel from the prescribed 3, then can't get anything but snow.) The second sliding control, located on the right, allows the user to turn the close-captioning on and off without going through a cumbersome and confusing onscreen menu.

7. Only the frequently-used buttons should appear on the basic design. Special function buttons such as Timers, Tools, System Menus, Picture-in-picture and Zoom functions should reside behind a flip panel at the bottom of the remote.

8. Power and mute buttons should be in a prominent position. If more than two power buttons exist (for example, one for TV and one for a cable box or satellite hookup) they should appear close together so that the user immediately recognizes that two power buttons exist. The user should be able to locate the mute button quickly in case the phone or doorbell rings.

Design for this remote control is ongoing. I have already included features based on my family's review of the design. Please let me know if you have suggestions for improving the design of my dream remote. If I get enough response, I'll include my updated design in a future article.



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Computer Defense Department What can file-sharing applications do for you?



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.pcprou.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@pcprou.com>. See his ad for PC Pro Computer Services on page 54.

File sharing applications, otherwise known as peer to peer (P2P) networking applications, allow computer users to share files such as music, games, applications or any file for that matter, to and from remote computers. The way it works is Timmy here in the River City can get on his computer and use a P2P application such as Kazaa, Bearshare or Limewire to name a few, and search for a new song he heard on the radio. Once the P2P application is installed and setup the user can then search the computers of other users logged onto the program. Once the song has been found it will show Timmy all the instances it found of that song on different user's computers and allow Timmy to download the song. Users of these programs can be found all over the world. Figure 1 shows a screenshot of Limewire, a popular P2P application. Not only does it allow you to share files but runs ads enticing you to download other "free stuff".

The problem, besides the legality of sharing copyrighted files, is that you really don't know what you are getting. It has been reported that many recording companies pay people to stick half versions, or even worse copies of songs that might do harm to a computer, on P2P computers in hopes of discouraging sharing of copyrighted material. Often times files shared via P2P are labeled something but turn out to be something else entirely and purposely. Viruses can be attached to files shared with P2P as well as spyware. In short P2P is a computer security nightmare.

Figure 2 shows a screenshot of Kazaa. You simply put what you are looking for in the search field and then there are buttons you can check to narrow down your search area.

Once these P2P programs are installed by default they are set to startup with your computer. With the program running your computer is basically open to anyone looking for a file through the P2P program. It is like opening the door to an otherwise secure computer and letting in who knows what.

Most of the heavily malware infected computers I have disinfected have had some sort of P2P application installed. Even uninstalling the application does not rid your computer of all the vermin. Some P2P applications come with bundled spyware that introduce other ITDs (Internet Transmitted Diseases), and then it is like walking though a sticker patch wearing cotton, they are all over the place and removing some is harder than others. Some of the newer P2P applications advertise that they do not come bundled with Spyware. Wow, that's great but there's still that security problem. Look at it like this would you open that email attachment from somebody you didn't know? Do you know who's sharing that file with you over the P2P network?

It was reported by Wired magazine that forty-five percent of the executable files downloaded through Kazaa, the most popular file-sharing program, contain malicious code like viruses and Trojan horses. Some code was designed to infect every file in a computer user's Kazaa download directory with a virus. Other code would steal users' AOL Instant Messenger password or install a program on their computer to allow the attacker to surreptitiously send spam through it or otherwise take over the machine remotely to steal personal data and files on the computer.

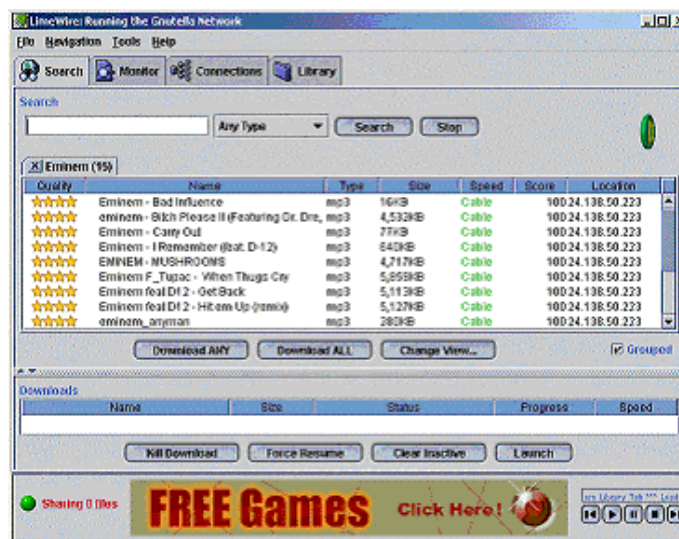


Figure 1

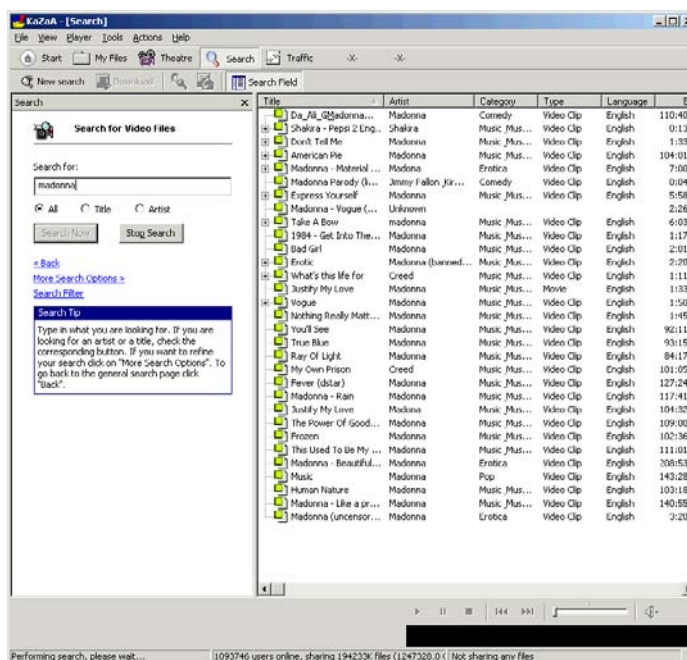


Figure 2

The following P2P applications are confirmed to have spyware or other unwanted parasites bundled into them:

KaZaa (offers a paid version without spyware)
Limewire (Older versions only)
Audiogalaxy
Bearshare (offers a paid version without spyware)
Imesh
Morpheus
Grokster (offers a paid version without spyware)
Xolox
Blubster 2.x aka Piolet (Blubster 2.0 and higher and Piolet are adware and bundle other adware)
OneMX
FreeWire
Exeem
BitTorrent
Ultra
FileCroc
Kiwi Alpha
RockItNet
WareZ P2P
MediaSeek (MediaSeek Lite from the same company does not bundle any spyware or adware)

E-Donkey AKA Overnet (Claims to provide a spyware free paid version)

Computwin AKA FileNavigator (While it doesn't bundle adware or spyware, this product is itself adware, pops up a full page ad in Internet Explorer upon loading and claims to track computer usage in its license)

Ares (Official site offers a "Lite" version without the adware bundles)

Various BitTorrent Clients

Since these programs have been installed legitimately they have free reign on your computer. So even though you have antivirus and firewall programs installed these programs have free reign. If you run any Antispyware program it will more than likely report the P2P application as spyware since they are known spyware carriers.

While it may be nice to get all that "free" stuff in my opinion and from my experience they don't offer any value and can end up costing time and money getting rid of the damage they are likely to cause. Either you can have "free" stuff or you can have a working computer.



BLOGS and Wikis

Best and Worst

Collected by Pim Borman,

SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc., IN; <<http://swipcug.apcug.org/>>

If you still don't know what a blog is you haven't been paying attention, or maybe you were holed up in the Antarctic. A Blog, short for Web Log, is an online diary for the common man, kind of a Web site for dummies. To set up a blog all you have to do is subscribe to a hosted blog service that will help you get started cheaply and easily. Once set up, you can write about everything you want to your online diary, for everyone to see. Not surprisingly, there are already more than 4 million of those, mostly inanity-rich, productions by teenagers and senior citizens alike, many of which were started and abandoned soon thereafter.

But there are also many nuggets in the mud, as more talented or business-oriented authors have glommed on to this medium to spread their messages. Democratic presidential hopeful Howard Dean maintains an active blog at www.blog.deanforamerica.com and happily uses it to collect millions of dollars from young and older followers. If you prefer your diary to be of the classical type, Pepys's diary is back as a blog at www.pepysdiary.com, with annotated copies of the original entries appearing daily. Professional writers publish blogs, such as www.neil-gaiman.com/journal/journal.asp by the novelist and comic book author. Businesses such as Macromedia and Sony use blogs to communicate with customers.

Blogging services include Google's www.blogspot.com, a free service, and the top-rated www.typepad.com that

charges \$4.95/month for basic service and more for several premium services. See PCMagazine of December 30, 2003 for more details. To jump right into the blogger scene, go to Google's <http://new.blogger.com/>.

Wikis are similar to blogs in that anyone can upload messages, but operate more like the bulletin boards of yesteryear. Any member can add or edit Web pages using a few simple formatting rules. The members work together to create the wiki site. (Wiki is derived from the Hawaiian wiki-wiki, meaning quick). Visitors to a wiki site consist of administrators, members, and the public. You can try out some wikis free at www.seedwiki.com and at www.swiki.net, while others charge for the privilege. See the December 30 PC Magazine article for details, or find the article on the Web at www.pcmag.com.



Preventative Maintenance Part II

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.

You can plug in to your computer and remove from it some peripheral devices, such as cameras, with no problem. However, other removable gear poses a greater risk to your machine's stability. For example, removing a network computer card adapter from a notebook or an external hard drive from a desktop can cause you to lose data. The proper way to remove devices the safe way from your computer is to click the Safely Remove Hardware icon in the System Tray. From the pop-up menu, you then select the hardware to be removed. Next double-click the Safely Remove Hardware icon. You can now unplug this device.

Doctor Tech

To get all your computer hardware and software problems resolved in less than 7 minutes, 24/7, you can call a toll-free phone number or by email at Ask Dr. The cost for this service is about \$8 per month at <<http://www.qksrv.net/click-1434278-1487676>>.

Drivers

Windows retains your old driver to let you undo a hardware problem. Log on as an administrator, open Windows Explorer, right-click My Computer, choose Properties, and click Hardware, Device Manager. In the Device Manager window, navigate to the hardware device with the problematic driver. Double-click its icon, choose Driver, click the Roll Back Driver button, and respond to any on-screen prompts. There are two ways to check for unsigned drivers in WinXP. To find out whether a specific installed driver is unsigned, click on Start, Control Panel, Performance and Maintenance, System. In the system Properties dialog box, on the Hardware tab, click on Device Manager. Double-click on the device name in the list of hardware devices on your system. In the device's Properties dialog box, click on the Driver tab, and then click on Driver Details. Signed driver files each have a certificate icon with a green checkmark. Unsigned files have no icons. To check your entire system for unsigned drivers, use the File Signature Verification tool by clicking on Start, Run, type sigverif, and then click on OK. When File Signature Verification opens, click on Advanced to open the Advanced File Signature Verification Settings dialog box. Next, click on "Look for other files that are not digitally signed". In the "Look in this folder box," enter `UI\SystemRoot UI\System32\drivers`, where `SystemRoot` is the folder in which WinXP is installed, such as `C:\WINDOWS`, click on OK, and then on Start to begin. The results are copied to the log file `Sigverif.txt`, which is located in the `SystemRoot` folder. In the Status column, look for files listed as "Not Signed."

DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD-RAM

Information can be saved on a variety of storage devices. CDs max out at approximately 700 MBs while most DVDs can handle 4.7 gigabytes of data. Some DVDs are double sided, and they can store 9.4 GB. There are many competing brands, formats, or standards for these disks. DVD-RAM is an early iteration of DVD. It was developed primarily to store data and be used on computers. If creating a disc using DVD-RAM, you are very likely to run into compatibility problems. DVD players usually work well with DVD-R and DVD+R. DVD-R is shorthand for DVD recordable. It means you can record the

disc just once. It has a rewritable cousin, DVD-RW. You can erase and rewrite those discs about 1,000 times. DVD+R is similar to DVD-R, in that it is writeable just one time. It also has a rewritable version, DVD+RW. DVD+R/RW. The recordable versions, DVD-R and DVD+R, are most likely to play back in a home DVD player. The rewritable versions, along with DVD-RAM, are much iffier. When you become involved in DVDs, check the instructions for your DVD player. They should tell you which formats can be played back. There may be some way to play DVD-RAM discs, but you will have to use the shorter DVD-Rs.

Error Message

When Windows tells you of a problem, preserve the error message to discuss with a support tech by pressing Ctrl C to copy the message to your Clipboard, opening a new e-mail message to the tech person, pressing Ctrl V to paste the error alert text, and then sending the message to that person.

Files Cleanup

You can always use Disk Cleanup with WinXP to rid your computer of files in the Recycle Bin, temporary files, etc. However, if you are one who likes to do a thorough cleanup job, here is some guidance which may be helpful for this task. It's safe to delete the following files from your computer: avi (Audio Video Interleaved), chk (Check), hlp (Help), html (Hypertext Markup Language), lnk (Shortcuts), rtf (Rich Text Format), gif (Graphics Interchange Format), mpeg (Moving Picture Experts Group), mime (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions), midi (Musical Instrument Digital Interface), pwl (Password List), png (Portable Network Graphics), and wmz (Windows Media Player Skins) files. You can also delete some of the following files but do so with caution after checking to see if they are used by other programs on your computer: bmp (Bit Map), gif (Graphics Interchange Format), jpeg (Joint Photographic Experts Group), tiff (Tagged Image File Format), inf (Information), log (Logistics), mov (Movie), mpeg (Moving Picture Experts Group), pwl (Password), wav (Audio Files), Backup Files, such as .bac, .bak., bck., bk!, and bk\$, tmp (Temporary), txt (Text), wav (Waveform Audio), doc (Documents) mp3, mpg, and wmv files. Do not delete: bat (Batch); dat (Data); exe (Executable); ini (Initialization), cab, com, inf, sys, bin (Binary), dll (Dynamic-Link Library). Whenever deleting a file, always assume that you will NOT be able to restore it. If there is a remote chance you will need the file, instead of deleting it, archive it or move the file to a floppy disk, CD, or tape drive.

File Extensions

As noted by the previous tip, there are many file extensions. Most are harmless but there are some which can carry virus' and/or cause you major computer problems. You need to know them to prevent a computer headache! .pdf = acrobat file document with layout preserved. .dll = functions or data to a Windows program. .doc = document, as found in Word or Works. .xls = Excel spreadsheet. .exe = application program. .dcr = shockwave file that enhances Web pages with multimedia, such as animation. .vcf = vcard or virtual business cards .wav = digitally recorded sounds. Files ending in zip, sit, or tar means they have been compressed, while those with jpg, tif, gif, or pcx are image or graphics files. Video files usually end in avi, ram, mpg, mov, or qt. Sound file formats include mp3, wav, au, aiff, apdf, and they require Adobe Acrobat Reader to open them. You should exercise caution in opening any attachments with endings in .exe, .com, .bat, .scr, lpif, or .vbs.

File Recovery Tools

When you delete a file and then want to recover it, things get a little more complex if the Recycle Bin has been emptied, or when the Bin empties itself because it's full. At this point the operating system (OS) erases the file's name from the directory, and marks the file's space as available for reuse. However at this point, all that's gone is the file's name. Fortunately the data is still there. Eventually, when the OS needs the space used by the "deleted" file, the file's data will get overwritten with new data from another file. Then, it will be difficult to recover the old data, which often requires the use of special and expensive lab equipment. But prior to that situation, before the old data is overwritten, it's actually not that hard to get it back, although the process can take some time. Software programs like Norton Disk Editor can search a disk sector by sector for the words or phrases in a deleted file. Once you find that word/phrase, you can search nearby sectors for the rest of the file. If you've kept your disk defragged, chances are good that the rest of the file is nearby. If your disk wasn't defragged, then pieces of the file may be in widely scattered locations. It's still not hard to recover the data, but tracking down all the pieces can take a very long time. With good backups, it's very rare to lose an important file. If you accidentally delete an important file, it's probably recoverable from the Recycle Bin. If not, then it's probably in your backups. But if not that, then a well-ordered, defragged disk will make finding the deleted file's pieces much easier to recover. There are many undelete tools available: <<http://www.google.com/search?q=undelete>> and <<http://www.google.com/search?q=file+recover>>. You can recover from format or fdisk operations, too, with <<http://www.google.com/search?q=unformat+recover+fdisk>> and

<<http://www.collina.us/files/REST2514.htm>>. Finally, Easy Recover at <www.ontrack.com> also has a good reputation for recovering lost files. It's actually rather hard to delete information from a hard drive. Until the data's been overwritten, it's possible to recover a deleted file.

Floppy Disk Maintenance

Here is good advice for computer users who have emergency boot floppies and rescue disks that Windows and other programs instruct us to have on hand. Floppies can accumulate bad sectors in a matter of weeks. To confirm that they still work, you should check them every few months by booting from the floppy or by evaluating them with a disk-scanning tool. In Win98/Me, select Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, ScanDisk. In Win2000/XP, choose Start, My Computer, right-click the floppy drive, select Properties, and click Tools, Check Now.

Microsoft Security Alerts

Microsoft issues regular security warnings for its computer operating systems users. You can get them by signing up for e-mail alerts from Microsoft at <www.microsoft.com/security/security_bulletins/alerts2.asp>. They will tell you which products are affected by virus', and they will give you a link to the full security warning announcement.

If you have a new computer and want to transfer your files from an old one to it, there are several methods for this task. 1. If your new computer has WinXP, you can use the Files and Settings Transfer Wizard. It will move over everything you have in My Documents folder, however it doesn't move programs. They would have to be reinstalled on the new computer. 2. There also are a few software programs on the market to help move programs from one unit to another. The best known is Alohabob's PC Relocator. This program is installed on the old and new machines. Then the data is transferred via USB or parallel cable. PC Relocator transfers everything, such as programs, folders, files, settings, etc. The settings you have within your programs are retained using this program. Unfortunately if you have junk on your old computer, it'll transfer those files to the new one, too. Before you make the transfer, clean out your old files. Another program that transfers data is Intellimover, by Detto Technologies (\$39.95). Intellimover transfers files, folders and program settings, but not programs. They have to be re-installed on the new computer. It also uses both USB and parallel connections. You can also move your files via CD or DVD with a burner. Copy the files you want to move and then re-install them on the new machine. 3. Finally, there is one other possible solution. You can remove the hard drive from your old machine, install it as a slave in the new one, and then copy the files you need to the new hard drive.

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Going Mobile

Larry Lentz, MCSE+I & W2K, MCDBA, MCSA:Messaging W2K3

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

Many of you tell me you love my column, read it regularly, but don't understand a word of it. Hopefully this one will be one you can understand. First though, I ended my last article saying that being able to access my e-mail from anywhere was a good thing, right? Right?! Well, it is but I do remember the 'simpler' days. Fifteen years ago when I started my business, cell phones weren't very prevalent. One could actually go out for lunch without getting 10 phone calls while eating. You could actually concentrate on your driving and not worry about your phone calls until you got back to the office and got your messages. That made lunch more of a 'break'. But I doubt any of us could live without our cell phones anymore. It's kind of the same thing with mobile e-mail access. I remember when I didn't worry about my e-mail when I was away from the office. Heck, we didn't know what e-mail was 15 years ago. Now I'm like a fish out of water if I can't get in and sync my Pocket PC or at least access my e-mail with my cell phone while running around town.

But what else can we do with this new capability? Small Business Server 2003 mobile access isn't just for e-mail. You can access all the major portions of Outlook. If you keep your schedule and contacts in Outlook, you sync those up when you sync up your e-mail. Let's look at a couple of hypothetical cases where this might come in handy. Let's say that you are a salesperson on the road all day, or even all week. Maybe you travel a territory. You have a support staff (or perhaps a boss) back at the office. As you make your sales calls, you can enter notes in Pocket Outlook Calendar about your visits. You can enter new contacts or update existing information in Pocket Outlook Contacts. When you find a WiFi hot spot, that information is updated on the server. Now the folks back at the office can access that information without having to wait for you to return to the office. The boss can see what a wonderful job you are doing, real time, and how you've impressed your clients. Conversely, the folks back in the office may need to update contact information in Outlook. Those updates would then be available to you on the road when you sync. Perhaps your secretary is responsible for keeping track of your calendar and scheduling your visits. When he enters a new appointment in Outlook, that appointment will show up on your Pocket PC calendar. And of course you can use e-mail to send in all those orders you are taking.

Now let's say you are a small business services company with a number of service teams out all day taking care of customers. Clients call into your main office and make requests for service. Your office staff then schedules the service calls. Using SBS 2003, they can enter the appointments in Outlook and the service technicians can download that information into their schedule in Pocket Outlook. Client information can be entered into the Outlook calendar as well. The field technicians can then enter the information about the service call at the time of the call and have it synced back to the main office. The office staff can then use that information to bill the customer, all before the service tech returns to the office.

Some organizations use Outlook Tasks to delegate activities. These tasks can then be synced into the Task feature of your Pocket PC. When they are completed, they can be synced back to let the requester know it's been accomplished.

Can't find a hot spot? If you have a cell phone with Internet access like Sprint PCS, you can do the same thing using Outlook Mobile Access as described last month. It's a little more cumbersome but it will work. A SmartPhone would give you such capabilities as well. Or you could subscribe to a WiFi service. T-mobile offers WiFi hot spots all over town and all over the country. These are easy to find. They are in most Starbucks and Kinkos. If you don't have time for a leisurely cup of coffee, you can just sync up in the parking lot. Time Warner Cable is setting up hot spots as well called SpeedZone. You can subscribe directly to this service or use your user name and password from your RoadRunner cable broadband account for 'free' access.

Mobile access isn't limited to just Outlook. Several CRM (Customer Relation Management) systems are beginning to come out with mobile versions. GoldMine is coming out with GoldMine Mobile Edition to run on a Pocket PC or SmartPhone. Microsoft has also announced that its CRM 1.2 is slated to have a Pocket PC module. These will allow us to have even more detailed information, instantly, anywhere.

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Internet Firm Told to Identify E-Mail Sender

New York Law Journal

An Internet service provider must hand over documents that disclose the identity of a person who sent an allegedly libelous e-mail about an executive director to the company's board, a Manhattan judge has ruled, finding that the First Amendment does not preclude discovery. The Public Relations Society of America and its director initiated an action against Road Runner High Speed Online, seeking all documents concerning the e-mail and the user of the originating Internet address.

Read full article <http://www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id%3d1118135110289>

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User Stories, Part II

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

Shane uses a PC. He needed comic relief this month. E-mail him at <shane@vpwn.com>.

Yes, this is the second installment of the politically incorrect treatment of our most hallowed assets: our beloved users. You know they're true. These stories are too incredible to be made up!

#9: Should Sales Get Technical Training?

A website developer told me about a new hire sales representative that asked him what a browser was. Enough said.

#10: Wasn't DOS So Much Easier!

This story comes from awhile back, when we were transitioning from DOS to Windows. A user attempted to save a document she'd been working on in Word for Windows, but the system told her there wasn't enough space left on her hard drive. She decided to clean the system up by deleting the DOS folder from her hard drive with the File Manager. After all, hadn't I been adamant of the fact we weren't using DOS anymore? She was surprised when she attempted to reboot the computer and Windows wouldn't start.

#11: Too Smart for Her Own Good!

I was recently helping a UNIX system administrator transfer some files on her local network, from one Windows PC to another. I told her I needed her to set up a shared folder on her machine so I could drop the files into it. Suddenly, a flurry of typing came from her keyboard, followed by a string of curses from her. When I asked her what was wrong, she exclaimed, "I can't remember the syntax for setting up a file share in Windows!" "Open Windows Explorer, right click on the folder, click share," I suggested.

#12: Reformat and Reinstall

A tech asked me for the Windows 2000 Server installation disk while we were preparing some unattended installation disks. I told him he didn't need it since I'd already installed all the Support Tools on the server. He told me that the server crashed and he needed the disk to attempt a recovery. I asked him what happened and he said that creating the unattended installation files corrupted the boot files on the server. He kept getting an NTLDR missing error. I told him to take his floppy disk out of the server and reboot again. The server was fine.

#13: Train the Trainer

A trainer went on-site for a client to train their users on a new application. The trainer was told she could call local technical support if she needed anything. The techs soon labeled her as "completely neurotic." At the slightest problem, she demanded their support instantly. After about three days of running to help her, the techs were quite weary when she called claiming, "I'm trying to log in and the cursor is just whizzing across the screen!" The tech arrived to find the cursor whizzing across the screen and the trainer quite annoyed. "It'll work better if you take your notepad off the spacebar," the tech offered.

#14: Righty Tightly, Lefty Loosy

One helpdesk technician got a call from a home user asking for help removing the monitor cable from the back of the PC. She'd tried pulling it out, enlisting her husband, her 19-year old son, and the next-door neighbor in an attempt to remove the cable. No one could remove it, she said. The tech asked, "Do you see those two round knobs on the side of the plug?" "Yes," she replied. "Well, unscrew them counter clockwise." The tech was rewarded with shouts of joy.

#15: My Secret Question

A fellow tech was helping his sister-in-law, who just happens to be blonde, establish an e-mail account on the Internet. They made it to an entry that asked for a secret question, in case the user forgets their password. He explained what the question was for and told her to type the question in. On his screen, the question was encrypted, so he couldn't see what she was typing. But something occurred to him. He reminded her, "You need to know the answer to the question." She immediately deleted her entry and had to start over again.

#16: The Infamous ANY Key and the All Purpose Cup Holder

Technicians take for granted that everyone is somewhat computer literate these days. But that just isn't true. There are still frantic calls from users who claim, "I've looked and looked but I can't find the ANY Key. Where is it?" or those who need a replacement coffee cup holder because they've broken the one that used to emerge from the computer each morning when they turned on the machine.

#17: Read the Instructions

A friend of mine recently spent several hours trying to help an office with their printer problems. The printer was just a few months old, but the print quality had faded to almost nothing. He'd already sent several replacement toner cartridges to the office when he decided to investigate their problems for himself. When he arrived, he asked the secretary if she'd installed the new toner cartridge he sent. She said she had, and that was when the printer stopped printing at all. He opened the printer and removed the cartridge to confirm it was one of the new ones. He quickly pointed to the tab on the cartridge that read "Remove this." Her next question was, "Should I remove that?"

Until next time...

The Switcher



...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac Grabbing Tiger by the tail!

Shane's a Mac user. Assist in his quest to learn OS X — e-mail him at <mac@vpwn.com>.

If you're into Mac, you've undoubtedly heard of the latest release from Apple of OS X 10.4 Tiger. There's a lot of buzz going on about it right now. Does it deserve it?

What are the new features of Tiger?

While most of Tiger's features were published over a year ago, Apple executives claim there's a lot in the OS to make users' lives easier. "We think that people using Mac OS X Tiger will be in the Spotlight menu all the time," said Brian Croll, Apple's senior director of Software Product Marketing. "You can go there to find documents, pictures, applications or anything else you want." Spotlight creates and automatically updates Smart Folders, which link related documents and other files, in the Finder. This simplifies searching and provides for better hard drive organization—which is important in a time when users never delete anything off their drives, according to Chris Bourdon, Apple's product manager for Mac OS X.

Besides Spotlight, Tiger features other new tools, aimed at helping Mac users in their everyday lives. The first is Automater, a built-in utility linked to AppleScript and sometimes referred to as visual AppleScript. "AppleScript has been an extremely great technology for people that wanted to automate things on the Mac—it's great for people that want to dive in there and learn some scripting," Bourdon said. But Automater can bring scripting to the masses. "There are a ton of people that know what they want to do with their computer and how they want their applications to work together, but they don't know scripting. We've broadened the market [using Automater] of people who can take advantage of automation in the operating system without having to write any code."

Other major additions and enhancements in OS X 10.4 include: an update to Safari (Apple's web browser) that adds RSS-friendly (a new type of news groups) capabilities; Dashboard, a new layer of the OS for housing mini-applications called widgets; a new version of iChat AV that adds multi-person video (up to three people) and audio chats; the updated QuickTime 7, featuring the new H.264 video codec; built-in syncing with a user's .Mac account; and enhancements to the built-in e-mail application.

Should I upgrade?

Apple quotes minimal requirements to install OS X 10.4 Tiger. They require a PowerPC G3, 256MB of RAM, and 3GB of hard drive space. However, with these specifications, Tiger will just annoy you with how slow it performs. If your system was originally designed to run OS 9, don't upgrade until you purchase your next Mac. However, if you've got a Power Mac G5, you'll likely find Tiger better than OS X 10.3 Panther, since the new OS has been optimized to work on those 64-bit processors.

I'm the first to run out and install the latest, greatest release of OS X. However, for the general user, having the latest is helpful only if you're using its added features. For someone just doing e-mail, word processing, and Internet surfing, Tiger offers little extra value. While you may find Tiger's widgets cool,

features such as Spotlight and Automator are most likely useless to the average user. Gaining iChat's video conferencing enhancements will also be of little use and those who don't manage a ton of e-mail probably won't be able to take full advantage of smart mailboxes and Address Book's smart groups (new features of Apple's e-mail program).

The bottom line really is to answer this question: What will I do with my Mac? Will what you do with your computer be improved by the upgrade? If you scatter files all over your hard drive, Spotlight will make it easier for you to find your stuff. If you work with graphics, and are tired of repetitive tasks, Automator is for you. You can create a single action that performs the same series of actions over and over (i.e., resizing and e-mailing iPhoto images). If you have physical disabilities, there are improved accessibility options. VoiceOver adds new screen reader capabilities to Tiger. These features alone may make the upgrade worth your while.

Of course, Tiger is the future for the Mac. There are several new options built-in to the core of the OS. Visually, Tiger adds new image filters, transitions, and effects to be used in applications. As developers take advantage of these options, you won't be able to see them without Tiger. And QuickTime 7 includes the new H.264 video codec, which delivers incredible looking video at much lower data rates. There are other things that will become more valuable as developers create new software to take advantages of Tiger's new features.

I've played with Tiger a bit. I've now performed both an upgrade and a fresh install (erasing the entire hard drive) using a 17" PowerBook G4 1.5GHz. Both the upgrade and the fresh install went without a hitch. Both the fresh install and the upgrade, which included updating OS X 10.3.6 with the latest patches and then running a repair on the drive to assure optimal health, took just over one hour to perform each time. I then performed some basic testing with common Mac applications: Microsoft Office X for Mac and Microsoft Office 2004: Mac and Macromedia's Dreamweaver Studio MX 2004 (with Dreamweaver, Flash, and Fireworks). I didn't encounter any problems running any of this software. I also tested Microsoft's Virtual PC v7.1. There are some known compatibility issues with this piece of software, but they were minor. Microsoft is working on a patch to repair these issues.

Before performing any upgrade, you should always check with the vendor of any of your mission critical applications to make certain they've been tested to function with the new OS. Apple also has information on their web site which talks about compatibility testing and known issues. It only makes sense to upgrade if the new OS is capable of allowing you to get your work done!



CSS - I

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!

This is the first of a multi-part series on Cascading Style Sheets, or CSS, one of the preferred ways to format Web pages. I've played around the edges of CSS but have never fully implemented them in my work, so I will be learning right along with you.

The key word is format. Hypertext Markup Language, or HTML, is intended to specify the structure of a Web page. All the ways we tweak HTML to make a page pretty are technically outside its mission. CSS appropriately separates the style from the substance and, in the long run, makes life easier for the Webmaster.

CSS is not used instead of HTML; it is used alongside it. There are three basic ways that you can use CSS.

The most elegant solution is to have an external style sheet. This is similar to a style sheet in a desktop publishing document that specifies all of the normal parameters for your tags. The style sheet might specify that all paragraph text is 11 pt Arial black and that there is 5 pts of padding around every graphic. Each individual Web page then refers to the master style sheet so that you don't have to repeat these instructions.

The link to the external style sheet goes in the <HEAD> tag so that it loads first. A link to a style sheet might look something like:

```
<LINK REL=stylesheet HREF=http://www.susanives.com/
lazy/style1.css type="text/css" TITLE="lazystyle">
```

Using a linked external style sheet has several obvious advantages:

- (1) You can save a lot of time by not having to individually code each instance of a tag's parameters. Think of all those attributes you won't have to type!
- (2) If you make a global change to your Website – say you want to make the text 12 pt Times New Roman instead of 11 pt Arial – all you have to change is one style sheet, not 50 or 100 individual pages.
- (3) Your pages will be meaner and leaner: the bulk of your formatting is consolidated in the style sheet rather than taking up bits and bytes on each individual page.
- (4) As we'll discuss later in this series, there are many more formatting options in CSS than there are in HTML, and they are more precise. You can control the letter spacing, indent paragraphs or include margins. Here, for example, is the rule you would use to space-and-a-half the text in a paragraph: `P {line-height: 150%}`

A variation of the external linked style sheet is an @import style sheet. This works in a similar way, and we will discuss its advantages in a future column.

The next way to use CSS is as embedded style. In this method, you would put the CSS rules in the header of the HTML document in which you want it to appear. The CSS only applies to that page. This is a way to take advantage of CSS features when you haven't constructed an external style sheet, or to override an external style.

Here is an example of an embedded style that will make all of the text within every table data <TD> tag 10 point Verdana:

```
<HEAD>
```

```
<STYLE TYPE="text/css">
```

```
<!--
```

```
TD {font-size: 10pt;
```

```
font-family: Verdana, sans-serif;
```

```
}
```

```
--!>
```

```
</STYLE><TITLE>...
```

We've used embedded styles quite frequently in the Lazy Webmaster, for example, to change the color of the scroll bar, or to do away with text decoration, such as underlines on hyperlinks.

The third way to use CSS is as inline style. This is used inside the HTML to apply a rule to a specific element. There are two ways you would typically use an inline style. One instance is when you have a class that is not associated with a named element.

If you view-source for the main Lazy Webmaster page, <www.susanives.com/lazy>, for example, you will see an embedded CSS rule:

```
<style type="text/css"><!--.HL {background: #E9E37A;
color: black;}
```

```
--></style>
```

I made the class .HL stand for highlight; it makes the text black and highlighted in yellow, as if it were swiped by a marker pen. It's not associated with any particular element such as <H1> or <P>. So what text gets highlighted? All the text on the page? That would sure be hard to read!

To activate this style you have to imbed the rule within the HTML tag:

```
<font class="HL">nifty Web tricks</FONT>
```


Another way to use inline CSS is to add just one CSS rule, or to override a rule that is in the external style sheet or the imbedded style sheet. If you have just one paragraph that you want double-spaced, for example, you could make it happen this way:

```
<P STYLE="line-height: 200%">your text here </P>
```

From these examples you can see that there can be many different CSS rules coming from different sources. Inline styles override an embedded style sheet which overrides an external style sheet.

Another important concept is inheritance. Most "child," or sub-elements, inherit properties from their "parents". In this example, I applied some font properties to the BODY element. This will affect the text for all of BODY's children, whether it is in a paragraph <P>, table data <TD> or list item :

```
<style type="text/css"><!--BODY {font-size: 10pt; color: blue; font-family: Verdana}
```

```
--></style>
```

If you have been following the examples, you can see that CSS is similar to HTML. It uses plain language rather than arcane symbols. It's a skill worth learning.

Next month we will learn how to create an external style sheet and start learning the syntax.

In the meantime, if you want to play around with the rules, visit <www.w3schools.com/css/css_examples.asp>. This Web site has examples that you can play around with to start getting comfortable with the format.

Definition

CSS - (Cascading Style Sheet)

A standard for specifying the appearance of text and other elements. CSS was developed for use with HTML in Web pages but is also used in other situations, notably in applications built using XPFE. CSS is typically used to provide a single "library" of styles that are used over and over throughout a large number of related documents, as in a web site. A CSS file might specify that all numbered lists are to appear in italics. By changing that single specification the look of a large number of documents can be easily changed.

Source: <www.unitedyellowpages.com/internet/terminology.html>

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Adobe Photoshop Elements 3

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 >.

Okay, so it's the new computer issue of PC Alamode magazine. While I'm usually a big advocate of getting new hardware, sometimes all you really need is a new piece of software to revitalize your computing experience. While the gift of a new computer may be too costly for some, an application like Adobe's new Photoshop Elements 3 will fit most holiday budgets. Not only will it look great in the stocking, but also the recipient will enjoy it all year round.

Adobe Photoshop Elements 3 is the latest revision of the best-selling image editor and photo-enhancing program that is the younger sister to Adobe's flagship application Photoshop. Elements 3 once again includes new, exclusive features that you will probably see in a future version of the parent program.

The most notable improvement in the Windows version of Elements is that it is no longer 'just' a photo-editing program; it now incorporates a complete database for your entire image collection. When you first install Photoshop Elements 3 you are prompted to let the application search for photos to add to the database. After that, you can select View and Organize Photos from the Welcome screen (Fig. 1) to the new Organizer. This incorporates the Photo Browser from previous versions, but makes it far more useful.

The right side of the Browser has a list of tags that can be added to any of the photographs by simply dragging them onto a photo. Some tags are predefined (family, events, places), but you can add custom ones as well. It is easy to then search through your collect of photos by dragging a tag to the Find bar (Fig. 2) to show all photos that fit that criteria, you can even select one tag and exclude photos that have another tag to help further narrow your search. For instance, I could display all the photos of my family, but then exclude a specific person or event. The Photo Browser has a Timeline at the top of the window. Bars are shown to indicate the dates with the most photographs and you can use this to navigate your collection. You can also display your images chronologically by Day, Month (Fig. 3) or Year.

The new Photo Review feature allows you to quickly sort through images in a slideshow, optionally with music. As the images appear nearly full screen, you can rotate, edit, add tags and mark them for printing. This greatly speeds up the process of sorting through new photos.

Often, one of the most common tasks you have when sorting through new photos is to compare several similar shots to find the best one. The new Photo Compare mode allows you to see two photos side-by-side to analyze the differences between them. You can keep one up while changing the other photo so you can determine the best of the batch. Once you've picked the best image, you can put all of these similar photos into a virtual Stack with the best one on top, saving space in the catalog of photographs without deleting some images that you may want later.

Elements 3 is full of the sort of productivity improvements you would want from this program. As soon as I connected

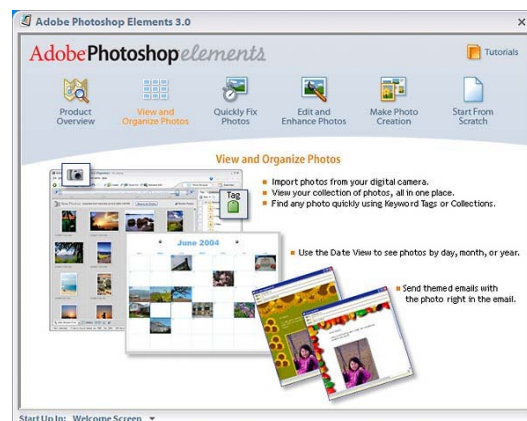


Figure 1

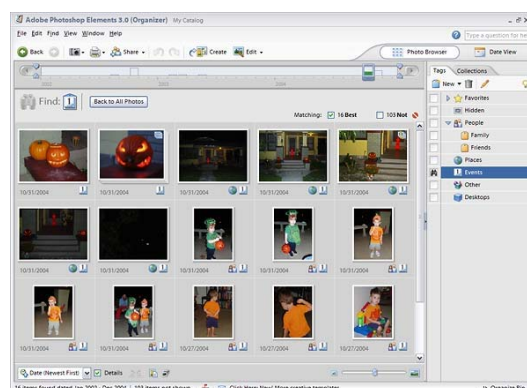


Figure 2

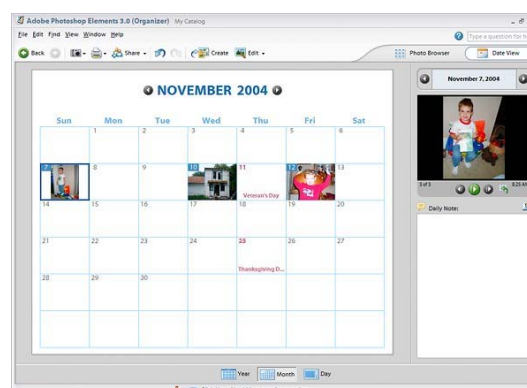


Figure 3

my digital camera to the computer, Elements showed thumbnails of all of the images and was ready to copy them to my hard drive and add them to the Photo Browser. The process could not be easier. There is now even support for the digital camera raw format. This format is basically the 'digital negative' and using it can give the photographer much more control over the image when importing it from the camera. There is even some limited support for working with 16-bit images.

Elements has two main workspaces, the aforementioned Organizer, and the Editor for doing the rest of your image work. There are two edit modes: Standard Edit and Quick Fix. The Quick Fix mode is brilliantly implemented, you can see a before-and-after comparison of the image and with one click of the new Smart Fix Auto button you can improve most photographs (Fig. 4). No longer do you have to try Auto Levels and Auto Contrast, these are all in one place. If you don't want to use the Auto feature, you can still make adjustments here to the shadows, highlights and midtone contrast; to the hue and saturation of the image and to the sharpness a well.

The Standard Edit mode works pretty much as you would expect. New tools have been added like the Spot Healing Brush, Cookie Cutter and the Red Eye Removal Tool. The Spot Healing Brush works similarly to the Healing Brush in Photoshop CS, but it requires only one click to get rid of blemish. Adobe realized that some tools that required you to click and origin point and then click again on the area to be affected were confusing to some users. The Spot Healing Brush avoids this completely. A similar tact is taken with the Red Eye Remover. Some users would marquee around the red area; some would just click on it. Now both methods will work to get the red out. The Cookie Cutter tool will crop your image to any number of predefined shapes: hearts, stars, signs, paw prints – there are lots to choose from.

Another useful new feature is the Photo Bin. This is an area at the bottom of the screen that shows a thumbnail of all of the images open in Photoshop Elements. This is an easy way to manage several open photos at one time. Elements also now can save multiple version of the same image in a Version Stack making it easy to access different versions of the same image.

Photoshop Elements gives you many new ways of sharing you photos. You can order prints online through the integrated Adobe Photoshop Services. Adobe has partnered with Kodak and Ofoto to let you get prints directly from your software. If you would rather print your photos to your own printer, Elements will help you print full-page photos, picture packages (Fig. 5) and contact sheets. Other ways of sharing your images include emailing them either to another computer, emailing to a mobile phone, sending them to a Palm OS Handheld or to a TiVo. The Photo Mail (Fig. 6) email option is especially cool; it will compose an HTML formatted email complete with pictures, custom message and layout. You can also share the photos on the Web using Adobe Photoshop Services. This free service can notify your friends and family about the online album, they can then view and even order prints directly.

The new Creations Wizard will guide you to making a variety of photo products including slideshows, video CDs (VCD) with menus, photo album pages, greeting cards, postcards, calendars and Web photo galleries. Elements includes CD/DVD burning support for creating VCDs, burning selected photos to CD or backing up the entire catalog.

All said, Adobe Photoshop Elements 3 is a great upgrade. Adobe has addressed many issues that users have had with previous versions as well as anticipating further needs. If you already use Adobe Photoshop, Elements can still be used as a photo

organizer and you can have it edit the images in Photoshop. This is the first version of Photoshop Elements that separates the Mac and Windows versions, and for good reason. There are different features available for each platform. The Organizer is only available in Windows; Adobe counts on Apple's iPhoto for this purpose on the Mac. Adobe Photoshop Elements 3 retails for \$99, upgrades from previous versions are \$79. They are also offering the program bundled with Adobe Premiere Elements which will allow you to create dynamic slideshows on DVD.

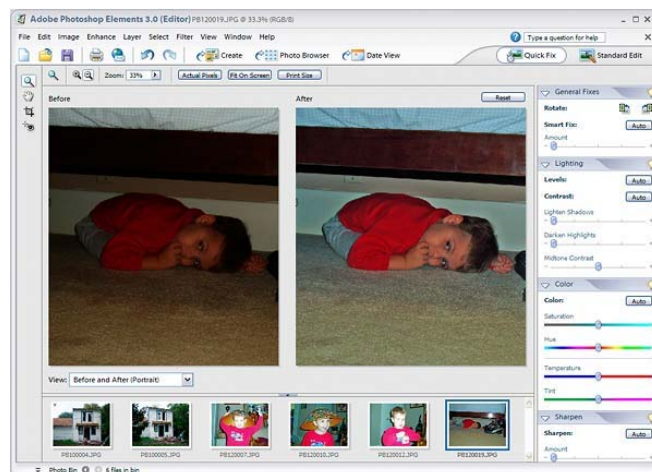


Figure 4

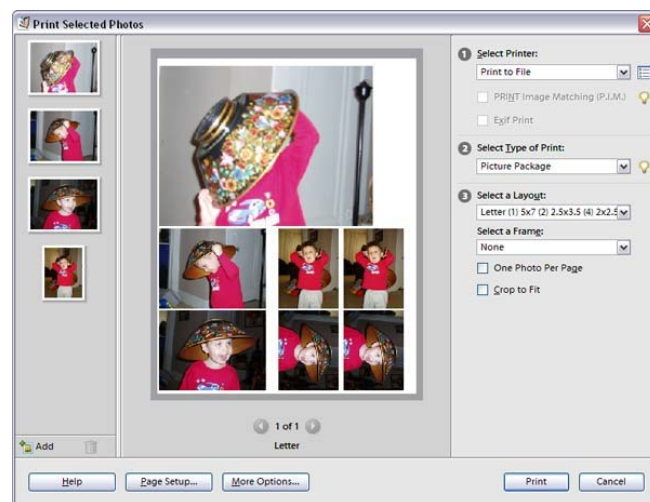


Figure 5

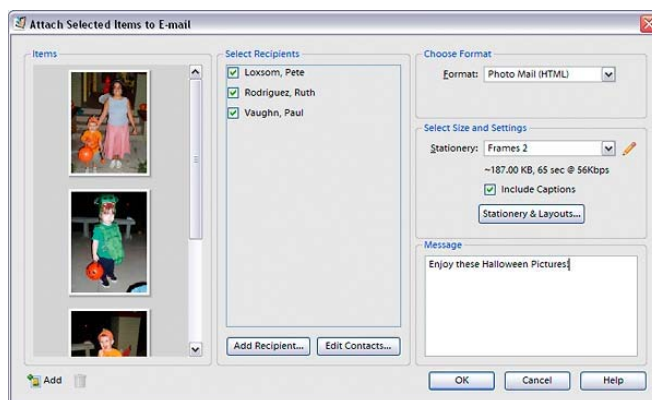


Figure 6

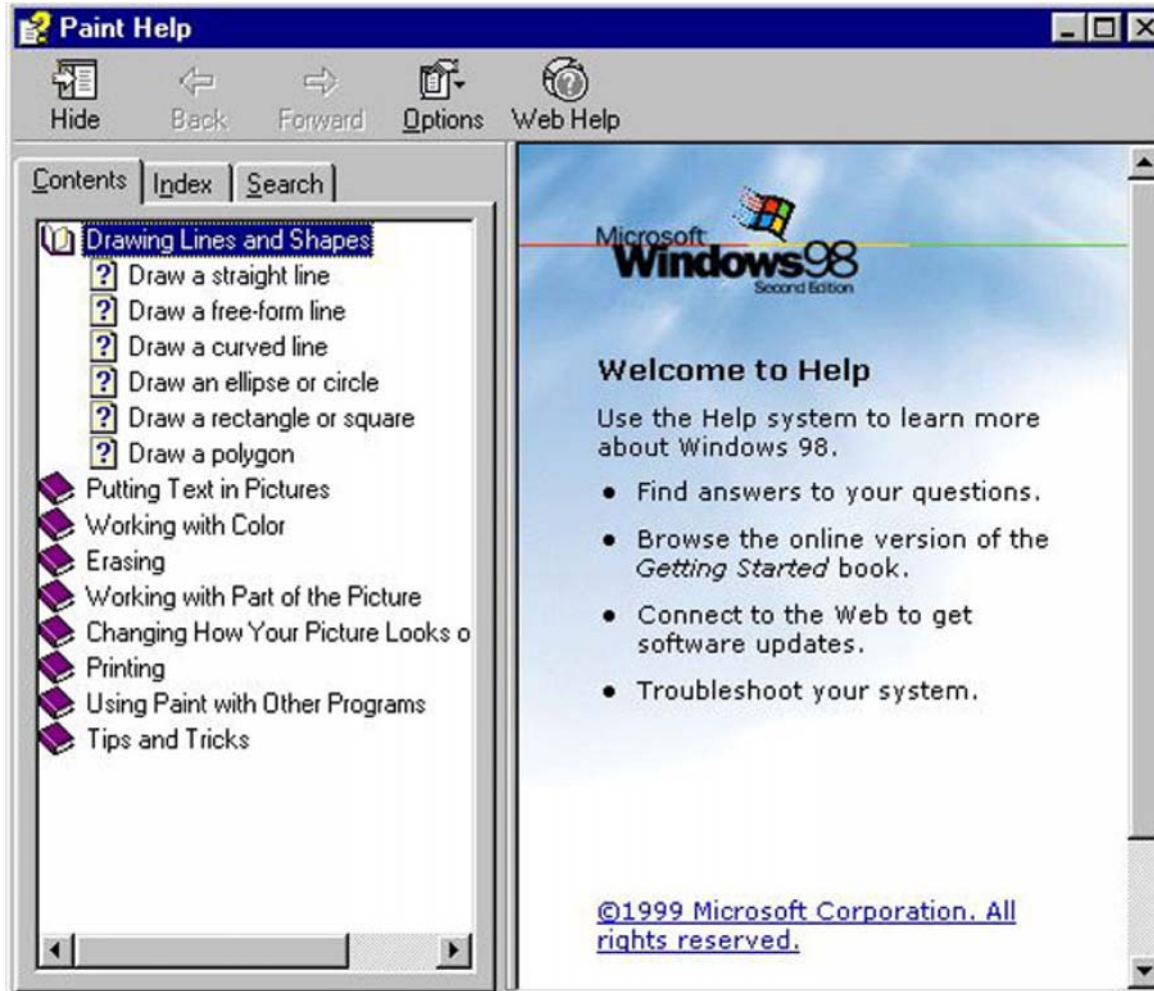


Windows Accessories "Paint"

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 Ron at <ringram728@earthlink.net>

The Paint program included in Accessories is a potent image program, with many of the features available in some of the most sophisticated software. I cannot do justice to all the features in an article of this length. In reality, full coverage could fill a book. Perhaps a look at the Help topics will give you some idea of what I mean.



As you can see from the Table of Contents, there are many facets to the program. The first section deals with making use of the drawing tools which appear in in the Toolbox on the left of the window. Clicking on each item Question Mark will display an explanation in the pane to the right of how each works. I could attempt to cover the use of each of these tools, but in reality, you're going to have to practice all of them for yourself before you can become proficient with them. Most of the symbols are self-explanatory, but their exact application is fully explained in the Help articles. One thing to keep in mind is that as you experiment with them, the Undo command in the Edit menu will allow you to back out of up to three previous actions.

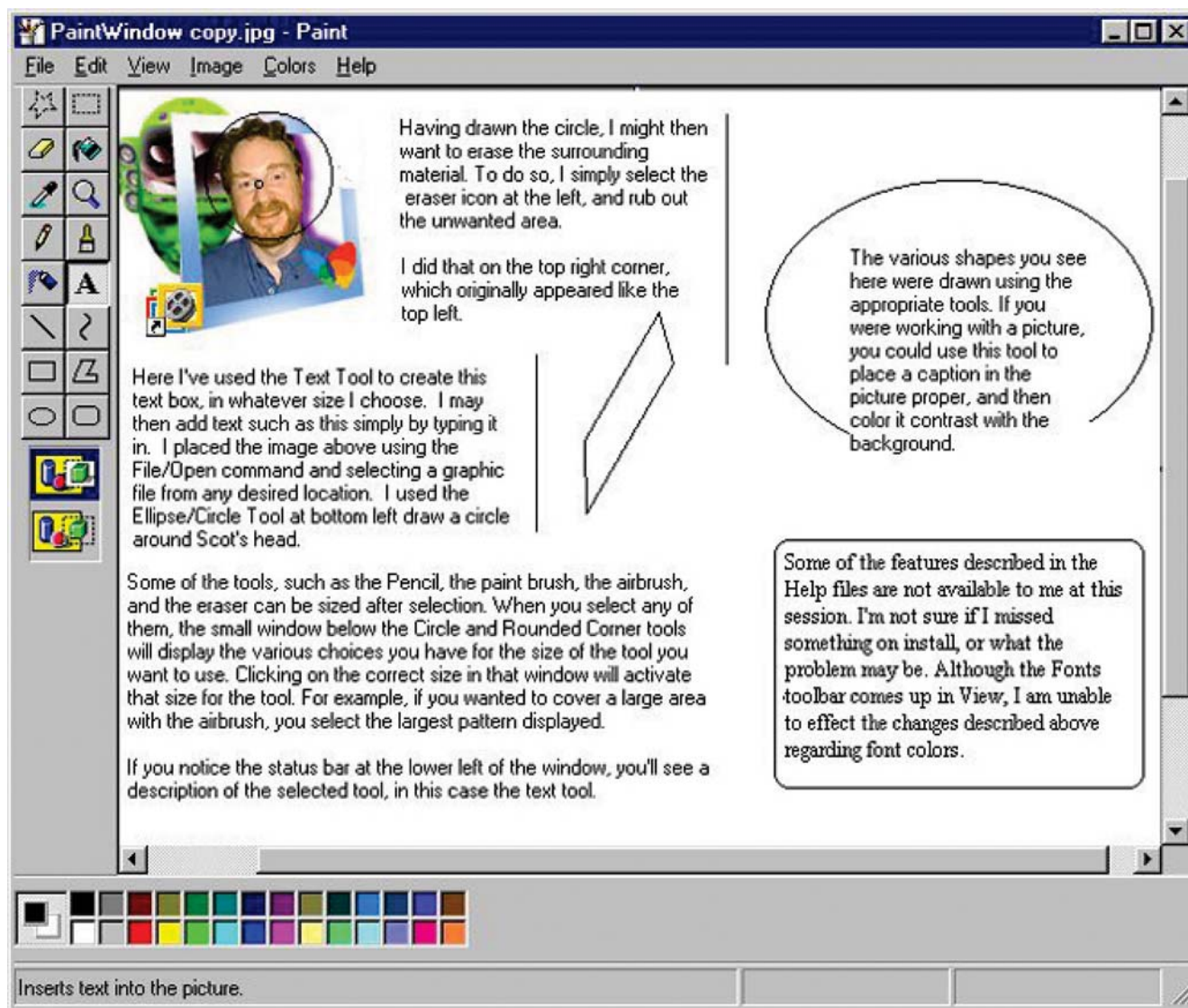
I tried in the window on page 31 to demonstrate some of the uses of the various tools available in the Toolbox. Some of those can be seen as the vertical lines, using the Line Tool, the polygon done with the Polygon Tool. The Oval and Rounded Corner Rectangle were done with the respective tools. Each of those tools have special features which are described in the Help files.

All of the text was placed using the Text Tool. An interesting feature of this tool is that if you add more text than the originally allowed space, the text box will expand to accommodate the text. That is why the word "background" extends over the lower edge of the Oval in the window shown.

All of the present discussion has dealt with the use of the drawing tools, primarily on a clear background. Another important use of Paint, is as a viewer for graphics which you cut and paste from various web sites, file, or documents. The small picture in the window above was pasted there from the files used for setting up this copy of the Journal. It is possible to paste into Paint just about any type of file you can imagine.

All of the tools from the tool box may be used to edit whatever graphic selected. For example, let's say you have a photo of a

group of people, but only want to show one of them. Unlike other programs, I have found no way to merely select and crop that person. By using the Image/Attributes command, it is possible to change the overall size and shape of the graphic. To remove all unwanted material you may either use the eraser, or the eyedropper to pick up a surrounding color and then airbrush, or brush the unwanted areas with that color. Practice with it and use the Help files to assist you in gaining proficiency.



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Ponderings

Meredith Poor

Mr. Bill Gates, having discovered that running a billion dollar business isn't as much fun when the US Federal Government is suing you, kicked himself upstairs, giving himself the title Chief Software Architect. What the he-all is that? The business community basically concluded that Mr. Gates would continue to influence events although not make day-to-day operational decisions. This doesn't bother most investors since Microsoft is better at making new knobs than it is at trying to explain to judges why Windows isn't a monopoly. Then Computer Associates President Sanjay Kumar got in more traditional trouble (faking out stockholders), and kicked himself upstairs and titled himself Chief Software Architect. One more of these and we'll have a trend. So we'd better figure this out.

The initial impression one gets is that Chief Software Architect is the penalty box for software executives that are one step away from jail. One 'does time' in this role until relevant controversies have settled down. Often the court and regulatory rulings driving such management shuffles deal with business or accounting issues that have little or no precedent. An inscrutable title goes with an inscrutable plaintiff.

Then there is the 'Chinese Emperor' theory or it's modern equivalent, where the head of state is never presented to the rabble, and various mandarins take executive responsibility and the associated heat. In China today we have the Premier (Head of State) Wen Jiabao, while the former President Jiang Zemin operates 'behind the scenes', in particular in control of the military. Mr. Gates can avoid depositions and similar inconveniences if he is not 'calling the shots', while he putters around in the Microsoft Research laboratories thinking up the 'next big thing'. In short, a collective body of shareholders owns his quarter trillion dollar market cap playpen.

Mr. Bill has gotten into charity work, trying to cure disease in various parts of the third world. As the largest percentage owner of the company, he could 'retire' and pursue personal interests, but it is unlikely that stockholders would be happy with this outcome. If the average programmer is 'owned' by their support obligations, just imagine how this works for big kahunas. A large number of people expect him to stick around... without antagonizing the Feds. Therefore we have a role in which he is 'working' and 'relevant' but not playing hardball with Mr. Jobs, Mr. Ellison, several corps of lawyers, and Eurozombies.

Having considered these possibilities, what's left is the fact that there might actually be a Chief Software Architect. And if there is a chief, then there has to be... Never mind that. For someone to be a CSA, there have to be Software Architects. Is there an ad for Software Architect in your local paper? Maybe finding one is like getting to Hogwarts.

Bring up the word architect and plenty of people are thinking of the Parthenon, some cozy retreat in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas, or various Italian Renaissance treasures. Recent stories about Frank Lloyd Wright on PBS illustrate that such lives are often contorted and haphazard, not to mention controversial. Among the characteristics of the kind that build buildings is that they are often hired to do projects they don't have much interest in; that they get in fights with their clients over who pays for what, particularly when the architect makes a mistake; and buildings that look great often don't 'work'. The aesthetics are great as long as the air is the right temperature and the roof isn't leaking.

So perhaps we can excuse some of the bugs in our more commonly used products as 'artistic license' by someone who is 'inspired'. Of course, 'architects' didn't design these programs. They are components of an architectural system, which spans Microsoft, it's partners, and it's imitators.

Real buildings have foundations, superstructures, HVAC, lighting, and interior finish. Corporate applications architecture starts with basics: clients, servers, database engines, networking infrastructure, and specialized hardware. Sitting immediately on top of this are the back end databases, the 'standard desktops' (the way a user's PC is configured), email and messaging, one or more security layers (and associated policies), and corporate standards for documentation and training. On top of this are generic standards for presentation, say for the appearance of web pages, user forms, command buttons, menus, and printed reports. On top of this are specific applications, such as Order Entry, Sales Analysis, or Production Scheduling. Some of these applications exchange data with each other, which is defined by the way databases are replicated between departments and the way associated rights are assigned to users. Users working for large employers might notice such resources are often haphazardly organized, designed, and administered. This has the architectural flavor of Bandera Road as opposed to, say, the River Walk.

So a software architect would come in and give this mess a unified, aesthetic, and consistent user experience, whether it is the interface, user account management, or report presentation. People that moved from Accounts Receivable to Production Control wouldn't find the new application 'surprising'. Someone converting the dBase application to GUI would know what menu items to define, where to put the Exit button, and how the corporate logo appears on reports.

A company with an IT department based in one city might have a Software Architect to ride herd on the developers. This is different from the CIO (Chief Information Officer), who is interested in the strategic and tactical value of corporate data. If there is more than one IT group, then the Chief Architect resolves issues that develop between the architects of the various groups.

One suspects that Mr. Gates isn't doing this within the innards of Microsoft. The 'architecture' envisioned is global, and Microsoft is going to set the standards. Have we been here before?

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Simple Password Practices

Keep PC and Online Data Secure

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor and Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Password dilemma: We can't live an online life without them, but if they're too numerous to remember, they encourage unsafe practices. What to do? First, basics. A password is just the key that opens a computer lock. It may gain access to a newspaper's online edition, protect banking records, let you bid on auctions, open a frequent-flyer account, or do anything requiring verified identity.

Some Web sites assign passwords; most allow choosing them. Rules for selecting passwords are easy to find but are often impractical. Don't use easily guessed familiar names or words; use letters and numbers and special characters? OK. Avoid anything related to facts about yourself? Makes sense. Don't share passwords with anyone? Good advice. Change passwords periodically? Oops, it's a memory test

Use unique passwords everywhere? Hm, that takes a *lot* of passwords. Don't write them down or store them in a computer file? Tilt!

Maintaining passwords is a nuisance. So some people use one password for everything -- a bad idea, since sharing or compromising one access opens them all. Password hierarchies are common: use one password for financial matters, another for commerce, and one for trivials such as newspaper sites. That avoids revealing your sensitive e-mail/password combination to junk Web sites.

But don't use a common password for all e-commerce sites (amazon.com, buy.com, etc.) since they're occasionally hacked. And treat sites like PayPal as financial rather than e-commerce. And don't just guess which password you used on a site; some sites lock accounts after just a few failed logins.

As passwords proliferate, it's common to store them in a computer file. And having too many site-assigned passwords guarantees the need to record them. But please, don't call the file "passwords.txt" and don't use the word "password" in it. The paranoid and geeky encrypt such files, but that risks losing the file by forgetting the encryption key.

You can print and save registration pages, but that leads to bulky files, cumbersome to search and requiring updating. Some people use an address book or print lists of sites and accounts, then handwrite passwords. But that still needs updating, and can be lost, destroyed, or found by someone untrustworthy.

If you have multiple email addresses, note which you use on a given site, since that's often the key for logging in or receiving password reminders.

Hackers use special software to attack logins, applying dictionary word lists and other guessing techniques. Passwords are described as "strong" (hard to crack) if they have at least eight characters, include upper/lower case and punctuation characters and at least one digit. So even if you use a memory aid for remembering passwords -- such as words from a poem -- convert them to strong passwords in a way that only you will know.

High-tech devices can add security, but they're usually used only in business settings; they include biometric devices which check fingerprints or eye structure and random logon-key generators.

Software password managers are more practical. These record and secure passwords and then auto-fill online logins. Good ones offer a "don't remember/don't ask" option to avoid recording info about sensitive sites. Encryption is desirable but not mandatory; it should be possible to secure the password manager itself with a master password.

Many managers are free, some are bought, and common software such as Web browsers and e-mail clients often includes it. Google returns many hits related to "password manager" and classy software site Tucows <www.tucows.com> numbers 300 such tools. Before installing one, make sure it supports your software applications, especially if they're non-Microsoft.

Many people don't secure home computers -- but consider cleaners, workers, friends wandering through, perhaps even having permission to use the computer. Suddenly security becomes more appealing. If you handle money online, check banking/financial sites occasionally for unauthorized transactions.

Remember that you may occasionally need access to secure sites while away from your computer. You can copy passwords to a thumbdrive or PDA or simply print them, but remember that they're powerful keys and must be protected. Before traveling, check your passwords so you're not surprised on the road. If you leave your computer running, you can access it remotely via tools such as GoToMyPC.

On business-owned PCs, separate personal from work-related material. Determine whether your office has policies for personal computer use and monitoring of computer activity. Some businesses install keystroke loggers which can capture passwords before they're encrypted. And remember that system administrators can often defeat security measures as part of their job, so you may not want to store sensitive personal material at work.

Work and home PCs both need disaster preparation, so family members or colleagues can access what's needed in an emergency. Work-related passwords and instructions can be stored securely so they're available but can't be secretly used.

For home computers and facilities such as e-mail and finance, remember that many ISPs and companies have privacy policies prohibiting revealing information to family members, even in cases of illness or death. Instructions and important passwords should be stored with essential family records. Note that changing situations may require special care -- for example, a divorce might motivate tight security.

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Get the Best Images from Your Digital Camera

Beverly Johnson

Beverly Johnson lives in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She teaches for the SeniorNet Learning Center there.

Digital camera use is rapidly overtaking the use of film cameras. Digital cameras differ from traditional cameras in that they don't use film. They come in many sizes and price ranges and it is a good idea to do some comparison-shopping before buying a digital camera. Digital cameras present different challenges and considerations from the cameras you may have been used to. You don't have to buy film—ever. And the number of pictures you can take is unlimited. You can save your pictures on a floppy disk, a zip disk, or CD. You can even have prints made on photography paper. The fact that pictures can be stored on disks and e-mailed to friends and family contributes greatly to the popularity of digital photography. Many digital cameras offer a preview screen so you can see how your shot will look. You can crop it or edit it in other ways before you save it. Digital cameras allow everyone to be a photo editor and artist!



It is important to remember that the camera settings for printing are different than the settings for electronic viewing. Solutions for some issues that arise in digital photography. To avoid digital images that are grainy and pixilated, decide how your photo is going to be used before taking a picture and then consult your camera's manual for information on how to change the camera settings for resolution and compression. If your goal is to produce a large, high-quality printed image, you would set your camera to its highest resolution and finest compression. The digital file size will be large, but you'll have greater picture detail and good visual quality when the image is printed.

Set the Printer

For a sharp, crisp printed image, choose the setting on your printer that matches the resolution of your photo file and use a high quality photo paper. To set the printer resolution, click File on the menu bar and select Print. Then click the Options button in the Print dialog window.

If you only want to view the image on a computer monitor, send the image as an e-mail attachment, or use it on a Web site, you would set your camera to a lower resolution (about 72 dpi) since that is the resolution of a computer screen and use a lower compression. Your digital file and image size will be smaller and therefore will take up less space on your computer or a disk and your image will load faster.

Some approximate settings and their suitable use Images from a 1 megapixel camera setting are suitable for email, Web use, or viewing on your computer monitor, but do not make good prints.

Images from a 2.0 megapixel camera setting are suitable for use in desktop publishing, Internet use, and producing 4" x 6" prints. The file size for a 4" x 6" print is approximately 300 KB. Images from a 3.0 or higher megapixel camera setting are suitable for professional applications, photographic quality output, desktop publishing, Web development, digital manipulation, and producing 8" x 10" or larger photo-quality prints. The file size for an 8" x 10" print is approximately 1.0 MB and the file size for an 11" x 14" print is approximately 2.8 MB.

Resolution Use for...

640 Internet

1024 Internet, wallet size prints

1280 Internet and 4 x 6 prints

1600 Internet and 8 x 12 prints

When you save a picture on your computer or on a disk, you can choose a format. The descriptions of various formats below can help you decide which format to use. It is important to remember, though, that the format in which you save the file will not increase the resolution of your picture. You must choose the resolution before you take the photograph.

Image File Formats

BMP: Bitmap File (pronounced "bee-em-pee") is the Windows native bitmap format. The Windows operating system has BMP software routines that can be accessed by all Windows application. BMP files provide formats for up to 16 million colors.

JPG or JPEG: Joint Photographic Experts Group is the common picture format used by most digital cameras. The JPG format uses compression to reduce the file sizes. A JPG image is automatically decompressed when it is opened.


GIF: Graphics Interchange Format (pronounced "giff" or "jiff") graphics file format used widely on the Web because the files compress well. GIFs support 256 colors. GIF files include a color selector that includes the 256 colors that are used most in the file. For example, a picture of a forest would include mostly greens.

TIFF: Tagged Image File Format is used to exchange files between applications and computer platforms. TIFF is a bitmap image format supported by virtually all image editing, and page layout applications. Also, virtually all desktop scanners can produce TIFF images.

Web Resources

- **Kodak's digital learning center:**
<www.kodak.com/US/en/digital/dlc/>
- **Adobe education resources:**
<www.adobe.com/education/main.html>
- **Digital camera now:**
<www.digital-camera-now.com/resolution.html>
- **Short courses** – free online guides to digital cameras
<www.short-courses.com/using/index.htm>
- **Every file format in the world:**
<<http://whatis.techtarget.com/fileFormatA/0,289933,sid9,00.html>>

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Most inkjet printers have a cleaning cycle that removes ink from the printing heads when the power switch is turned off. If you plug your printer into a surge protector and use the surge protector to turn the printer on and off the printer head won't be cleaned and may eventually clog.

Turn off an inkjet printer and allow a minute or so to complete the cleaning cycle before you turn off the surge protector.

Send your Good Mousekeeping tips to:
Susan Ives, suives@texas.net

Take Better Pictures of the Great Outdoors

Six tips that will make a difference

By Kevin T. Gilbert

You've mastered the point-and-shoot technique that makes it so easy to photograph all the big and little events of life--the first soccer practice, the ski trip, the family vacation.

Chances are that you've also taken a lot of pictures of the great outdoors whether in your own backyard or on those family vacations. Now you can turn those photos into exceptional works of photographic art with a little know-how and some tips from a professional. Award-winning photographer Kevin Gilbert shares some simple techniques you can use to take your outdoor photography to the next level.

TipRead your camera's manual. One thing that will help you take better pictures no matter where you're shooting is using your camera's built-in settings. The more you know about how to use your camera's features, the better your results will be.

Black and white



This image was taken close to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, at a spot in the Grand Tetons, where Ansel Adams created one of his famous pictures. The original image is in beautiful color, a sunrise taken at 551 A.M.

You can easily convert color photos to black and white by using your favorite image-editing program like Digital Image Pro. With some camera models you can even do this in the camera before downloading the image to your computer. Once the image is on your computer, you can use your image-editing program to adjust contrast and brightness to create a photograph that's reminiscent of an Ansel Adams.

Silhouettes look terrific in black and white, as do old buildings. The effect adds drama. But be sure to reserve this technique for landscapes or buildings. Photos of family members in black and white may not be as warm as you want them to be.

Fill the frame for dramatic effect

The below-left picture is pleasant, but it's rather boring. Sure, the sky is lovely and the beach is large and empty. But I really wanted to capture the texture of the beach. By tilting the camera down about a third of a frame I created a much different effect (below-right).



Look carefully at the picture you're framing before you click the button. Experiment by moving the camera up and down, side to side. Tilt the camera to various angles and see what it shows you. Fill the frame with the object that interests you most. If your digital camera has an LCD screen, you can use it to improve your sensitivity to the entire scene.

Get up close

Most people see a group of flowers, say, "Wow!" and snap a shot of the whole bunch. Don't settle for this canned shot; zoom in on the details. Almost every camera has a magnify or macro button that lets you get close and create a much more interesting photo.



You can photograph an ant, a penny, a tiny shell--have some fun and get creative. Just remember to fill the frame with the beautiful lines and colors of the object you are capturing.

Look around you

When visiting a national monument, some people photograph what they've come to see. I always remind people that if there's beauty in front of you, there's prob-

ably beauty behind you. Look around, and you might find something unexpected to shoot.



For example, I took both of the above pictures while standing in one spot in Yellowstone National Park. Although I came to shoot mountains, I looked down and saw these contrasting flowers in the rocks. Then I looked up and saw a plane. The lines were interesting, so I snapped the shot. While I got my shots of the mountains, I also came away with a couple of nice surprises just by looking around.

Change your perspective

Most people stand up and shoot their photographs at a 45-degree angle. Try bending over, getting down on your knees, or standing above your subject.

If you're photographing a group of people, for example, why look at them straight on? Stand on a chair and have them look up at you.



When I captured images of a field of blue flowers (above) I was on my knees close to the ground so that I could look directly at the flowers. Changing perspective can turn an ordinary situation into an extraordinary photograph.

Plan for the time of day

Sometimes you can turn pretty images into terrific ones by shooting at different times of day or in different types of lighting.



Many people take pictures of things they see for the first time--a boat on a quiet lake, the boardwalk at an amusement park, the ocean, an interesting landscape. But in different light-

ing situations, your image might be much more effective. You might ask yourself, "What would the boardwalk look like this evening, when the sun is setting?"



The above photos show the same image captured at different times of day. The one on the left has harsh, midday, almost 'stormy-like' lighting. The other one, taken in the same place later in the day, is peaceful and moody. It's a dramatic difference that has an effect on the story you want to convey through the image.

Experiment

Take these six easy tips that all of the pros use too and add them to your own bag of tricks. They don't require complex camera settings or even an expensive camera. They require only that you look at the world around you a bit differently when viewing through the lens of your camera.

Kevin T. Gilbert is a 20-year veteran photojournalist based in the Washington, D.C. area, where he has covered super-power summits, professional sports, national political campaigns, and the news of Washington and the nation. He is currently the managing partner of Blue Pixel, one of the country's leading digital imaging consulting teams, and President of Arkhaven Group, a digital production company that shoots digital still imagery for corporations and television networks.

Kevin recently finished his fifth term as President of the White House News Photographers' Association (WHNPA), and he is the winner of over 35 photography awards from the 80-year-old WHNPA. The National Press Photographers Association and the Society of Newspaper Design have also honored him for outstanding photojournalism and design. Kevin spent 14 years at The Washington Times newspaper, including five years as chief photographer.



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Part I



Digital Photography: The **Killer App** of this Generation

BY RICK ALTMAN

Digital photography is different. Its rise has not been meteoric, but rather sure and steady. And month-by-month, season-by-season, holiday by holiday, more and more households have bought into it. Today, most of us view a digital camera as novel but necessary, and only a matter of time before we buy our first one or our next one. It is happening as we watch. And this could not be a better time to watch, with models becoming better and cheaper on a monthly basis, and print services almost as accessible as service stations for your autos.

Unless you have been living under a rock since 1996, you are familiar with the persistent virtues of going digital with your photos:

It's Way Cheaper: Even though the initial buy-in is a bit higher, your cost for consumables drops through the floor. You will never buy film again, storing photos on media that you can buy online from \$25. Equal to the point, you will never pay for a print of a bad photo.

You Take Better Photos: When it costs you nothing to push the shutter, you do it more often. You know the story about a thousand monkeys pounding on a thousand typewriters and the work of Shakespeare being the result? Dumb luck also prevails over digital photography, as any of us hacks and amateurs can take a decent photo of a scene when we give ourselves a dozen chances.

You Become A Better Photographer: As a decent commercial-grade photographer, I have been taking photos for over two decades. But I never really developed a feel for composition or a solid understanding of the science of photography until five years ago.

No matter how many notes I took, I just could not connect what I did five days ago with what I was looking at when the film came back from the lab. But the immediacy of digital is the best photography teacher you could ever hope for. You see in five seconds, not five days, what happens if you move your subject off-center, how it looks to shift the light source to another angle, how depth of field changes when you change the lens aperture, how shutter speed affects the entire energy flow of a scene that involves motion.

Your Subjects Become Better Models: An unexpected benefit of the digital age is a result of the attention span of the people you photograph. It used to be easy to sit for a photo—smile broadly through one or two shots and they would be done.

Now, it is commonplace for a photo to be more like a photo session, with multiple photos taken from several angles. Most people can't paste a smile for that long and some will even begin to ignore the photographer. And that is when the really good photos are taken. After the requisite pasted-on-smile shots, when they tire of having their photo taken, expect the best results.

Photos Anywhere

Perhaps the most important development in digital photography is the explosion of outlets that will print your images. We stopped counting at 250 the number of online services available (our favorite is the Kodak Picture Center), and today you can take your little compact flash card or jump drive to Rite-Aid, Longs, Walgreens, Walmart, Costco...and dozens others.

This is significant because the real price savings occur not from your printing photos yourself, but from you sending them out. It is wonderful to be able to make your own prints, no doubt, and you can pick up a good photo printer for next to

nothing (or literally nothing if you watch for the incentives offered by Dell, Best Buy, and the other big retailers). But you'll get eaten alive by the cost of the ink and paper if you use your own printer exclusively.

You cannot beat the estimated 35 cents you'll pay for a single 4x6 print (and as low as 15 cents for quantity or promotional offers). Skeptics look at the ritual of sending digital images out and awaiting the arrival of prints as being nothing different than the tedium they were hoping to escape with film processing.

But there is one huge difference: With digital, you only order prints of the good images, not all of them. You already know if you've taken a winner, and chances are good that you have already emailed it to friends and loved ones, uploaded it to a website, and organized it in your online photo album.

The Cameras are Incredible

The biggest risk with digital photography is that you will go overboard and buy more camera than you need and more cameras than you need.

What a fantastic problem to have!

Today's buy-in for a good all-purpose digital camera is barely \$250. The top-of-the-line model that cost \$800 two years ago can be found for about \$350 today, and digital versions of professional-style single lens reflex models (SLRs, "real" cameras with detachable lenses) are showing up with regularity under \$1,000. We are watching closely the emergence of the "super-zoom" category—cameras that boast 10x and 12x optical zoom ranges. This is the equivalent of a 35 to 400mm zoom lens, all in a standard camera chassis.

These cameras feature the good kind of zoom (optical zoom, not worthless "digital zoom" that is a marketer's dream and consumer's nightmare) along with special image stabilization technology to help against camera shake. As those prices dip into the mid-

\$400s, we expect them to be gobbled up by vacationers who want to be able to shoot close-ups and landscapes without having to add or swap lenses.

Fix Your Boo-Boos

And then there is the holy grail of digital photography for those adept with image-editing software: the ability to fix, modify, and enhance a photo. We wish that everyone started practicing with an image editor, if for no other reason than to eliminate for good the obnoxious anti-red-eye flash options that turn cameras into migraine-creation machines.

Beyond that, of course, is a treasure trove of opportunity to alter reality for the better, and few have it better than users of Corel software. For one low price, you get graphic-drawing and image-editing applications with CorelDraw, or an incredibly priced image editor in Paint Shop Pro.

Similarly, creative PowerPoint users will love being able to effortlessly incorporate their own photos into presentations, be it for business or for pleasure—refine a sales pitch that was formerly a collection of boring bullet slides or creating a family keepsake of images, set to music.

The One Blight on the Horizon

We look upon the emergence of mobile phones with built-in cameras with fear, loathing, and blatant snobbery. First off, the cameras are pathetic little toys, capable of producing images no better than first generation cameras from 1996. Those who form their first impression of digital photography from what they see on their phones are doomed to harbor misconceptions for years.

Worse is the specter of what might happen to the mobile phone industry if camera phones become more common. There are numerous institutions and destinations at which photography is

prohibited (court houses, military bases, many airports, museums) and other places where it is morally reprehensible, such as restrooms and locker rooms. If authorities cannot tell the difference between a mobile phone and a camera, they may have no choice but to prohibit them all. Madison Avenue might want to think twice about creating commercials that show someone taking a photo and immediately sending it out via email, all with the same device. They might be killing their golden goose.

All in all, this is a grand time to be a photographer and a digital designer, with technology ready to explode onto the scene, competition among manufacturers driving prices down, and entries forming at so many different price points.

Watch for 2005 to be a banner year for the revolution that we are watching unfold right now.

Part II

Here is how it happened in our household; you probably have a variation on the theme. My wife, Becky, who shall remain nameless, asked me to take photos of a family event with my then-new Nikon Coolpix 4500. I did what a digital photographer does:

1. Took over a hundred photos of a 10-minute activity.
2. Uploaded them to one of our computers, ditched the rejects, and lightened the dark ones.
3. Sent Becky the link.


Meanwhile, Becky did what a film photographer does: She waited for the phone call from the drug store announcing that her photos were ready.

The photos sat for months until one day they inadvertently got taken out with the digital trash. That day coincided with the alignment of three planets in our solar system and the day that Becky asked, "Hey, I never saw those photos you took of..." It was later that night that Becky made her proclamation that lasted almost three years: "I do not want a digital camera!"

This little tale of domestic woe underscores one of the arguments against digital photography: It does involve extra work. Never mind all of the rebuttals, they are meaningless against the simple fact that for the person who has been dropping film off at the store for the last 30 years and having it processed and printed, no questions asked, digital photography adds a step in the process that is devoid of all warm and fuzzies.

The person in need of said warm and fuzzies should not yet invest in digital photography. Soon, we suspect—dropping the compact flash card off at Rite-Aid is almost as routine as it is with the canister of film. Almost, but not quite.

And when the day comes that every corner store can accept your media as it does your film, will that be the time for the less technically-savvy to go digital? Well, no. Turning over your media for processing and printing negates one of the most fundamental benefits to digital photography: your ability to review, reject, and refine. Without the three REs, is the extra cost of a digital camera worth it? Perhaps not.



GOOD MOUSEKEEPING

the seal of approval for computer tips

Sometimes new software will change your file associations so a graphic, for example, will open with the new program instead of with your old favorite.

To change this on the fly with Win 95 or 98, hold the Shift while right-clicking on a file name in Windows Explorer, select Open With.... then select the program from the menu. The association will be changed for all files with the same file extension.

In Windows ME/2000/XP just right-click on any file and select Open With.... No need to hold down the shift key.

*Send your Good Mousekeeping tips to:
Susan Ives, suives@texas.net*

If you are not ready to turn your personal computer into a personal darkroom, you should deem digital photography not ready for prime time in your household. At a minimum, you need to consider routine the following tasks:

- * Transferring photos from a media card to your computer
- * Finding the photos on your computer
- * Viewing the photos and deleting bad ones
- * Uploading desired photos to a print service

There is a conspicuous absence from this list: we did not mention printing the photos from your own printer. We'll probably take some flack for this because we have seen some of the incredible photos that people have printed from their \$99 printers. We know that to some, much of the magic in going digital is all about creating that print yourself.

Being able to make a quick print is fabulous... until you start thinking of doing it all the time. Then you will find out what "cost of consumables" means if you didn't already know. Ink and paper costs are too high to think of your personal printer as your main printing outlet. You really need to create a relationship with one of the online services, and if you are not ready to do that, you are not ready for digital photography.

The exception to this is if you intend only to email photos or place them on websites—two perfectly credible ways of handling digital photos. Of course, the technical buy-in for those two activities is higher than for photo printing, requiring that you learn about downsizing photos, creating attachments, and uploading to web servers. If you are not willing to learn how to shrink your photos for email purposes, then we all beg and plead with you not to go digital yet!

The next impediment to digital is financial: digital cameras cost more than film cameras. This is hardly front-page news and by itself is a rapidly diminishing factor, as we watch digital cameras drop in price. But you couple this with a second line in the sand, and the dynamic becomes particularly telling:

* If your budget is around \$300

* If you want to get good photos of your daughter scoring a goal on Saturday

This set of requirements becomes a digital photo break point. Most decent point-and-shoot cameras in the \$300s are not responsive enough to shoot action sports. The lenses are plenty fast enough; the issue isn't shutter speed. Its shutter lag—that dreaded tendency of many cameras to fire the shutter as much as a half-second after you ask it to. This reduces action photography to a matter of dumb luck.

The price of a digital camera without shutter lag is about \$600 and that camera will not shoot sports as well as a good film-based SLR that you could indeed get for your \$300. For the photo purists, the veteran enthusiast, and the sports photographer — all of whom value the control of the camera over the price of the film — the cost of going digital might not yet add up. Digital photography requires a higher commitment of dollars, time, and technical know-how than traditional photography, and any one of those things could be a tipping point for you.

Far be it for me to play the Luddite here, he who owns three at a time and is never in the market for the next one. Indeed, much of this article was a lesson in advocating the devil, but I do understand the commitment level required, and I know firsthand (from my anonymous wife, Becky) the perils of pushing someone to digital too quickly. One bad experience could sour them for years beyond the time that they might truly be ready.

If you think you're not ready to go digital, the one thing you can absolutely take to the bank is this: When you are, it will be waiting for you...

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Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, a Contributing Editor with PC World and 23 year veteran of PIBMUG. He's also the author of the second edition of PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer, O'Reilly Press. Check out a sample chapter at <http://snurl.com/sample_annoyed2>. It's available on Amazon at <<http://snurl.com/annoyed2>>.

News Brief

Counterfeit Counter Attack

You probably know that high quality, low cost digital scanning, copying and printing technologies have been used to counterfeit currency, but did you know that the government is fighting back? When you put a document under the glass of your new photocopier or scanner and push the button, it makes a high resolution copy - unless the document is one of the new style twenty or fifty dollar bills. If you do that, you just might see a message pop up informing you that you should visit the Treasury website to become more educated on counterfeit laws.

Digital Camera Scene Modes -



What are all those symbols for?

By Larry Horn, Editor & Review Coordinator
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 PC Users Group of New Jersey
 <www.pcugsj.org>

You went out and purchased a digital camera for Christmas and now you have to learn how to use it. The instruction book mentions “Scene Modes” and you see a lot of funny icons on one of the dial of your camera so what are they and what do they do? The picture on the right is from an Olympus D8060 digital camera, so yours will probably look somewhat different but they are generally similar.

The first thing to remember is this a still a camera and you get a picture by having the right amount of light hit the film or light sensor in a digital camera. You do this by adjusting the size of the lens opening (Aperture), or the length of time the shutter is open (Shutter Speed). How you adjust the two of these in tandem will create a different picture. Without going into a long photography course, I will briefly explain what each of these does.

The Aperture controls how much light is hitting the sensor at any instant and the depth of focus. If I want everything in the picture to be in focus, both near and far objects, I will choose a small aperture. If I want selective focus, for example taking a portrait with a blurred background, you adjust the camera the other way.

The Shutter Speed controls how long the shutter is open so the light can get to the sensor. For a sporting event where you want to stop the action, you would use a short shutter speed but if you want to blur the movement to imply motion, you would use a longer shutter speed. You would also use a very long shutter speed for night shots with motion you want to capture like fireworks.

How does this relate to Scene modes? In its Default setting, the camera guesses at the best exposure, adjusting the Aperture and Shutter Speed without really knowing what you are taking a picture of. It goes for an average setting. By selecting a "scene" on your camera, you are telling the camera what you are taking a picture of so it can make a better choice of how to set the camera. It generally gives more accurate and pleasing results than the default Auto mode.

What are some of the more common Scene Modes? I have listed them below and apologize for not drawing the actual icons but my art work is not that good.

P - Program or Auto: This is the default where the camera makes all of the settings based upon an average.

A - Aperture Preference: Here you set the aperture according to the effect you want and the camera sets the appropriate shutter speed.

S - Shutter Preference: You set the shutter speed - fast for sports or slow for a motion- blur effect and the camera sets the appropriate aperture.

M- Manual: With this setting you select everything with no help from the camera. Reserve this for experienced users who want to get creative.

- **My Mode:** This is an Olympus term which lets you set everything manually and then save those settings. This is useful if you are frequently taking pictures in a set location and lighting setup. An example would be if you frequently sell items on eBay and want to include pictures so you set up "stage" where you take your pictures and want to easily remember the correct settings.

- **Movie:** Many digital still cameras can now take short movies limited in length by the size of the memory card. They are low resolution and generally limited to only 1 or 2 minutes or less.

- **Night:** This sets a slow shutter speed to capture the available light and may also allow for the use of flash for a subject close to the camera.

- **Landscape:** This setting is self-explanatory.

- **Action/Sports:** This is really a shutter priority mode setting a high shutter speed to freeze the action.

- **Portrait:** Used for taking pictures of people with the background blurred.

- **Play:** This is usually a triangle similar to the play button on a CD player. It is used to view the pictures you have taken on the LCD screen.

- **Macro:** You would use this setting to take close-up pictures.

Some cameras, like my Nikon CoolPic 4100, do not have all of these icons on the main dial but rather have a setting that says SCENE which brings up a menu on the LCD screen where you can set them. The Nikon even has scene modes for Party/Indoor, Beach/Snow, Sunset, Museum, Fireworks and others. The Nikon also has an additional feature they call Assist Modes. These modes actually place lines over the image in the LCD screen to assist you in positioning the subject in a more pleasing way and/or line things up for panoramas or architecture. You might even find a Burst or Multi-Shot mode for firing off a set number of pictures in rapid succession. I used this to get some great action shots at a bull riding competition last year.

I suggest that you pick up a good book on basic photography when you get your camera. Even with the camera's help, good pictures require the picture taker to understand the basic principals of photography and graphic composition. We have reviewed several in the Cache. Digital or Film, it is still photography. Additional suggestions:

- Check camera and printer manufacturers' web sites. They frequently have lessons and tips.

- Kodak is an example. Go to: <http://www.kodak.com> then click on the Taking Great Pictures box on the top of the page.

- Olympus also has lessons which are more geared toward their cameras for examples but they are still informative. http://olympusdigitalschool.com/photo_lessons/index.html

- I like a monthly magazine called PC Photo (<http://www.pcphotomag.com>)

- PC World Magazine (<http://pcworld.com>) has newsletters that are very informative.

(<http://www.pcworld.com/resource/newsletters>) One of the newsletters by Dave Johnson was the inspiration for this article.

I hope I have given you some enlightenment as to what Scene Modes are and what they do. I encourage everyone to read their camera's manual to see what is available. Then use the Scene Modes because by telling the camera what you are doing, the camera will use that information and do it for you. You don't have to know the details of how to adjust the settings. The end result is more successful pictures that you will be proud of.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND PRINTING

by Charlotte Semple, President & Editor, Los Angeles Computer Society, California
Charles Mahan, Wi-Fi SIG Leader, Los Angeles Computer Society, California

Lee Otsubo is best known as The Digital Photo Guy. He has become a familiar figure to many user groups as he shares his knowledge and experiences in digital photography. He emphasizes two basic topics in his presentation:

- 1) How to get the most out of a digital camera (or how to buy one) and,
- 2) How to share and display great digital photos.

Megapixels

Mega comes from Greek, meaning, great. In technological terms, it's a prefix for millions. A 3.5-inch floppy holds 1.44 mega bytes, which is 1.4 million bytes of data. A megapixel is 1 million pixels.

So, "What the heck is a pixel?" A pixel is a made up tech term for "picture element." Pixels are square.

If you look closely at a newspaper photo, using a magnifying glass, you will see hundreds of tiny dots, some dark, some light and some in between. As you move the photo away from yourself, setting aside the glass, you will not be able to discern the dots any more, instead you will see the whole photo. Digital cameras work the same way. They use millions of pixels, (mega pixels, or MP), to make a photo. i.e. a 2 MP camera uses 2 million pixels. A mega pixel is a measure of the camera's capability to capture detail, which is resolution.

You need to be aware of what kind of photography you are interesting in doing and what you are going to do with the photos in order to make the best use of the finite number of pixels you have.

CCD

The CCD (Charge Coupled Device) is the central processing unit of the digital camera. It is somewhat like the CPU in a computer, but unlike the CPU, the CCD has only one function. It takes images and munches and crunches them. The CCD of a 2 mega pixel camera contains 2 million light sensors. Each light sensor produces 1 pixel. Each pixel represents 1 of 16.7 million different colors. Each pixel has a red, green and blue component of color. Each component is a byte (of data). Each pixel has three bytes of data. A 2 MP camera produces 6 million bytes of data. Enough data to fill five 3.5-inch floppies!

Cycle Time

The time needed for the CCD to munch and crunch data and get it out of the way in time for the camera to be ready to take another photo.

Lag Time

The time a digital camera needs to look at a subject and fire enough electrical charge to be ready so that when the shutter button is pressed, the camera will capture the image of the subject.

Munching and Crunching

After the CCD captures the image it has to compress it. A 2 MP camera uses (munches) 6 million bytes of data for each picture at high resolution. This has to be compressed (crunched) down to 1 mega byte of data. Many cameras have different settings for resolution. Lee recommended that you keeps your camera on the highest setting and leave it there. If you change it for a lower resolution shot and forget to re-set it to the higher level, and you use the camera again, thinking you are taking high-resolution shots, you will be disappointed in the results. You can always throw away extraneous detail, but you cannot put it in if you didn't capture it in the first place.



GOOD MOUSEKEEPING

the seal of approval for computer tips

There must be 20 things plugged into power strips under my desk, so when I have to unplug something it was a struggle to match the cord with the corresponding piece of hardware.

Now I use a bread bag tag marked with the appliance's name clipped to the cord end, and pulling the right plug is a breeze.

*Send your Good Mousekeeping tips to:
Susan Ives, suives@texas.net*

Input –The Lens

This is the first and last place where there is any real resemblance between the digital and film camera. The usual focal length of a 35mm point and shoot camera is anywhere from 35mm to 105mm zoom. Most digital cameras have 3 X zoom, which goes down to the equivalent of 35mm, for a moderate wide-angle shot, out to the equivalent of 105mm for a telephoto shot.

There are two types of Zoom: Optical, which is “real” zoom, and Digital, which is electronic trickery. When you activate the zoom function on a 35 mm point and shoot film camera, you can hear the lens moving in and out, increasing or decreasing the size of the image to be captured. This is “real” zoom. When the electronic zoom on a digital camera is activated, the zoom plays a trick on the image. The lens captures the center section of the image and stretches the pixels out to fill the frame. But one loses some resolution and the photo will not be as clear.

Using a photo imaging tool on your PC, and enlarging a photo large enough so that straight edges are no longer straight, you can see the points of individual pixels. In tech terms, this is called “Jaggies.” Under the same conditions when looking at a photo of a person, you can see individual square pixels. In tech terms, this is called “Pixulation”.

When buying a camera be aware of what component of the camera is optical zoom and what is digital zoom. Some “smart” marketers might advertise their camera as having 6X zoom capability, where they have multiplied the 3X Optical by the 2Xdigital. A 3X Optical camera is a 3X Optical camera. Another way marketers might advertise a 6X Optical camera is where they have taken a cheap 2X optical zoom and bumped up the digital zoom to 3X, calling their product 6X Zoom. You must be really careful to read the fine print. Don’t always go by the advertising printed on the box.

About Zoom

If you are taking photos at a back yard BBQ, and you are able to fill the camera frame with subjects, you probably will not need a zoom. If you are going to be taking outdoor photos with subjects 20 to 30 feet away, a 3X Optical zoom camera is probably all you would need. If you are in the “nose bleed” section of a sports arena, and your subjects seem to be 6-inches tall, you will probably need anywhere from a 6, 8, 10 to 12Xm zoom. You should be aware of the kind of photography you want to do so that the right type of zoom lens can be obtained.

Output-USB

Most modern digital cameras will have a USB (universal serial bus) port connection. If a camera does not have this don’t even consider it. A slow serial connection will drive you crazy. Simply plug the USB cord that comes with the camera into the computer and leave the camera end in a convenient place for ready use. A card reader makes an easy job of uploading the data from your camera into the computer. A universal Card Reader accommodates up to 6 different memory cards. Simply insert the memory card into the reader and it will look to a Windows machine, almost like a disk drive, and you can drag and drop photo files from the memory card.

Memory Cards

These are compact flash memory cards. The particular type of memory card that came with your camera is the type you should use. Not all memory cards are universal. The real advantage of memory cards is that they are removable and are fairly robust.

Not like ordinary film. Lee recommends that you should carry at least two memory cards of a moderate range. These are all electronic devices and sooner or later you will corrupt data on a memory card. If you were gullible enough to buy only one very large range memory card, and go on vacation, and the card becomes corrupted, you are up the proverbial tree. You have two choices. Erase all the accumulated data from the card and reformat the card, losing all your photos, or not take any more photos. Neither choice is desirable. If you had two memory cards, the corrupted card can be removed and stored away safely and the second card can be inserted into the camera and you can continue taking photos. When you get home, the corrupted card can be inserted into the card reader, and a rescue software (Photo Rescue, <<http://www.photorecue.com>>) can be fired up and most of the photos can be saved.

LCD

Instant gratification! You can see in an instant the photo just shot (but wait for the Cycle Time). It is not recommended that you waste time trying to decide which shots to keep and which shots to discard while taking the shots. Wait until the photos are transferred to your PC, and then make these decisions. Each time you turn on the LCD the power consumption increases by 2 –3 fold, and precious battery life is wasted. Also, when you buy a digital camera, make sure it has an optical viewfinder, and use it for much better shots.

Power

Most digital cameras use standard rechargeable batteries. If you use regular alkaline batteries a digital camera will just eat them up in no time. The most popular batteries are Nickel Metal Hydride (NiMH). Some people might use Proprietary Lithium Ion batteries, proprietary meaning expensive. The lithium ion batteries are very powerful and long lasting, lasting 3-4 times longer than the nickel metal hydride batteries. A warning about these batteries-be very careful how and where you store them. Don’t carry them loose in a pocket with anything containing metal. You could start a fire. These batteries should be stored safely in some sort of plastic containers.

Now, what do you do with all these great photos? Print them! In order to get the best quality prints, there are 4 components that impact the quality of the prints:

1. The printer

Use a good quality photo ink-jet printer. Epson, Hewlett Packard, and Canon are the most well known and written up in most photo magazines. They also do have a range of good quality inexpensive printers.

2. Paper

Use good quality paper. This might be somewhat of a surprise, but Epson produces the best quality prints on expensive Epson paper (about \$1.00 per an 8.5 X 11 sheet). The same goes for Hewlett Packard and Cannon. Keep in mind that there are certain combinations of paper and printer that will never work. It is not advisable to use Epson paper with a Hewlett Packard printer, or HP paper with a Canon printer. etc. . If you only print about 20 to 30 photos per month, live a little and buy the expensive paper. If you print hundreds of photos per month, look around for deals, but try a few sheets of the paper first before buying a ream or you might be stuck with a ream of unusable cheap paper.



3. Image

As Lee mentioned before, keep your cameras set at the highest resolution and you will get high quality prints. There are two exceptions: a) the use of "raw" or "tiff" mode is mostly for when one needs the highest quality possible. e. g., taking wedding photos where everything is set up, people are standing quietly, the lighting is just right, and the camera is on a tripod. Raw, or Tiff, captures every single pixel and does not compress, creating huge files. b) Taking photos for the Internet, such as for eBay. Use a low resolution that does not require compression and reduces the time between taking the shots and uploading them to eBay. If you keep your cameras at the highest resolution you will have the least compression.

4. Software

The software is the most critically important component in producing good prints. Remember when Lee talked about those square pixels where just 1 pixel represented 1 of 16.7 million different colors in a RGB color scheme? Well, printers print round dots, each with a color spectrum of between 5 to 10 thousand different colors in a CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black) color scheme. For a printer to make the transition from square pixels to round dots, it needs the support of good high quality software that is specifically written to do that job. (Someone actually figured out how to insert a square peg into a round hole!)

CDs

The most important reason for copying digital photos onto CDs is, digital photos have no negatives. If you transfer your photo to your computer, and if your computer fails (and it will by Murphy's law) and you have not copied them to CDs, you are out there up the proverbial creek. Your photos are history. The CD is your "negative".

The format used by digital cameras for compression is JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group), a powerful technology and an excellent compression log rhythm. There is, however, an insidious idiosyncrasy you must be aware of with JPEG images. After you have downloaded your photos into your PC, and you pick out a photo to examine and admire, do something with it and save it, it is re-compressed. If you open it again and save it, it is re-compressed again. Each time you open a photo and save it after viewing it, it is re-compressed. Each time it loses a little more detail, eventually becoming one ugly photo. When this happens, and you have a pristine copy of the photo on a CD, re-copy it to the PC and you will have a fresh photo to work on. The best advice is not to save it each time you look at it. You can work with a photo, changing its composition and print it without saving the changes. CDs, when used regularly, also degrade. So make 2 CDs of your photos, keeping one in a safe place.

News Brief

Monopoly Mowed Down

A federal appeals court struck a blow against printer manufacturers who want to use Digital Copyright to protect their share of the lucrative printer cartridges market. Judge Gilbert Merritt stated in his summary, "We should make clear that in the future companies like Lexmark cannot use the DMCA in conjunction with copyright law to create monopolies of manufactured goods."

Digital Photography Links

Jerry Kaedy

There are many digital photography websites. A recent Google search resulted in more than 2.1 million hits, from this collection a list of about two dozen was created. The content of the sites covers equipment reviews, buyers guides, how-to articles, galleries, messageboards, and much more.

www.dpreview.com/

Latest info about digital photography, comprehensive database of digital camera features and specifications, reviews of cameras and accessories, discussion forums, sample images and a buyer's guide. This site is considered the ultimate source for digital photography info.

www.dp-now.com/

Contains news, reviews and advice about all aspects of consumer digital cameras, scanners, printers, software and associated services.

www.dpcorner.com/

Digital photography equipment news and reviews, and basic tutorials about digital cameras and images.

www.dcresource.com/

Similar to dpreview.com: digital camera news, reviews, buyers guide, message boards, FAQs, and more.

www.steves-digicams.com/

Consumer source of digital camera information and news; equipment reviews (cameras, camcorders, printers, scanners & accessories); discussion forums and manufacturers links.

www.wrotniak.net/photo/dof/

Here you will find a number of semi-technical articles dealing with photography, mostly

(but not only) digital. Includes photo gallery, shareware and a heap of interesting sidebars.

www.megapixel.net/html/

issueindex.php?lang=en Home page for megapixel.net a web magazine for digital camera buffs.

www.outdooreyes.com/

This is a photo gallery and a discussion forum for camera questions. A site to display favorite photos also has a newsletter covering current topics of interest.

www.imagestation.com/

Online photo album, a place to post and share pictures. Also provides reprints for a fee.

www.arraich.com/elements/psE_intro.htm

Tutorial website for PhotoShop Elements 2.

www.irfanview.com/

Home page for Irfanview (pronounced "earfan view"), a freeware (for non commercial use) graphic viewer for Windows platform.

[www.shopping.com/\(formerly dealtime.com\)](http://www.shopping.com/(formerly%20dealtime.com))

Browse over 600 makes and models of digital cameras in many ranges and quality. Compare features& specifications side by side.

www.dvdrhelp.com/

A site to help you make your own video cd's, svcds or DVD's that can be played on your standalone DVD Player from video sources

like DVD, Video, TV, Cam or downloaded movie clips. Compatibility information for CD-R/W, DVD±R/W, VCD, SVCD, MP3 is available. If you want to make your own CD or DVD's this is the place to start.

www.photographic.com/

Online magazine.

www.pcworld.com

Online edition of PC World magazine, can subscribe to email newsletter.

www.digitalphotocritique.com/default.asp

This site was established to assist anyone who desires to improve their photographic and digital darkroom skills. Post your pictures and get 'peer to peer' critical analysis.

www.shortcourses.com/

Provides tutorials (some free) on subjects like choosing a digital camera, using a camera, displaying and sharing photos, pixel and image size and many other subjects. Links to other web pages of interest to a digital photographer.

www.zonezero.com/

Online photography magazine with articles, work from featured photographers, a forum for discussions, etc.

www.internetbrothers.com/phototips.htm

Tips and tutorials about digital photography.

www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/digitalphotography/

Explore digital photography with Windows XP.

www.kodak.com/US/en/digital/dlc/index.jhtml

Collection of information, tips and techniques on Digital Imaging.

www.dvviews.com/tutors.htm

Collection of educational resources on Digital Photography.

www.sjphoto.com/

Online gallery of the work of noted photographer & lecturer Steven Johnson.

www.shutterline.com/

Shutterline is a premier digital photography community. Photo contests, selects photo of the day and conducts online forums of interest to digital photographers.

download.com.com/3150-2204-0.html

Download site for host of freeware, shareware and trial versions of commercial programs used in digital imaging, editing, printing, etc.

www.shutterbug.net/

Home page for the digital photography emagazine "Shutterbug"

– Mid-Hudson CUG



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Fabric softener sheets can be used to reduce static electricity on computer screens and decrease the amount of dust that accumulates on them. Use sheets that have *already been used* in a dryer; new sheets can streak or scratch a screen.

Send your Good Mousekeeping tips to:
Susan Ives, suives@texas.net

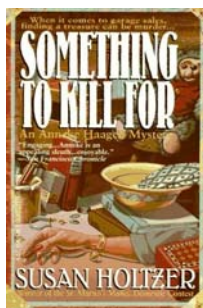
Something to Kill For

by Susan Holtzer

Paperback, St. Martin's Press, 1995,
\$5.99 242 pages

While foraging for Art Deco treasure on the Saturday morning yard sale circuit, Ann Arbor computer consultant Anneke Haagen stumbles across a bludgeoned woman just in time to hear her dying words: "The Jap?" Concerned that suspicion will wrongly fall on the city's only Japanese-American dealer, the antiques association asks Anneke to use her contacts as a consultant to the police department to help them unmask the real killer and the "big score" that lead to murder.

This is the first in an award-winning series that will delight those interested



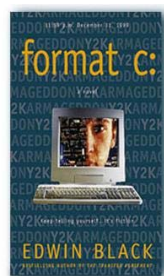
in antiques and yard sale lore. The computer stuff is on the periphery but solidly written and insightful about the day-to-day work of a computer consultant. Recommended.

Format C:

by Edwin Black

Hardback, Brookline Books, 1999,
\$24.95, 402 pages

The richest man on earth, Ben Hinnom, preys on fears of the Y2K problem to embed mind control features into the dominant WindGazer 99 operating system. Chicago investigative reporter Dan Levin, his girlfriend, her computer genius teenage son follow Hinnom to Jerusalem's Old City and the Caves of Qumran and end up in a final battle in Meddigio, on the site known as Armageddon and faith that the only way to save the world is to reformat the



C drives of every computer at the stroke of midnight..

The first half of this book is a funny, obvious and often well-written take down of Microsoft and its attempts to dominate the world's OS market. The second half of the books turns weird; with Kabalistic mysteries (did you know that the word computer works out to 666, the mark of the beast, in the Jewish Kabala?), secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls, some very odd rabbis and a reincarnation of Hitler and an end of the world scenario that rivals the Left Behind series. It's a classic of its type; read it, but don't take it seriously.

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 darnest to keep the recommended books in stock.

Book Review

Digital Photography Hacks

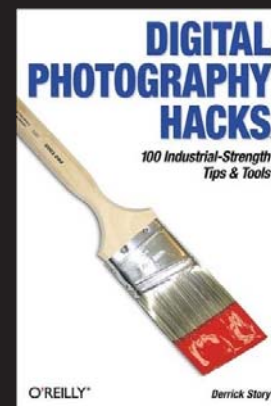
100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools

by Derrick Story

\$29.95

Published by O'Reilly

Reviewed by Jim Morrison, NOCCC



Author Derrick Story has a welcome take on the word "hack." From the pejorative which it has become, Story elevates it by revealing that among code writers, hack means a quick and clever way to solve a nuisance problem. In the same light, Roy Emerson, one of the world's best tennis players, once described himself as just a hacker. Would that we all were such hackers on the court or the keyboard.

At \$29.95 MSRP, the book, while not exactly cheap, is well worth the price. Story's style is clearly understandable and compactly informative, without being the least esoteric. He consistently gives websites as needed. The quality of the paper is excellently appropriate for the amazingly accurate color pictures illustrating both hardware and photo results. Such pictures are commendably included on at least as many pages as not.

Enough maundering. A new type of review is hereby foisted upon you. Foisted? Story presents his solutions and hints in non-sequential form, an admirable arrangement as is the case with several other digital photo books out there. Not to dismay a customer, he does provide notes within his recommendations if one of them requires knowledge of another hack. The new style of review? Because of the independent insertions, his topics and this writer's analyses are presented piecemeal by chapter and sometimes by page number. If you like what you see, let me know and I'll be glad to loan you the book. For a while. You saw it here first.

Chapter 1. Digital Camera Attachments. The screw-on, bolt-on, strap-on hardware described here is just as useful for film cameras as digital. Descriptions of various styles of tripods and attachment arms are followed by a technique to transform your

sun-washed digital viewing pane into a virtual single lens reflex (SLR) by shopping at <http://www.hoodmanusa.com> for an eyepiece that shuts out all external light as you strap one end of the soft black rubber onto your digital screen and advance your little eye into the viewing area. How cool is that! I bought one before I read the book. They work. They're cheap. T-mounts, extension tubes, and ring reversing are old hat for film users, but their utility for digital work is not to be denied, albeit their inclusion somewhat belies the accuracy of the book title. Battery life, car chargers and even solar charging are more on digital target along with their very welcome website addresses. Last, the black "gaffer's tape" is more than a little useful for shutting out light, taping down cords, etc. A \$15 roll might well last a lifetime.

Chapter 2. Daytime Photo Secrets. Pantyhose diffusion filters take years off of wrinkles. Digital SLR's (DSLR) have almost negligible shutter lag, but cost is about \$1,000 and up. And up. If you're seriously thinking about getting one, shop for the Canon 20D a la The Photo Guy. I'll loan you this book if you loan me your camera. At the other end of cost, the Point and Shoot cameras do great jobs these days, but generally should be set at as high a resolution as possible. Use sunglasses as polarizing filters. For panoramas, use a tripod, set f/stops and shutter speeds on manual for consistent sky color, and leave the stitching to one of several programs now available. Photographing classroom white boards? Keep the camera plane parallel to the board, turn off the flash and make sure the camera is steady. The remainder of the chapter includes making your own passport photo, using macro techniques, attending white balance, using flash vs. available light, and creating multiple exposures. Surprise, surprise: The section on infrared photography unabashedly states "older digital cameras often work better than newer ones." The pronounced differences between light and dark areas captured using infrared are startlingly dramatic. Useful and unusual hint: Test the 'infraredness' of your camera by aiming a TV remote into the lens of your digital camera

after covering the lens with an R72 infrared filter. If the remote's light shows up on the digital viewing screen, IR photography is a definite, er, likely possibility. Exposures are long with infrared light even in bright daylight, so do use a tripod. The best IR pictures often include trees, sky, and clouds. The chapter conclusion discusses depth of field, manual shutter setting, softening portrait backgrounds, and improving your photos by analyzing meta data.

Chapter 3. Nighttime Photo Hacks. Flash fears, red eye combat, blinking subjects, streaming lights, ISO management, star filters, colored gels, fireworks, moonlight, and finally, star trails. Subsequent chapters are fully as informative as the previous ones, but space limitations preclude extending this review. You do get the idea, though, right?

Remaining chapters beckon with the titles:

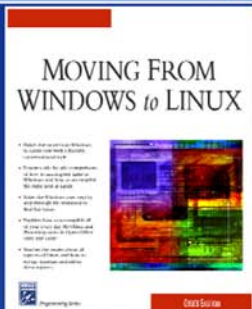
Chapter 4. Magic with Flash.
Chapter 5. The Computer Connection.
Chapter 6. Photoshop Magic.
Chapter 7. Camera-Phone Tricks.
Chapter 8. Weekend Photo Projects.

You can get free information regarding the intrigues below by navigating to

<<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/digphotohks/chapter/index.html>>

- Walking-Stick Mount
- Convert Your Digicam to a Digital SLR
- Pantyhose Diffusion Filter for Flattering Portraits
- Starlight Effects for Candles and Lights
- Second-Curtain Flash for Cool Effects
- Judge Sharpness by File Size

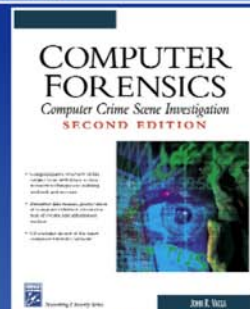
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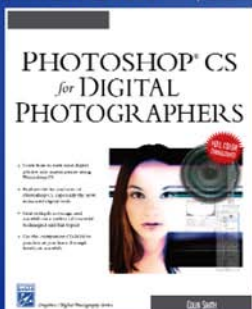
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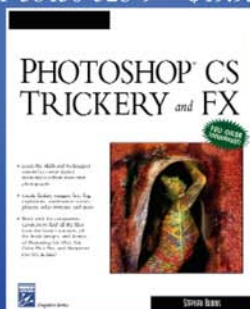
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Software Review

Corel Painter IX

\$429.00

Published by Corel

Reviewed by Clarke Bird, Alamo PC

Painter has been around for about 14 years in various guises and under different ownership. Corel acquired Painter in 2000 from Metacreations (Fractal Design) and has added imaginative improvements to an already impressive program and users claim that version IX is the best yet.

For the reader who is not familiar with Painter, I'll try to explain what it is and what it does. Painter offers natural-media art techniques without the mess, and expense, of real-world art tools. New in Painter IX is a new Welcome Screen that appears when you open the program. Here you can begin a new project, get quick access to recently used files, open tutorials, and find brush and color-management settings. Figure 1 shows the Painter screen with a project in progress.

Imagine you are a watercolor artist. Open Painter and the first thing you will need to do is select a paper type to paint on — there are over 22 artist papers to pick from. Next you may want to sketch an image to fill in with watercolors. Pick a colored pencil to begin drawing. When you've finished outlining your image, you next pick a brush (there are over 40 different watercolor brushes from which to choose). Pick a color and take your first brush stroke. Hey, what is happening here? The color actually runs and feathers out just as actual watercolor paints do (Figure 2). Too wet for your taste. Click undo and your wet paint stroke disappears (you have 32 levels of undo). Now pick a dryer brush to work with. Do you have to quit before your finished with your painting? With Painter IX, the paint now stays wet between sessions. When you are happy with your painting you can click Ctrl+Shift+L to dry the layer.

Now let's say you don't have any drawing skills at all and you seldom are able to draw a straight line. I'm going to tell you how I created the July cover which I named "Self Portrait." I cropped a recent photo to show just the head and shoulders (Figure 3). I "placed" the photo on a sheet of 8.5 X 11 inch white paper in Painter IX (the photo didn't fill the top or bottom of the paper). Next I used a Sketch tool to turn my photo into a pencil outline. Now I had something to work with. I chose oils to paint with as I found watercolors were more difficult for a novice to master and I'm working against the clock (deadline for the July issue). Figure 4 shows a close up showing brush strokes to create the hair in the portrait.

Unfortunately I don't have a Wacom tablet and had to use a mouse to control my brush strokes. Very quickly I got the hang of using the mouse to "paint" over the pencil outline. Thank God for the undo command. I then used the Paint Bucket to fill in the color at the top and bottom of the page. Figure 3 is the result of my effort.

A new user of Painter IX who has had some painting classes and experience with artist's media should get up-to-speed quickly. For new users without any painting experience at all, Painter IX will enable you to learn painting techniques without the cost of expensive art materials.

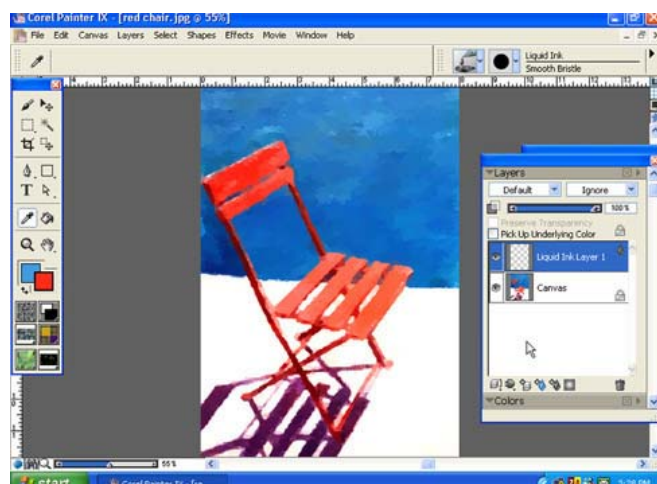


Figure 1

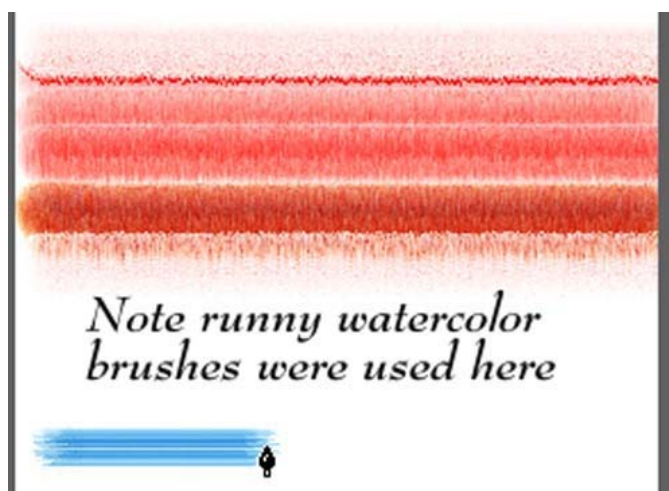


Figure 2

The combination of media to select from and brush combinations will totally confuse you at first but, as with any sophisticated program such as this, there are no easy shortcuts other than working with it over time (Figure 5).

Here are some Painter tools that should help you:

Clone effect. This tool lets you trace over an existing photo or image with Painter's brushes, resulting in a new painting that obtains its color and lines from the original. In other words, you can immediately begin creating artwork from a digital photo. Choose Quick Clone to start painting on the cloned image using a broad brush for background and a smaller brush for painting foreground details. Adjusting brush size and opacity enhances the effect you are creating. You can try different brush variants in the Cloners brush category to get different results.

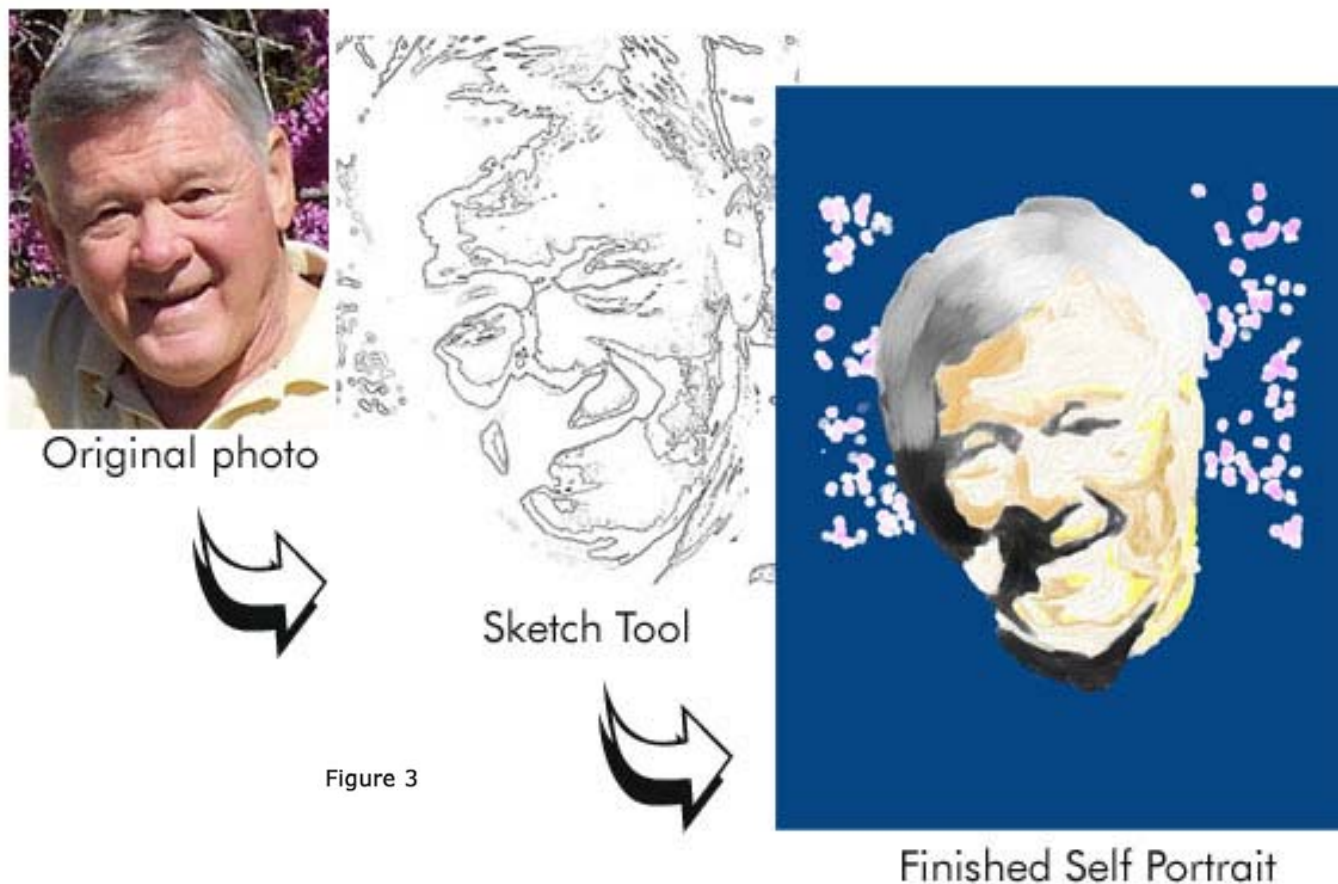


Figure 3

Mixer Pad. Just as an artist squeezes tubes of paint onto his palette, mixing colors to get just the right shade, Mixer Pad lets you mix colors the same way. You load a brush with one or more colors by swiping an area of the palette (Figure 6). Selecting the Dirty Brush option, the old color mixes with the fresh brush and loads just as it would with a real brush, streaks and all.

Artists' Oils Painting System. This new painting system enables the user to use paint blends created in the Mixer Pad. Each brush dab loads the brush with a finite amount of oil. As you move your brush, the oil runs out the brush stroke becomes fainter. In addition, brush strokes interact with any paint already on the canvas — just as they would with real oil paints (Figure 7).

Align to Path. This new feature forces brush strokes to adhere to the edges of paths. Now you can place type and paint strokes precisely over the type outlines. Or, import a masked image and paint strokes around it to create glows. You can also use the Pen Tool to draw Bezier curves and then paint along that path.

KPT Filters. Corel has added several KPT filters to Painter IX such as: Gel, Goo, Pyramid Paint, ShapeShifter, Reaction, Lens Flare and Lighting which add interesting special effects to your art project.

Painter IX is much more compatible with images imported from Photoshop. It now recognizes layer sets, layer masks and alpha channels, allowing you to import and export files with little alteration. Exception: wet watercolor layers will be meaningless to Photoshop.

With this latest version of Painter, Corel has reworked the program code to simplify, streamline, update and modernize it. The



Figure 4

result is a much faster — Corel says some brushes are up to 10 times faster — and a more stable application.

To get the most out of Painter IX, you should have a pretty fast CPU (500 MHz minimum) and loads of RAM (256 MB recommended but 512 MB should be minimum). Corel says you will need 380 MB of HD space for the program. Also, you really ought to have a Wacom tablet which will let you draw with much more precision than you will ever hope to do with your mouse.

The price for Painter IX is shown as \$429 at the Corel Online Store and \$359 at Amazon.com. The upgrade price for IX is \$189 at Amazon.

Corel Corp. 1600 Carling Ave. Ottawa, ON Canada K1Z 8R



Figure 6

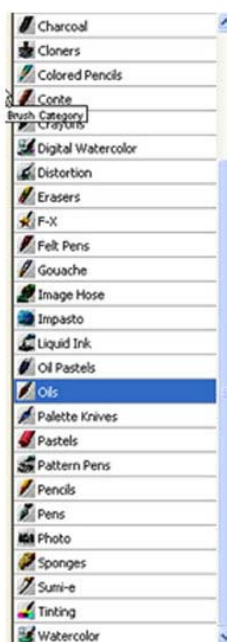


Figure 7

Toolbar



Media Selector



Brush Selector

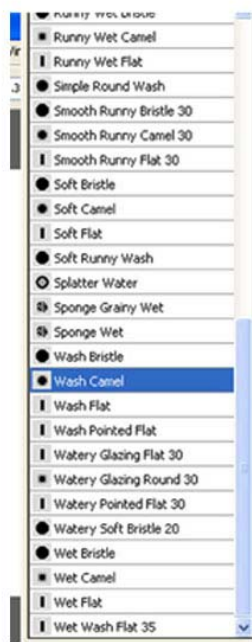


Figure 5

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Software Review

Studio (Plus) Ver. 9

\$99.99

Published by Pinnacle

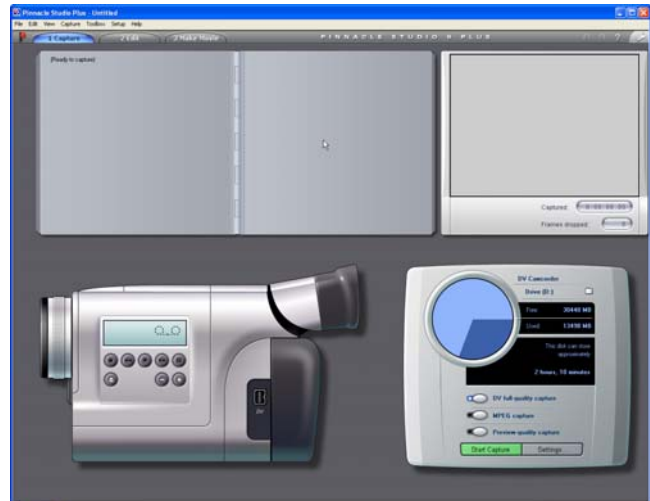
Reviewed by Lindy Lindemann

This remarkable program from Pinnacle is one of their three products in the “studio” class that can be used to capture, edit and create videos. As a professional videographer with over 30 years experience, I am amazed at the features that this product offers and how well it compares to the more costly software in the market place today.

Here is what you need in addition to the software to make this system work: an Intel Pentium or AMD Athlon 800 MHz or higher (1.5 GHz or higher recommended); Windows 98 SE, Windows “Millennium”, Windows 2000, or Windows XP (recommended); graphic card compatible with DirectX 9; sound card compatible with DirectX 9; 256 MB of RAM (512 MB recommended); CD-ROM drive; DVD drive for installing bonus content; speakers; mouse; microphone for voice-overs; 500MB to install software; optional CD and DVD burners for output. The hard drive must be capable of sustained reading and writing at 4 MB/sec. Most 7200 RPM drives are capable of this. The drive needs to be big. Video in the DV format occupies 3.6 MB of space per second, so four and a half minutes will need a full gigabyte on the drive. The “Smart Capture – Preview-quality” feature of this system allows an entire tape to fit in as little as 360MB for editing purposes and then recapture just your edited video at regular quality for final output.

When you open the box you find a CD with the program on it and a DVD with supplemental content. If you don’t have a DVD drive you can send for the material on CD’s. You will also find a 289 page manual with very complete and detailed instructions on how to operate this program. Installation on my Sony Vaio Laptop with a Pentium 4 2.6 GHz processor, 512 MB Ram and 60Gig hard drive was uneventful, but takes about 50 minutes since the program and supplemental material are quite extensive. When you first start the program there is an excellent tutorial that leads you step-by-step through the entire process. I highly recommend one take the time to go through it. The process is divided into three major jobs – capture video, edit it and produce an output.

Let’s get to work on the first job – capturing video. When Studio first launches, it comes up in edit mode so it is necessary to click the capture button at the top of the screen. The setup tab opens a series of windows that allows you to select the source of your video as well as the format. The program even has a feature that tests the read/write speed of your hard drive before capture to make sure it is fast enough and shows you the amount of used and available space on the selected drive. You have three choices for capture quality: full DVD (takes more room on hard drive); MPEG; and preview quality (least amount of space on hard drive). Scene detection can be automatic based on shooting time and date, automatic based on video content, create a new scene or clip every X seconds, and finally no automatic scene detection – just press the (space) bar each time you want to start a new clip. I prefer the latter choice. If you are using a camera and computer with “firewire” connections, a single IEEE1394 cable is all you need. If you are using an analog camera, you will need a video capture board installed in



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your computer along with the appropriate connecting cables. By pressing the “play” button on the mock camera on the screen and the green “capture video” button, the capture process is started. When all the video is captured, you are ready for the next fun step – editing.

When the edit button at the top of the screen is pressed a new screen opens consisting of the album (where your captured clips are located), the preview window with VCR controls underneath and the lower half of the screen can be displayed in “storyboard” or “timeline” mode. To create your video, just drag and drop the clips in whatever order you desire from the album to the storyboard. Transitions can be dropped between clips, titles added as well as music and your own narration. Still photos may be added and the program has a frame grabber capability to add stills from your own video. Some of the more intricate Hollywood FX transitions must be purchased by obtaining the activation key via the Internet. Each group of transitions costs \$14.99. This is one of the reasons the cost of this product is so low. However, there is an abundant supply of transitions that come with the basic software. The edit features are truly outstanding for a product in this price range. Clips can be edited on the timeline, audio tracks can be adjusted to raise or lower sound levels, transition lengths can be extended or shortened, music created to exactly match the length of the video, and many other neat features. DVD authoring can be done right on the timeline including adding

the “first play” menu and automatically create chapter points with buttons that can have edited titles. This remarkable product even supports two track editing as well as chromo keying and picture-in-picture. When editing is complete, you are ready for final production.

The “Make Movie” button at the top of the screen opens a window that allows you to make choices as to how you will share your production with others. These choices include: output the movie to video tape, save the movie as an AVI file or MPEG file or as Windows Media or RealVideo file, share your movie via the internet, or output your movie to disk for playback on a DVD, VCD or S-VCD player. If you captured the clips in other than DVD quality, the program will recapture your movie clips in DVD quality before producing the output. In my test and review of this product I captured in DVD quality and produced a DVD complete with menu and chapter points. Playing it back on a DVD player, the quality looked as good as if it had been produced on my professional system.

The simplicity and intuitiveness of Studio Plus make it a great choice for the beginner or serious hobbyist who wants to produce professional looking videos. Support options are readily available and include: built-in Help tab, an excellent manual, the tutorial, a knowledge base of over 2000 documents accessible on-line 24x7, complimentary email support and telephone support. Your first call is free, but subsequent calls cost \$30 per



call. Considering the price of the product, this is a reasonable charge. I tested the telephone support line and after selecting a couple options, my call was answered in one and a half minutes! I highly recommend Studio Plus as it is an exceptional product for the price.

The MSRP for Pinnacle Studio Plus Ver. 9 is \$99.99 and can be ordered at www.pinnaclesys.com. It can also be purchased locally at CompUSA or Best Buy for the same price. There is a \$20 competitive rebate. Additional information about Pinnacle and their other products can be obtained at the web site. Pinnacle will be presenting at the August meeting and will have this product for sale at that time, hopefully at a discount – have your checkbook or credit card ready! If you are interested in attending a class on this great product, please call the Computer Learning Center 210-736-0080 and sign up. We are tentatively scheduling a class in September and will notify those signed up of the exact time and date.

Lindy is a former V.P. of Alamo PC Organization and is a volunteer instructor for Video and Digital Photography classes at the Computer Learning Center. He can be reached at < cjlindy@satx.rr.com>.



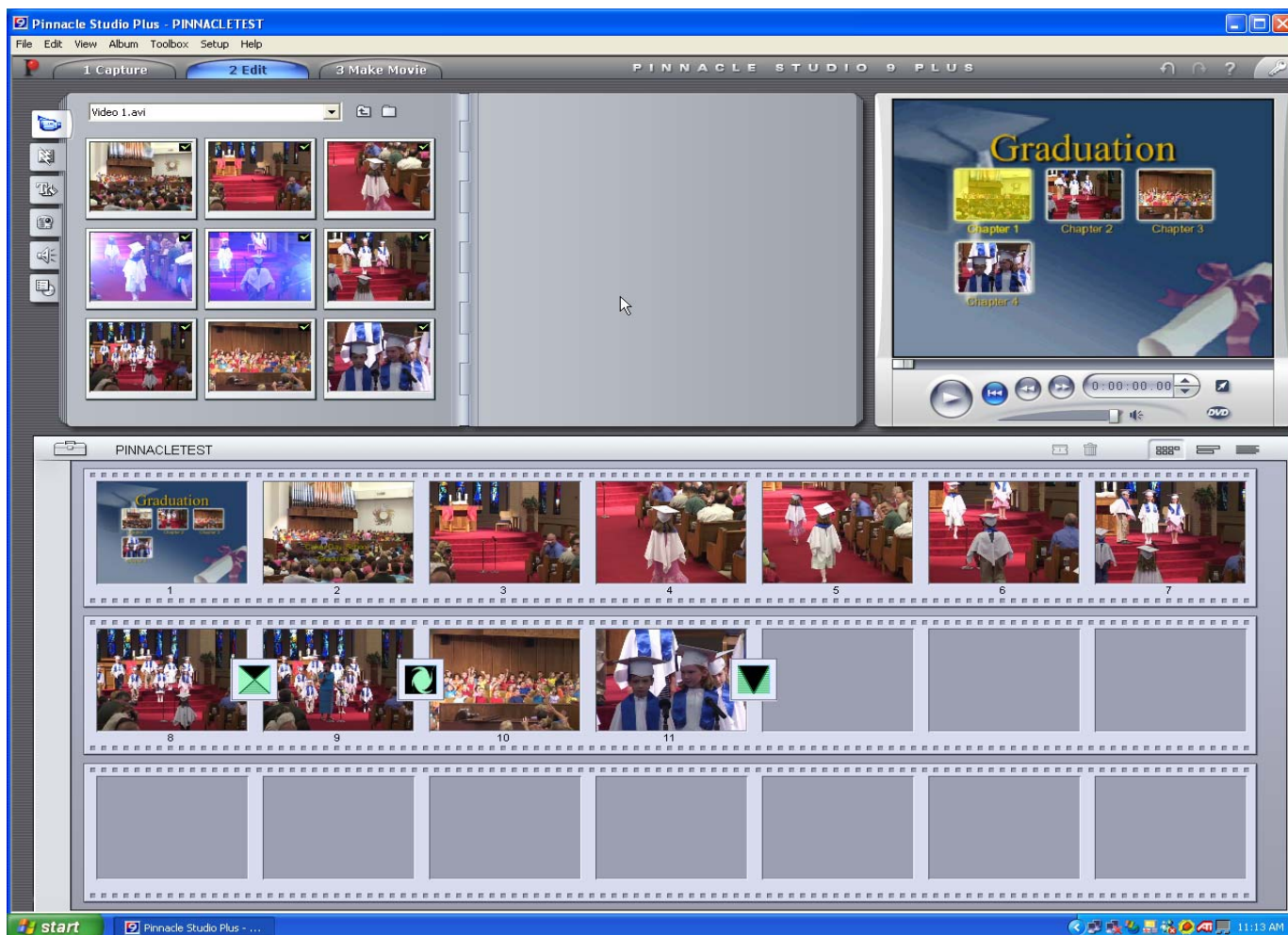
Relax
and let us
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We Specialize in individual & small business tax preparation

Laura B. Grover, E.A.
Tax Preparation & Financial Consulting
14350 Northbrook Drive, Suite 240
San Antonio, TX 78232
210/402-6100
FAX 210/402-2888
laurab@lauragrover.com www.lauragrover.com

23 years in public service

Enrolled to practice before the Internal Revenue



Software Review

Paint Shop Pro 9

\$99.00

Published by Corel

Review by: Susan Ives, Alamo PC



I've been a Photoshop user forever, or it seems that way. My software philosophy is to find a program I like and to stick with it. I like to get really good at using one program rather than dabble in several.

That being said, I have kept an older version (5, I think) of PaintShop Pro on my computer because of one feature. It can draw a border around a photo. This might seem like a minor convenience, but I NEED borders around some graphics. In Photoshop (I'm still using ver. 6) it's a 72-step process, or at least it seems that way. In Paint Shop Pro it's one click.

I got interested in trying a newer version of PSP last fall. I was visiting my brother, an enthusiastic PSP user, who gave me the sales pitch and a demo.

To backtrack a bit, Paint Shop Pro is professional-level photo editing software, positioning itself as the equivalent to Adobe PhotoShop. You can use this program to improve your photos, embellish them and share them.

JASC, the company that has marketed PSP for years, was recently bought by Corel. At \$99, PSP is much cheaper than Adobe PhotoShop (\$599) and includes virtually the same professional-level tools. However, I have found that Paint Shop Pro is more welcoming to hobbyists than PhotoShop: it's an ideal program for scrapbookers, for example. While PhotoShop may be the professional standard, Paint Shop Pro offers professional tools accompanied by useful and fun embellishments.

Let's get started. Paint Shop Pro has a utility called "one step photo fix." It automatically adjusts the color balance, clarity, saturation, smoothes the edges and sharpens the image. All of these tools, and more, can be used individually, but as a bundle they are especially fast and powerful. I used them on about 10 of my photos, some of them a bit iffy and others, I thought, fine just the way they were. All of the photos were improved by this one click.

Figure 1 shows one of the dialogue boxes, this one for red eye removal. All I did was click on the red eye, and the program automatically isolated the problem and corrected it. I gave this guy a grey eye, but there are dozens of options: 17 shades of green alone. I used the automated removal, but you can also do it manually, if you want.

There are similar dialog boxes for removing the moiré patterns that you get when you scan items from a printed page, for restoring faded photos and many more.

Quite a few of the photo correction tools are aimed digital camera users. There is one-touch correction for digital camera noise removal; for salt and pepper -- those stark white and black pixels that sometimes creep into digital photos -- scratch removal; and for various lens distortions. The Chromatic aberration removal filter eliminates the purple fringe that often appears in digital photographs.

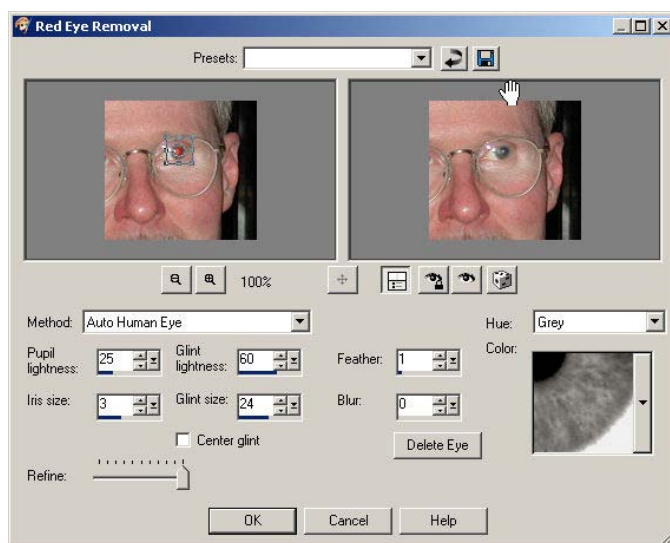


Figure 1



Figure 2

After you correct your photo you can apply photo effects. There are filters (PSP uses the same filter algorithm as PhotoShop) that distort the photo in (one would hope) attractive ways. You've seen these before – filters that make a photo look like an oil painting or a charcoal sketch. There are dozens of filters included, such as page curl (I love that one) and one that can make seamless background tiles for Web pages. Other free ones are available for download at sites such as <stevesdesktopphotography.com/plugins.htm>, or you can use commercial filters, such as Alien Skin's Eye Candy.

There are also various painting tools: you can paint with oils, markers, chalk, pastels and colored pencils. One of PSP's unique painting features, however is picture tubes.

Tubes are small graphics that you paint on to a photo or other graphic. Figure 2 shows a close-up of a boy, painted over with the "bubbles" tube. All you do is drag the cursor over the photo and the bubbles are applied in random patterns.

I like the more "generic" tubes best: bubbles, fireworks, confetti, etc. Others are more specialized: art supplies, farm animals, sports equipment. A few dozen tubes come with the program. JASC offers more for download on their Web site, and there are lots of free third-party tubes available. You can even create your own! Tubes are one of the features that are especially useful for scrapbookers.

Referring back to figure 3, you'll also see that there is a frame around the photo. Actually, there are three frames. First, I applied the filmstrip frame. Then, I applied a wavy photo edge, and finally I stuck the whole shebang into a gold frame. Additional frames are also available for download at the JASC site.

For those who create complicated compositions, PSP supports layers, masks and virtually unlimited un-do.

You can, of course, import images directly from a camera or scanner. There is also a built in screen capture utility; the dialog box for this is shown in figure 3.

I wasn't terribly fond of the text tool: rather than type directly onto the graphic, text is entered into a text box, which I find awkward. However, you can fit text to a vector path and (I really like this) type with a texture rather than apply it later.

PSP can save and import a variety of file formats: a list is at figure 4. RAW image file format is supported for:

Canon 300D Rebel, D30, D60, 10D, 1D, 1Ds, 1D Mark II, Powershot G3, Powershot G5

Nikon D1, D1h, D100, D2h, D1X, D70

Olympus 5050, 5060, E1, E10, E20; Fuji S2 Pro, S7000

Pentax *ist

Minolta A1, A2

Kodak 760, 14N, 14c

There are sophisticated batch processing tools that can, for example, re-name or change the file format of a group of files. You can even write and save scripts that perform a series of steps to a batch of files every time the script is invoked.

There are several tools specifically available for Webmasters. Photos can be optimized in GIF, JPG or PNG format. Images can be processed as image maps or sliced, with each slice or



Figure 3

Amiga (*.iff)
 Animation Shop (*.psp)
 Brooktrout Fax (*.brk,*.301)
 CALS Raster (*.cal,*.cals)
 CompuServe Graphics Interchange (*.gif)
 Deluxe Paint (*.lbn)
 Dr. Halo (*.cut)
 Encapsulated PostScript (*.eps,*.ai,*.ps)
 FlashPix (*.fpx)
 GEM Paint (*.img)
JPEG (*.jpg,*.jif,*.jpe,*.jpeg)
 JPEG 2000 (*.jp2,*.j2c,*.j2k,*.jpc,*.jpx)
 Macintosh PICT (*.pct)
 MacPaint (*.mac)
 Microsoft Paint (*.msp)
 NCR G4 (*.ncr)
 Paint Shop Pro Image (*.pspimage,*.psp,*.psp)
 PC Paint (*.pic)
 Photoshop (*.psd)
 Portable Bitmap (*.pbm)
 Portable Greymap (*.pgm)
 Portable Network Graphics (*.png)
 Portable Pixelmap (*.ppm)
 RAW (graphics) File Format (*.raw,*.*)
 SciTex Continuous Tone (*.sct,*.ct)
 SGI Image File (*.rgb,*.bw,*.rgba,*.sgi)
 Sun Raster Image (*.ras)
 Tagged Image File Format (*.tif,*.tiff)
 Truevision Targa (*.tga)
 Windows Clipboard (*.clp)
 Windows Enhanced Meta File (*.emf)
 Windows Meta File (*.wmf)
 Windows or CompuServe RLE (*.rle)
 Windows or OS/2 Bitmap (*.bmp)
 Windows or OS/2 DIB (*.dib)
 Wireless Bitmap (*.wbmp,*.wbm)
 WordPerfect Bitmap (*.wpg)
 X Windows Bitmap (*.xbm,*.bm)
 X Windows Dump (*.xwd,*.wd)
 X Windows Pixmap (*.xpm)
 Zsoft Paintbrush (*.pcx)

Figure 4

map section individually optimized as a GIF, JPG or PNG image and formatted as a rollover.

I love the PSP printing options. Figure 5 shows one of the print layouts: all you do is drag-and-drop your photos into the template and the program automatically fits them into standard size formats.

There are a few things about PSP that I don't like. I find the text entry and manipulation awkward, but that could just be my experience. Unlike Photoshop, it doesn't have an easy utility to create a Web gallery, although it does automatically upload photos to a picture sharing service, such as Kodak Easyshare or Shutterfly. All in all, it's an excellent program.

Scrapbookers may want to look at their Scrapbooking Xtra editions, \$19.95 each. Edition 4, for example, is "Simply Elegant," containing backgrounds, templates and embellishments for events such as weddings. There are seven of these.

If your needs are more modest, Paint Shop Pro Studio (\$79) might be more your speed. It has fewer features than PSP 9,

but it has a less complicated interface and is easier to learn and use. A good add-in would be Paint Shop Photo Album 5 (\$49) which helps you organize your photos and burn archives onto CD.

The manual is excellent: 500 pages, well organized and well written. This is a popular program, and there are numerous Web sites that provide hints and tips, such as the PSP users group < <http://www.pspug.org/> >.

If you're not convinced, you can download fully functional 30-day trial version at <www.corel.com>.

You can buy Paint Shop Pro just about anywhere, including from the Corel Web site. Corel often has special offers: sometimes discounts, sometime extra software thrown in. Retail price is \$99 for the boxed version, \$89 for a downloaded version, but you can get the upgrade price of \$59 if you are a registered user of Paint Shop Pro, CorelDRAW, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite, Corel DESIGNER®, Corel PHOTO-PAINT® or Corel® Painter™.

Susan Ives is a former president of Alamo PC.

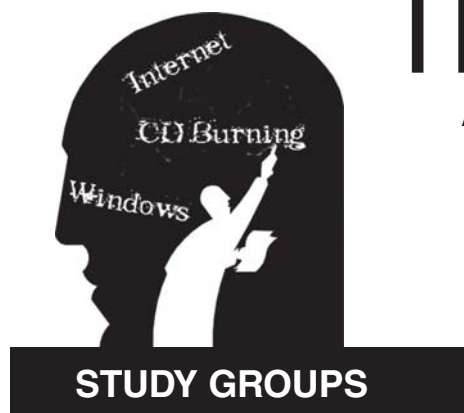


Figure 5

Alamo PC Monthly Planner

July 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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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 becomes 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 each month in the UBS Conference Room, in Suite 300 at 200 Concord Plaza Drive, 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', is currently studying Microsoft's new ISA Server 2004 in anticipation of it's being included in the soon to be released Service Pack 1 for Small Business Server 2003. The SIG meets every Saturday morning from 8:30 until noon. Space is limited and the subject matter is very advanced. Therefore membership is restricted. Please contact Larry Lentz before attempting to attend.

Contact: 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 Organization SBS Special Interest Group held its May meeting on May 7th. We had 18 in attendance including several new members from the March Microsoft event. After tacos, group leader Larry Lentz gave an overview presentation on Microsoft CRM. There appeared to be a lot of interest and the meeting went an extra 1/2 hour. Next month, June 3rd, Larry will continue the topic by demonstrating how to install MS CRM onto an SBS 2003 server. The Alamo PC SBS SIG meets on the first Friday of the month at 8 AM at the Alamo PC Learning Center in Crossroads Mall, San Antonio, Texas. The meetings begin with a 'Taco Social' from 8 to 8:30 followed by our presentation. For more information, please contact group chair, Larry Lentz at Larry@LentzComputer.net, or visit the group web site at <http://www.LentzComputer.net/SBS.>

New Class Starting

Surf and Search - A new beginners' class to explore the internet. How to search for long-lost cousins, how to research Aunt Jemima's antique tiara or how to find just about anything on the internet (including yourself). While the class will be largely "Google-based" we will also look at many other options and will be sharing our own favorite sites.

Pre-registration is required. Call (210) 736-0080, or (210) 736-0700

STUDY GROUPS (cont.)

Power Internet Study Group

This year we are covering eight subjects: 64 bit computers, SATA HDD technology, 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 ★★

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: 4th Wednesday, 7-9pm

Where: Call Cynthia for directions

Pre-registration: Yes - Call Cynthia

Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

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 <oobootes@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 ★

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

CorelDRAW I Class

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

Contact: Steve Tech

<stephentechjr@yahoo.com>

210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating ★★

DotNetNuke Configuration and Management

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

Contact: Joe Brazell,

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

When: August 31 7PM - 9PM

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating: ★

eBay - Bid with Confidence: An Introduction to Internet Auctions

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

Contact: Learning Center 736-0080

<learncenter@alamopc.org>

When: TBA

Where: Learning Center, Room 1

Pre-registration: Yes

Technical Rating: ★

Excel 2000 Class

Students will become familiar with Excel 2000's basic functionality, menus, toolbars, icons and shortcut keys. Learn how to create, format, save and print an Excel spreadsheet. Understand and use formulas, work with worksheets and workbooks, and learn the basic productivity elements of Excel. The Excel 2000 Basics Class will use the Excel 2000 Step By Step book. This book will be helpful but is not required.

Contact: Bill Eastridge

<weastridge@satx.rr.com>

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

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: Yes

Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

HTML and Beyond Class

Learn how to create your own web site. 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. Students should attend the Home Page Jumpstart Class and have familiarity with the Windows Operating System. 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

The class is intended for people who would like to learn more about the mail program Outlook Express, which is a subset of Microsoft Outlook. The first class is entirely on e-mail and the second class is 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: Sandy Knight

<sknight@satx.rr.com>

When: 2nd & 4th Sunday of even numbered months, 2pm - 5pm.

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: Desired, but walk-ins are welcome

Technical Rating ★

Introduction to Photo Editing

A new class will begin in July. We will primarily use Photoshop Elements software, although we will also use Corel PhotoPaint and ArcSoft

Photostudio occasionally.

Contact: Clarke Bird

<cbird@satx.rr.com>

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

No Class in June, will resume in July

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: 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: Sandy Knight

<sknight@satx.rr.com>

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: Paul Sanchez,

<webmaster@rnpconsulting.com>

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 - \$

2005 Schedule:

September - each Friday 1 - 5

Elements workshop for all students who have previously taken the Elements 2 instruction classes. Fee \$20.00; Registration required

October - each Friday 1 - 5

Special Playing Cards class; learn to create your own personal playing cards for anyone who has previously taken Photoshop 7 or Elements 2 instruction classes; Fee \$20.00; registration required; bring photos; small laminating machine and pouches required.

November - each Friday 1 - 5

Calendar Class; learn to make personal calendars for friends & family; bring photos; fee \$20.00; registration required

Contact: Beverly Bihn <bihndolls@att.net>

When: Fridays 1pm - 5pm except holidays

Where: Learning Center

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

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★

Contact: Beverly Bihn <bihndolls@att.net>

When: Thursdays 1pm - 5pm except holidays

Where: Learning Center

Fees: (includes written instructions) \$20 per month for Alamo PC members only

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★

Senior Comp Class - \$

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

Contact: Ed & Audry Henkin

www.seniorcomp.org

When: see page 10 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: ★★

Private or Semi-Private Tutorials - \$

Develop your skills at your own pace and at a time that fits your schedule. Introductory private tutorials for one, two, or three students. Choose from:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Basic Computer Skills, or
- Keyboarding/Typing

Contact: Learning Center (210) 736-0080 or 736-0700

When: Days and hours are arranged between the student(s) and teacher.

Where: Learning Center

Fees: 1 student: \$35 per hour, 10 hours for \$300. 2 or 3 students: per student—\$20 per hour, 10 hours for \$150

Pre-registration: Yes—call or visit the Learning Center

Technical Rating: *

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.

Step One

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.

0	ACT!	28	Quattro Pro
1	Access	29	Quick Books
2	AlphaFour	30	Quicken
6	dBase	31	Photo Album
7	Delphi	32	Windows 98
8	Dreamweaver 3	35	WinFax Pro
9	Networking	36	MS Word Windows
10	Excel	37	WordPerfect
11	Family Origins for Win.	39	Visual Basic
12	FrontPage 98	40	Internet Explorer
13	Flash 4	41	MS Outlook Express
14	Genealogy	42	Home Help
16	RoadRunner	43	Hardware
18	MS Publisher	44	OpenOffice
21	Paradox	45	Time&Chaos
22	PageMaker	46	Opera
23	Paint Shop Pro	47	Mozilla
24	Adobe Photoshop	48	MySQL
25	Crystal Reports	49	.Net
26	PowerPoint	50	Windows XP

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
(40, 41, 50)	Ted Ressler			catechist@gmail.com


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Classified Ads

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

- Lost** A lady lost her purse either in Alamo PC area or in the general Meeting area. If you should find her purse please call Charlene Ray at 493-3666. A reward is offered.
- For Sale** Scrapbook Tote Crop-in-Style XXL is new with pull up handle, fixed ball bearing wheels, removable pen caddy hold 75 pens, 18 scissors loops, punch storage. Holds multiple albums up to 12" x 15" and anything else you can think of for the growing scrapbooker. Store price is \$140.00 plus tax and I am asking \$95.00. Call David at 492-5153. <marjdave1@sbcglobal.net>
- Free** Free to anyone who needs them: FAX paper rolls, one new, one half used. Heat sensitive paper. (8 1/2 x 98 ft.) I got a new FAX machine that doesn't use them, so if someone wants them... E-mail for more info: <joeecool@satx.rr.com>
- For Sale** 100Gig hard drive, 512Mg RAM, Flat screen monitor, Speakers (with subwoofer), DVD drive, CD/DVD writer (separate drive) \$700, negotiable. <richardstrout@hotmail.com>
- For Sale** View Sonic Professional Series P75f+ Flat Screen CRT 17" monitor. Purchased June 1, 2004. Hot key to boost brightness levels for intense, vivid colors with video, DVD, graphics and gaming. Toggle back to normal brightness for text. Ultra-fine 0.25mm aperture grille pitch. \$99 call Sandy 372-9985 or <sknight@satx.rr.com>
- 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



100% gray cotton golf shirts with pocket and embroidered full-color **Alamo PC logo**
Available at the Learning Center in a wide variety of sizes.

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

Your membership number entitles you to a full year of membership privileges. Established in 1983, this non-profit, all-volunteer organization is dedicated to helping members keep up with trends and technologies.

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. Your \$45 dues covers your entire family!e. 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 address and phone to selected vendors

PCA JAN05

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

Isn't it about time for you to consider all the benefits of membership with Alamo PC? Renew your membership before the year is over!

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



Consider A Matching Donation, or a Donation To Alamo PC Organization

Increasing members knowledge and effective use of personal computers, and providing other membership services and access to the expertise of other members, does not happen without an associated monthly expense. In recent months, although member dues and ads have offset the majority of the required monthly expense, and cost-saving measures are constantly being reviewed, the total amount of monthly funds generated has been less than the monthly expense. The shortfall has had to come from reserve funds, which have been severely depleted. We would like to offer everyone the opportunity to help rebuild the reserve fund.

If your employer has a "Matching Donation" program, please consider that you can double a donation amount by participating. All donations are tax deductible and can be dropped off at the Alamo PC Learning Center in Crossroads Mall (near the underground parking entrance, accessed from Fredericksburg Road) or mailed to **Alamo PC Organization, PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX, 78265-5180**. Checks, Money Orders, etc., should be made payable to **Alamo PC Organization** and identified as "Donation."

On-line donations can be made at <<https://training.alamopc.org/donations>>. If you do not have on-line access, credit card donations can be made by mail if you legibly provide the following information on a piece of paper: Full Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone Number (to verify you want your card charged), Name of Card, Card Number, Card Expiration Date, Donation Amount, and your usual Signature. Please help us keep our membership dues low, meet our monthly expenses and rebuild the reserve fund.

