

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

TECHNICAL HELP ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

August 2005

\$4.00

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Is Down**
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**Cables - The Missing
Part of Upgrades**
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to Get Answers**
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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:

Bill Eastridge 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:

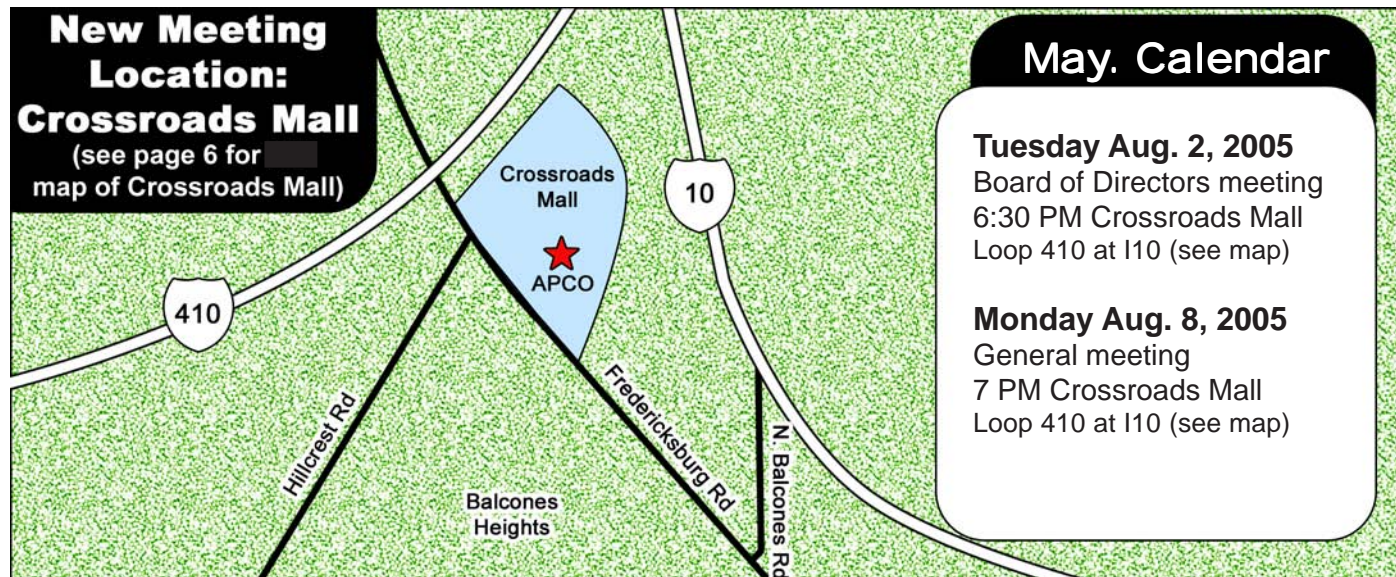
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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 Aug. 2, 2005
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Monday Aug. 8, 2005
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)



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Reviewed by Paul Vaughn

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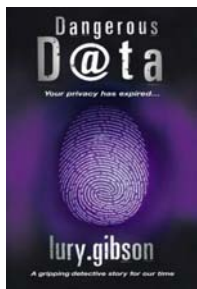
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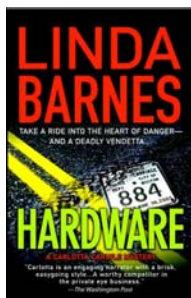


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by lury.gibson

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PC Alamode

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PC Alamode (ISSN 1065-3708) is published monthly by the Alamo PC Organization, Inc., PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180, an independent association of personal computer users, founded in January 1983, and incorporated in January 1984 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. COPYRIGHT © 2005 by Alamo PC or the author. All rights reserved. No part of PC Alamode may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means — mechanical, electrical, or otherwise — including, but not limited to, photocopying, recording, or information storage/retrieval, without express written permission from Alamo PC. However, unless otherwise indicated, articles may be reprinted by other user and education groups provided the articles are reprinted unaltered and the publication acknowledges the author thereof and PC Alamode. Articles, programs, reviews, and advertisements are compiled without verification of accuracy or applicability to a specific task, computer, or other equipment. Comments or claims are made solely by the individual author and do not necessarily represent the views of Alamo PC or of any other Alamo PC member. Trademarks have been used at random within the publication and are hereby recognized as such.

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

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Ad rates effective January 2005

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

*Consecutive months

**To be paid in advance

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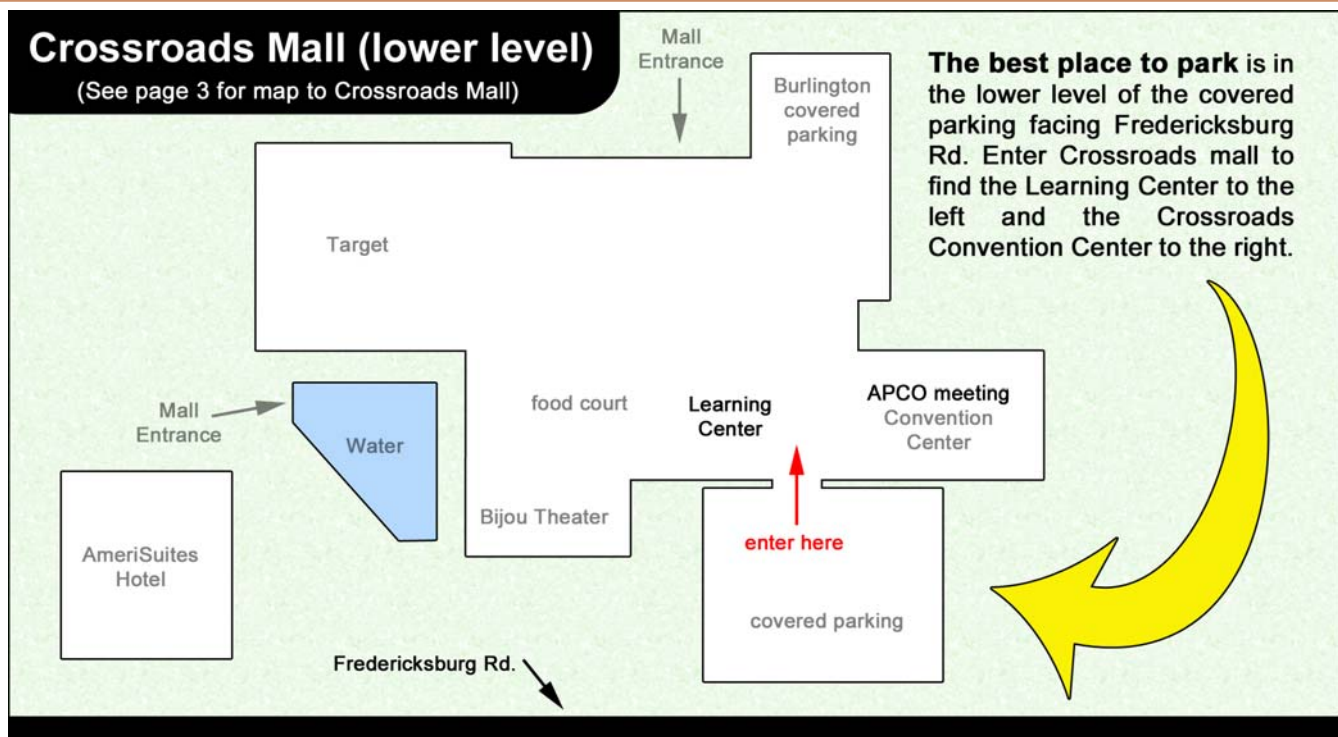
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736-0700

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



PC Alamode Links List



Falling Lady

<<http://www.planetdan.net/pics/misc/tetka.html>>

Submitted by Gwen Langland

Here's what Gwen had to say about this site:

"I kept wondering when she would land safely. Kept wanting to catch her. I could hardly believe she just kept rolling off the balls and float through the air and land on another ball, then another and another. The lady was so incredibly limber, and if the lady would get stopped, we could pull her around where she was stuck and get her loose, with the mouse. I was fascinated by it all. I still go back now and then and look at that email again. The computer gurus who programmed that link are truly geniuses."



99 Rooms

<<http://99rooms.com>>

Submitted by Clarke Bird, former editor, *PC Alamode*

An abstract Flash masterpiece, 99Rooms.com is as much a work of art as it is a website. Visitors will find themselves on a slightly spooky journey that showcases the talented mind of the young German illustrator, graffiti artist and web programmer who designed the site.

Make sure you are Flash-ready, follow the brief instructions and start walking. Each room reveals itself as a unique step within a digitised urban maze. Visitors have to use their mouse to find the hidden entrance to the next room. A very cool experience and a great example of young artists are using the web as a canvas to create.



The Monthly Photo Contest is no longer being held. Very few people are submitting images anymore. For the past two issues, the same person has been sending in images... Thanks Wenda! I would like to revive the Monthly Photo Contest some time in the future. Anyone have any nice vacation pictures to submit?

I hope you will enjoy the newest section of the PC Alamode above. I do come across a number of interesting websites. Some come from former students, others from clients. If you come across an interesting link you would like to share, e-mail me at <editor@alamopc.org>.

I normally do not run reviews more than once, but this month I made an exception. On page 58 you will find a review by Lindy Lindemann on Pinnacle Studio 9 Plus. This same review ran last month, but I thought it would be appropriate to repeat the review since Pinnacle will be demonstrating Studio 9 Plus at the August general meeting. See pages 9 and 10 for more details.

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.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

We need your vote!

August of each year is a time to vote. Normally the voting is only to select new directors. This year, however, two votes will be required.

The first vote will be to accept the proposed changes to the Bylaws. The original text, with proposed revisions (PR) provided or identified, has been posted to the Alamo PC web site. Please read the proposed Bylaws and vote during the first two weeks of August. Acceptance of the proposed Bylaws is required before we can continue to elect directors (the number of directors required, under Article 5.2, is being revised).

The second vote is to elect directors. As the Bylaws state, "In August of each year, the Board of Directors shall hold an annual meeting of the members for the purpose of electing directors of the organization for the following fiscal year beginning October 1." Our August 8th membership meeting will be that annual meeting. It will also be the time when Article 5.4 of the Bylaws will be utilized "Nomination of Directors: ... prior to the election of directors, a member qualified to vote may nominate a person with the second of any other member qualified to vote."

The second vote will begin once the voting results on the Bylaws has been totaled, we know how many directors need to be elected (current number or revised number), and the biographies of nominees has been posted to the web site (on, or about, August 16th at the earliest). Voting for directors will conclude at midnight on September 12th (the night of the September monthly meeting).

The Alamo PC Organization doesn't want to become a "Use to Be" statistic, but it may if no one steps up to help. Please

consider becoming a board member or nominate someone who is interested.

The August membership meeting is Alamo PC's final time for accepting nominations the 2006 fiscal year (Oct 05-Sep 06) Board positions. Members will be responsible for identifying individuals willing to serve at the BOD level, and may submit names at the August 8th General meeting. Once the Election Committee and Floor nomination list of proposed names has been consolidated, individual biographies will be submitted for posting on the Alamo PC web site and inclusion in the September PC Alamode. During August-September (NLT midnight on 9/12), the online election process will be conducted to determine the list of new Board members for Oct 2005 - Sep 2006.

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 protected 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!

Windows Longhorn Renamed

Source: ZDNet.com

The next version of Windows finally has an official name: Windows Vista.

The advertising tagline for Vista is "Clear, Confident, Connected: Bringing clarity to your world," according to a video of the announcement posted by Microsoft.

The company also said Friday that the first beta, or test release, of Vista is slated for release by Aug. 3. That release will be targeted at developers and IT professionals, said Brad Goldberg, general manager of Windows product development.

The Vista moniker breaks with the company's tradition of using version numbers or acronyms for new Windows releases. The current version of the operating system, Windows XP--short for "experience," according to Microsoft--debuted in October 2001.

Vista's three design goals include better security, new ways to organize information, and seamless connectivity to external devices, the company said. Microsoft will provide more detail on Vista features Aug. 3, Goldberg said.

Among the key features of Vista are a new searching mechanism, lots of new laptop features, parental controls and better home networking. There will also be visual changes, thanks to Avalon, ranging from shiny translucent windows to icons that are tiny representations of a document itself.

Alamo PC Organization now offers members private or semi-private tutorials

- ☞ Keyboarding/Typing
- ☞ Basic Computer Skills
- ☞ Microsoft Word

Rates for one student

\$35 per hour

\$300 for 10 hours

Rates for two or three students

\$20 per student per hour

\$150 per student for 10 hours

Enjoy private instruction on days and at hours
that fit **your** schedule at our modern facility in
Crossroads Mall.

Call or visit the Learning Center to register
(210) 736-0080

Volunteer of the Month Clarke Bird



June Program

David Steward

Pinnacle Systems demonstrates video editing with Pinnacle Studio Plus 9

The August General Meeting will be hosting a first time presenter to the Alamo PC Organization, Pinnacle Systems. Representatives from the company will be demonstrating the latest additions to their award winning video editing arsenal including the very popular consumer product, Pinnacle Studio Plus 9.

With Studio 9 Plus, you can edit your home movies in any number of ways, to create some very dazzling effects, render them to digital format, and record them to DVD. Studio 9 Plus is a one stop product that will handle everything from the conversion of older analog tapes, editing and adding transitions, creation of DVD menus and recording capabilities. For those of you that do not have video card capable of video input, Pinnacle has products that include the hardware necessary to bring you video memories into the software for editing and recording.

Unlike other video editing solutions, Pinnacle software is very easy to learn. You will be creating masterpieces in a matter of minutes.

So, come learn from the best. Plus, attendees will have a chance to win some of their products to try immediately.

The meeting will be held at the Crossroads Convention Center on August 8th, at 7:00 PM.

Please come early, as seating is limited for this very special event.



See review on page 58!

Significant Happenings...

John Gaddis, Education VP

Alamo PC will offer a beginners' class to explore the wonders of the internet. Learn how to search for long-lost cousins, research Aunt Jemima's antique tiara, or find just about anything on the internet including you.

The class will examine the basics of Boolean logic and how an understanding of it can improve the success of the common search engines. It will use various resources including standard reference sites such as Google, A9, Wikipedia etc. and a variety of specialist sites such as FamilySearch, MapQuest, and InfoBel, etc. It will also be sharing students' own favorite sites.

William Hudson who has given tutorials to the Alamo PC Genealogy special interest group and also taught the popular Internet Auction (eBay) classes will lead the class. It is intended for beginner users who might either be unaware of the power of the Internet or might get frustrated at the difficulty sometimes experienced in finding the data they are looking for. It will be an occasional class, not regularly scheduled, and the first will be held on Saturday, November 19th from 2 pm to 5 pm. Students should have familiarity with the Windows Operating System and, although a free class to members, pre-registration is required. Call the Alamo PC Computer Learning Center at 736-0700 or register in person at the Learning Center the lower level of Crossroads Mall.

A reminder to Apconians wishing to sign up for Elements 2 classes, they will be held each Friday for the months of July - August at the Learning Center from 1 to 5pm. The fee is \$90.00 for members who have not taken the course before, or \$20.00 for members who have already taken the course and want to re-take it. If you do not have Elements 2 software, it is available for \$19.99 plus shipping from www.Softwareoutlet.com

Beverly Bihn says, there will be an Elements workshop offered in September on each Friday from 1 to 5pm for all Apconians

who have previously taken Elements instruction classes. The fee is \$20.00

There will be another Photoshop 7 instruction class offered each Friday from 1 to 5pm for the Months of October - November, \$90.00 for first time participants, \$20.00 for retakes. Software for Photoshop 7 is available for \$49.00 plus shipping from www.CDSalesUSA.com

Workshops for Photoshop 7 continue each Thursday from 1 to 5pm for the months of July, August and September for a fee of \$20.00 per month for anyone who has previously taken Photoshop 7 classes at Alamo PC

Beverly will be offering a Playing Cards Class each Thursday in October from 1 to 5; you must know Elements 2 or Photoshop 7; fee \$20.00. She will offer a 2006 Calendar class each Thursday in November (except Thanksgiving Day) from 1 to 5pm; fee is \$20.00. You need to pre register for the classes and/or workshops; Beverly will send the lessons to those who are participating. E-mail her with any questions. Please tell your friends who might be interested about these wonderful classes in case they would like to join Alamo PC and take any of the courses offered.

For those Apconians who are new to computing, we have found an instructor for the popular Computer Literacy class. Register and get information for this class at the Learning Center, 736-0700.

Pinnacle Software will demonstrate their award winning video editing software at the August General Membership meeting. Alamo PC will offer a three session Pinnacle video editing class from 7 to 9 pm, September 14, 15 and 16th, so be sure to attend the meeting and register for the class. Learn how to edit and export DivX videos, burn DVDs with Dolby Digital 5.1 audio, export MPEG4 video and MP3 audio. Pre-registration required!

Senior Comp Schedule

Bill Hudson, Senior Comp Instructor

Senior Comp Fall 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, 21 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:

September 10 & 11
more info at <http://www.pcshows.com/>



Geeky Gourmet

As the “Dog Days of Summer” swelter around us, it’s time to head for the lake, river, or park to seek refuge and fun. These take-along foods are both cool and refreshing. So enjoy the last of the summer as Fall is just around the corner.

Tortilla Pinwheels

8 ozs. Sour cream
8 ozs. Cream cheese, softened
4 ozs. Diced green chilies, well drained
1 cup grated Cheddar cheese
½ cup chopped green onion
4 ozs. Chopped black olives, well drained
Garlic powder, to taste
Seasoned salt, to taste
5 10-inch flour tortillas

Mix all ingredients, except tortillas, together thoroughly. Divide the filling and spread evenly over tortillas; roll up tortillas. Cover tightly with plastic wrap, twisting ends; refrigerate for several hours. Unwrap and cut in slices ½ to ¾ inch thick. Yield is about 50 pinwheels. Serve with salsa. These are really easy to carry to the picnic and slice onsite.



Gazpacho

This liquid salad is easy to transport in a thermos.

1 large tomato, peeled
1 large cucumber, peeled and halved
½ med. Onion, peeled
¼ green pepper (Optional)
2 (14-oz.) cans tomato juice
¼ cup salad oil
1/3 cup red wine vinegar
¼ tsp. Tabasco
1-1/2 tsp. Salt
1/8 tsp. Coarse ground black pepper

Accompaniments:

½ cucumber, chopped
½ med. Onion, chopped
1 avocado, chopped
¾ cup green pepper (optional)

In electric blender, combine tomato, half of the cucumber, the onion, green pepper and ½ cup tomato juice. Blend at high speed 30 seconds, to puree. In large bowl or pitcher, mix the pureed vegetables with remaining juice, oil, vinegar, Tabasco, salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled – 2 hours. Meanwhile, chop separately the half cucumber, onion, avocado, and if desired, green pepper. Put in separate Baggies and serve as accompaniments. Serve chilled in paper cups.

Cowboy Cookies

2 cups flour
1 tsp. Soda
½ tsp. Baking powder
½ tsp. Salt
1 cup shortening
1-cup sugar
1-cup brown sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. Vanilla
2 cups rolled oats
1 pkg. Chocolate chips
1-cup pecan, chopped

Sift together the flour, soda, baking powder and salt. Set aside. Cream together the shortening, sugars, eggs and vanilla until fluffy. Add the flour mixture and mix well. Add the oats and chips; then add pecans. Drop by teaspoonful onto greased cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

This recipe makes dozens and dozens and keeps well for a long time without freezing. Not only are the great for picnics but also they ship well to family away from home.

Make some deviled eggs, buy some fried chicken and head out for some family fun.

Until next time, enjoy.

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.

The deal for the biometric fingerprint device to operate your locks that I featured last month is still good for August. Think about just laying your finger on a pad that will quickly unlock doors or open your garage door. Ain't technology great! For information see <<http://www.ekeyusa.com>> and to order, e-mail <Hassan.Hares@ekeyUSA.com> or call (941) 782-1227. To get the 30% discount, use the password "dealsguy05."

The other announcement deals I featured last month are also still good for August. I had a great product ready for this month, but they could not put a deal together in time, so look for home building and remodeling software next month. I may also finally have a deal on the Dazzle 990, a great product. I'm having fun looking at the products. In their place, I'll include more announcements with a discount or free for user group members.

*Free Database

At this writing, InterSystems was still offering Cache, a post-relational database that uniquely combines advanced objects and high performance SQL, as a free download. They say that with Cache, no mapping is required between object and relational views of data, thus contributing savings in both development and processing time. Cache also incorporates a powerful Web application development environment that dramatically reduces the time to build and modify applications. To get your free download, the URL is <<http://www.intersystems.com/free>> and I hope it's still free. My description is from their ad and it appears that you do have to register for the download.

*How About a Free Toolbar!

The ToolbarBrowser is a new project supported by Trellian and is now available for download: <<http://www.toolbarbrowser.com>> The ToolbarBrowser is a Toolbar management tool and a complete Toolbar authoring system.

- **Imagine** if you could take just the features you want from the many toolbars you may have installed, and combine them into a single super toolbar.
- **Imagine** if you could manage dozens of separate toolbars in a single tab control.
- **Imagine** if you could write your own toolbars as easily as you write HTML pages, and share these with your friends, clients and web site visitors.
- **Imagine** if you could add new toolbars at a click of a button without having to install new software, and uninstall them just as easily.
- **Imagine** if you could write your own toolbars in XML, HTML, Java, JavaScript or even Flash.

We very much look forward to receiving your feedback, suggestions and comments and invite you to participate in the ToolbarBrowser developer forum: <<http://www.toolbarbrowser.com/forum>>

Adding Toolbars --- Once you have installed the ToolbarBrowser, visit our Toolbar Library to add new toolbars at a click of a button. <<http://www.toolbarbrowser.com/toolbar.htm>>

Standard Features --- In addition to being fully programmable and customizable, there are many standard toolbar features that include: Popup Blocking, Keyword Highlighting, Form AutoFill and more...

Advanced Authoring --- If you are a webmaster, one of the most powerful features is the ability to generate individual toolbars, customized to each visitor's needs or preferences. For example, if you have a financial web site, you could display real time stock quotes that are individually tailored to each user. There is virtually no limit to what you will be able to do. Cost? The ToolbarBrowser is freeware.

Best regards from the Trellian Team <<http://www.trellian.com>> Trellian Ltd.

*Pocket PC Safety! Edited Announcement.

Company: INFOTECs

ViPNet Safe Disk for Pocket PC: A bulletproof data security system for desktop computers is now available for your PDA. INFOTECs announces version 1.0 of ViPNet Safe Disk for Pocket PC. This application is designed for PDA owners who can now protect their personal information from prying eyes by encrypting and password-protecting their sensitive files. ViPNet Safe Disk for Pocket PC provides your PDA with a totally protected environment where data is stored encrypted and protected by a password even when your device is switched off, or in the "stand-by" mode. It allows you to create the so-called "containers". These are secure folders for confidential files, which are created in the memory on a PDA and mounted by ViPNet Safe Disk software. You can easily open and edit any file from a secure folder in a word processor or database program, the file being automatically decrypted when opened and encrypted when saved. The program supports two 256-encryption algorithms.

AES and GOST.

In case of emergency you can use the "panic" mode to de-mount all mounted "containers" and hide the main window of the program from view with one tap. Added to this is the ability to connect your PDA to a PC and exchange data, provided that ViPNet Safe Disk is installed on the desktop computer.

Product page link: <http://www.infotecs.biz/Soft/safe_diskppc.htm>

Direct download link: <http://www.infotecs.biz/demo/download_safedisk_ppc.htm>

E-mail: <novikov@infotecs.biz>



SCOTUS Slams File Sharing

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>

The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) heard argument on March 29, 2005, in a case styled MGM vs. Grokster. The Grokster case originated in the Ninth Circuit and pertains to file sharing and whether the companies that manufacture file-sharing software can be held liable for file sharing of copyrighted files. SCOTUS rendered its "slip opinion" on June 27, 2005. This article, because of time constraints, relies primarily on the language of the opinion. An analysis of the opinion will follow next month.

"Respondent companies distribute free software that allows computer users to share electronic files through peer-to-peer networks, so called because the computers communicate directly with each other, not through central servers. Although such networks can be used to share any type of digital file, recipients of respondents' software have mostly used them to share copyrighted music and video files without authorization. Seeking damages and an injunction, a group of movie studios and other copyright holders (hereinafter MGM) sued respondents for their users' copyright infringements, alleging that respondents knowingly and intentionally distributed their software to enable users to infringe copyrighted works in violation of the Copyright Act."

Discovery revealed that billions of files are shared across peer-to-peer networks each month. Respondents are aware that users employ their software primarily to download copyrighted files, although the decentralized networks do not reveal which files are copied, and when. Respondents have sometimes learned about the infringement directly when users have e-mailed questions regarding copyrighted works, and respondents have replied with guidance. Respondents are not merely passive recipients of information about infringement. The record is replete with evidence that when they began to distribute their free software, each of them clearly voiced the objective that recipients use the software to download copyrighted works and took active steps to encourage infringement. After the notorious file-sharing service, Napster, was sued by copyright holders for facilitating copyright infringement, both respondents promoted and marketed themselves as Napster alternatives. They receive no revenue from users, but, instead, generate income by selling advertising space, then streaming the advertising to their users. As the number of users increases, advertising opportunities are worth more. There is no evidence that either respondent made an effort to filter copyrighted material from users' downloads or otherwise to impede the sharing of copyrighted files.

While acknowledging that respondents' users had directly infringed MGM's copyrights, the District Court nonetheless granted respondents summary judgment as to liability arising from distribution of their software. The Ninth Circuit affirmed. It read *Sony Corp. of America v. Universal City Studios, Inc.*, 464 U. S. 417, as holding that the distribution of a commercial product capable of substantial non-infringing uses could not give rise to contributory liability for infringement unless the distributor had actual knowledge of specific instances of infringement and failed to act on that knowledge. Because the appeals court found respondents' software to be capable of substantial non-infringing uses and because respondents had no actual knowledge of infringement owing to the software's decentralized architecture, the court held that they were not liable. It also held that they did not materially contribute to their users' infringement because the users themselves searched

for, retrieved, and stored the infringing files, with no involvement by respondents beyond providing the software in the first place. Finally, the court held that respondents could not be held liable under a vicarious infringement theory because they did not monitor or control the software's use, had no agreed-upon right or current ability to supervise its use, and had no independent duty to police infringement.

Held: One who distributes a device with the object of promoting its use to infringe copyright, as shown by clear expression or other affirmative steps taken to foster infringement, going beyond mere distribution with knowledge of third-party action, is liable for the resulting acts of infringement by third parties using the device, regardless of the device's lawful uses.

(a) The tension between the competing values of supporting creativity through copyright protection and promoting technological innovation by limiting infringement liability is the subject of this case. Despite offsetting considerations, the argument for imposing indirect liability here is powerful, given the number of infringing downloads that occur daily using respondents' software. When a widely shared product is used to commit infringement, it may be impossible to enforce rights in the protected work effectively against all direct infringers, so that the only practical alternative is to go against the device's distributor for secondary liability on a theory of contributory or vicarious infringement. One infringes contributorily by intentionally inducing or encouraging direct infringement, and infringes vicariously by profiting from direct infringement while declining to exercise the right to stop or limit it. Although the Copyright Act does not expressly render anyone liable for another's infringement, these secondary liability doctrines emerged from common law principles and are well established in the law.

(b) Sony addressed a claim that secondary liability for infringement can arise from the very distribution of a commercial product. There, copyright holders sued Sony, the manufacturer of video-cassette recorders, claiming that it was contributorily liable for the infringement that occurred when VCR owners taped copyrighted programs. The evidence showed that the VCR's principal use was timeshifting, i.e., taping a program for later viewing at a more convenient time, which the Court found to be a fair, non-infringing use. Moreover, there was no evidence that Sony had desired to bring about taping in violation of copyright or taken active steps to increase its profits from unlawful taping. On those facts, the only conceivable basis for liability was on a theory of contributory infringement through distribution of a product. Because the VCR was capable of commercially significant non-infringing uses, the Court held that Sony was not liable. This theory reflected patent law's traditional staple article of commerce doctrine that distribution of a component of a patented device will not violate the patent if it is suitable for use in other ways. The doctrine absolves the equivocal conduct of selling an item with lawful and unlawful uses and limits liability to instances of more acute fault. In this case, the

Ninth Circuit misread Sony to mean that when a product is capable of substantial lawful use, the producer cannot be held contributorily liable for third parties' infringing use of it, even when an actual purpose to cause infringing use is shown, unless the distributors had specific knowledge of infringement at a time when they contributed to the infringement and failed to act upon that information. Sony did not displace other secondary liability theories.

(c) Nothing in Sony requires courts to ignore evidence of intent to promote infringement if such evidence exists. It was never meant to foreclose rules of fault-based liability derived from the common law. Where evidence goes beyond a product's characteristics or the knowledge that it may be put to infringing uses, and shows statements or actions directed to promoting infringement, Sony's staple-article rule will not preclude liability. At common law a copyright or patent defendant who not only expected but invoked infringing use by advertisement was liable for infringement. The rule on inducement of infringement as developed in the early cases is no different today. Evidence of active steps taken to encourage direct infringement, such as advertising an infringing use or instructing how to engage in an infringing use, shows an affirmative intent that the product be used to infringe, and overcomes the law's reluctance to find liability when a defendant merely sells a commercial product suitable for some lawful use. A rule that premises liability on purposeful, culpable expression and conduct does nothing to compromise legitimate commerce or discourage innovation having a lawful promise.

(d) On the record presented, respondents' unlawful objective is unmistakable. The classic instance of inducement is by advertisement or solicitation that broadcasts a message designed to stimu-

late others to commit violations. MGM argues persuasively that such a message is shown here. Three features of the evidence of intent are particularly notable. First, each of the respondents showed itself to be aiming to satisfy a known source of demand for copyright infringement, the market comprising former Napster users. Respondents' efforts to supply services to former Napster users indicate a principal, if not exclusive, intent to bring about infringement. Second, neither respondent attempted to develop filtering tools or other mechanisms to diminish the infringing activity using their software. While the Ninth Circuit treated that failure as irrelevant because respondents lacked an independent duty to monitor their users' activity, this evidence underscores their intentional facilitation of their users' infringement. Third, respondents make money by selling advertising space, then by directing ads to the screens of computers employing their software. The more their software is used, the more ads are sent out and the greater the advertising revenue. Since the extent of the software's use determines the gain to the distributors, the commercial sense of their enterprise turns on high-volume use, which the record shows is infringing. This evidence alone would not justify an inference of unlawful intent, but its import is clear in the entire record's context.

(e) In addition to intent to bring about infringement and distribution of a device suitable for infringing use, the inducement theory requires evidence of actual infringement by recipients of the device, the software in this case. There is evidence of such infringement on a gigantic scale. Because substantial evidence supports MGM on all elements, summary judgment for respondents was error. On remand, reconsideration of MGM's summary judgment motion will be in order.

[The order of the Ninth Circuit] is vacated and remanded.

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Freaky Search Results and Click Fraud

K. Joyce McDonald, Alamo PC

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I never imagined that I would actually read a non-fiction book about (yawn) economics, but recently one all but jumped off the shelf at me. The book was Steven Levitt's and Stephen Dubner's recent best seller, *Freakonomics*. When I got it home, it wouldn't let me put it down.

One chapter deals with the power of information and how that power has shifted from "expert" to "consumer" with the ascent of the Internet. An example described how Quotesmith.com caused a dramatic drop in the price of term life insurance by allowing the consumer to make easy comparisons from one company to another. Prior to the inception of Quotesmith, making comparisons was difficult because the economic incentives available to insurance agents favored keeping as much information as possible out of the hands of the consumer. With Quotesmith available, keeping information away from consumers (at least those who owned computers) was no longer possible. The economic incentive shifted toward offering the best price on term life insurance, thus brining in more Internet traffic.

By this example the authors introduced the staggering potential for the Internet to place information in the hands of the user. However, what if you're not looking for an insurance quote, a plane ticket or a good book at a good price? What if you don't want to buy anything at all? What if you just want information?

The authors did not address this issue, but it is something that concerns writers like me. I have heard that library usage has declined precipitously because the Internet is available to disseminate information; thus, a person can get anything available at the library by simply searching and clicking.

I'm wondering if the persons who make those claims have actually done library research. The steps involved in library research are simple. First, find a roomy, comfortable place in the library stacks and be prepared to spend some time there. Find the most recent copy of the "Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature". Flip through the current year's edition and the recent month supplements to find magazine and newspaper articles regarding your topic. Make note of the articles that sound interesting, and move on to the dusty stacks (or microfilm caches) to find the periodicals that contain the articles you want.

It was a tedious, time-consuming task that today's Internet could make lightning fast. Think of it. No commute to the library; no flipping through multiple copies of "The Reader's Guide"; no slog through the stacks. You input your search argument and references appear on your screen almost instantaneously. To read the article, click the citation and here it is. You can even search the article for references to pertinent terms.

What you didn't anticipate was wading through twenty seven thousand search results, only three of which are relevant. An advanced search might narrow it to about nine thousand search results, but it will probably eliminate two out of the three relevant hits.

Something that has mystified me for the better part of the last decade has been why, as the Internet grows and refines itself, is it now more difficult to find search results with any relevance. Certainly the tools with which we search and the standards that define website

metadata have improved astronomically during this time. Why haven't results kept up with these technological advantages?

In 1997 the likes of Travelocity or Orbitz, did not exist. Neither had Amazon and its imitators secured the Internet for commercial purposes. Web browsers were pretty useless, which is just as well, because the bandwidth required for Internet searches was difficult to come by without bringing a Graphic User Interface into the equation. One could, however, do a text search via the Unix command line. Using this technique, I was able to locate airlines that flew to Buenos Aires, Argentina, compare ticket prices and schedules and book a ticket. My search was fairly efficient, because I didn't have to deal with a lot of irrelevant search results or wait for a clicked site to load a flash presentation. The results that did come up were at least 90 per cent useful. And the information was made available with few expectations of making a profit from providing it.

How is it, then, that I had less trouble locating the names of airlines that fly to Argentina in 1997's Internet than I have on today's Internet searching for references for a book on Antarctica? Of course umpteenth-jillion more websites exist nowadays, but the sophistication of search algorithms is umpteenth-jillion times better, as is the bandwidth for returning the results. So why, if I search for "Antarctica" might I find on the first page of search results a reference whose blurb reads "You Don't Have to go to Antarctica for cooler drug prices"?

As I read *Freakonomics*, I began to formulate an answer to my longstanding question—In a word, incentives. A search engine such as Google is not inclined to simply give you information. Google makes its money by sending you to commercial sites, and commercial sites make their money when you buy something. The Internet was originally conceived as a research tool, but its primary mission has been diverted to the purpose of making money. If the Internet didn't make people money, it wouldn't have become the widespread phenomenon it is today. Still, something is lost for those who simply wish to exchange information honestly.

While I was pondering the issue of search irrelevance I came across an article in Wall Street Journal referring to "Click Fraud" (June 9, 2005: Delaney, Kevin, Web Start-Ups Vie to Detect "Click Fraud"). Since I had never heard the term, my first impression was that "Click Fraud" must be something like the reference to the irrelevant drug price article in my Antarctica search. I wasn't even close. It is the user, not the search engine that perpetrates "Click Fraud." To do this, the user deliberately clicks a paid advertisement that pops up during a search, the presumed intention being to run up the company's search ad bill, since advertisers pay for ads on the basis of how many "hits" they bring in. A new breed of companies had sprung up to deal with users who commit click fraud, primarily by tracking down the IP addresses of computers from which a user clicked a single search ad multiple times.

Since wiping out Click Fraud probably won't help me in my search for relevancy, maybe I'll try a search for "Prescription Drugs." It might just come up with some search results that refer to "Antarctica."



Wi-Fi Basics

Russell James, Alamo PC

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Preventive Maintenance

ALAMODE COLUMNS

High speed Internet access seems to have become the norm for most of us. I know when I have to use a modem for access I am amazed at how much time it takes for anything to happen. Can anyone else remember the 2400-baud modem? We thought that was fast when it came out and now I am griping about a 56000-baud connection. Amazing how fast we can get spoiled by technology.

Now the new rage is wireless technology. It is really a simple process to setup or even add to an existing network. By default, you should be able to plug a wireless router or access point in and connect your computers and browse the Internet without changing any settings. The problem is that this means that anyone parked in front of your house with a wireless card in a laptop can do the same thing.

Wi-Fi networks operate in the 2.4 and 5 GHz radio bands just like the cordless phones that most of us have become accustomed to. These radio technologies are called IEEE 802.11b, which connects at an 11 Mbps data rate and 802.11a and 802.11g, which connect at 54 Mbps. The signal will travel about the same distance for your wireless network as it would for a cordless phone. You can usually get a decent signal at about 150 feet inside a house or office. With direct line of site the typical range is about 500 feet. These distances can be increased with the use of directional antennas and repeaters.

As was mentioned earlier, this signal is available for anyone that can receive it by default. There is no encryption by default. If you choose to leave your wireless network in this state, you will run the risk of someone being able to get into your network. If you trust everyone that drives by your house or business, feel free to leave encryption turned off. If you are like most people who would prefer to have a lock on the door to keep the honest people honest and the dishonest people out, look into encryption as well as a few other changes that are needed to help lock the door to your network.

First let's look at some simple solutions to help to keep your network safe. The first item that you need to change is the password for your router. Anyone who is looking for a wireless network and sees the name Linksys listed will try admin as the password since that is how they all are shipped. Change the password as soon as you setup the router. Do not use the address or your first or last name since those would be too easy to guess.

The next item to change is the name of the SSID and turn the radio signal off. As long as you do not give it a name that is too simple, whoever is driving by will first need to know that you have a wireless network. Then they will have to guess the name of your SSID since the radio signal is now not broadcasting this information out. Then they will have to crack your encryption key. You have now given them more information that they will need to know to get into your system, which in turn will help to keep them out.

Now let's take a look at the choices that are available for encrypting the data that is being transferred from your access point to your wireless device. There are currently two available with the third slated for approval sometime in the second half of 2004.

The original and most common is call Wired Equivalent Privacy or WEP. This encryption is better than nothing but has been found to be fundamentally weak because it uses a static encryption key. Because of this, an attacker can easily crack WEP encryption by using hacking

tools that are freely available on the Internet. You would have to change the key on both the access point and the wireless device on a regular basis to help to insure the security of your network.

Wi-Fi Protected Access or WPA is the newest member on the block. It utilizes a setup password to secure the network. WPA also utilizes 128-bit encryption as well as dynamic session keys. This means that the passkey that is entered into your access point and your laptop is changed with every frame that is transmitted. This helps to insure that your network stays secure since the key that is being passed between the devices will be different with every packet and therefore will be harder to crack.

Wi-Fi access is not that difficult if you take the time to learn a little about the tools that are available. It could be that you will never have a problem without the encryption, the name change or turning the radio off. The question is, are you willing to take that chance with the data that is stored on your computers?

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Don't Get Hooked



Bruce Cramer, Alamo PC

A+, Network+, Microsoft Certified Professional (Windows XP). Bruce is retired from the Army. He is the owner/operator of PC Pro Computer Services <www.pcpro4u.com> where he provides in-home/on-site computer services. He is a regular at the Doctors Is In on Friday mornings, at the Learning Center and has never met a piece of malware that he couldn't get rid of. Bruce can be reached by e-mail at <service@pcpro4u.com>. See his ad for PC Pro Computer Services on page 39.

Stay away from those hooks; somebody is always phishing for you and your personal information. Phishing is defined as the act of sending an e-mail to a user falsely claiming to be an established, legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the user into surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft. The e-mail directs the user to visit a Web site where they are asked to update personal information, such as passwords and credit card, social security, and bank account numbers, that the legitimate organization already has. The website, however, is bogus and set up only to steal the user's information. Once the phisher has the information, you could become a victim of identity theft.

Phishing was almost unheard of a year ago but now it is a real and present danger. In a 2004 report by Garter Group, it is estimated that 57 million people had received online phishing attacks, costing banks and credit-card issuers over \$1.2 billion in 2003 alone.

How do they get your email address to begin with you ask? Phishing is a type of email spam and the spammers gather email addresses in a variety of ways, from email addresses being posted on websites, newsgroups or even by simply guessing. Yes guessing. They guess at the first part of popular email domains like _____@aol.com, or _____@sbcglobal.net, they fill in the blank. Phishing emails are not targeted at one person, hence the word phishing. Like the fisherman that throws out a hook hoping to get a bite, the phisher sends out a mass email to several email addresses hoping to get a bite, or as some might say, a sucker.

One sure way to tell if the email you received was from someone phishing is by the email asking to validate an account with an establishment that you don't even do business with. Obviously you are safe here since you have no private information to give. But with the proliferation of this nasty tactic you are likely to come upon a phishing email that claims to come from an establishment that you do business with, Washington Mutual, Capital One, eBay, PayPal. No one is immune from it. You can report phishing emails to the establishment that the emails claim to be from but there is not a lot that they can do about it. Spending time tracking these villains down is not really worth the time. Many of these emails come from off shore email servers so prosecution would not even be possible.

Besides your own common sense and some personal fortitude there are some software tools available to help thwart the phishing emails.

SpoofStick is a simple browser extension that helps users detect spoofed (fake) websites. A spoofed website is typically made to look like a well known, branded site (like ebay.com or citibank.com) with a slightly different or confusing URL. The attacker then tries to trick people into going to the spoofed site by sending out fake email messages or



posting links in public places - hoping that some percentage of users won't notice the incorrect URL and give away important information. SpoofStick only works with Windows XP and 2000. Another software company, Cloudmark makes a product called Anti-Fraud Toolbar. The Anti-Fraud Toolbar will rate any web page you go to while surfing the Internet to help you identify its credibility. If you click on a link to a harmful web page that contains spyware, viruses, worms, identity theft or phishing attacks the Cloudmark anti-fraud toolbar will detect the URL as being "Unsafe" and will block that page from viewing. If you are using a web mail client Cloudmark anti-fraud toolbar will block any "Unsafe" pages from viewing that your web mail provider's anti-spam solution hasn't caught.

The Anti-Phishing Working Group has a website at <<http://www.antiphishing.org/>> that can provide you some useful information to help you stay out of the phisher's traps. You can report phishing emails to <reportphishing@antiphishing.org> and they will put the reported email into an archive where people can look at the phishing email to compare it with a suspected one to verify that it is bogus.

Be suspicious of any email asking you to verify private data such as a passwords and credit card numbers. Be safe and happy computing.



Advergames, Updates and Flickr

Collected by Pim Borman,

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

Advergames

The latest skirmish in the battle between Web advertisers and ad blockers is being won by the ad agencies. As ad blocking is becoming more successful, on the Web as well as on TV, more and more ads are made part of the content. And as more and more young men spend less time watching television and more time playing online games, embedding ads in those games is rapidly increasing. In TV sports programs it is already common practice to display virtual ads in the background that are inserted in the picture with clever editing programs. The same technique can be used with online sports games. Interestingly, ads for actual products are preferred to artificial simulations by most players as being more realistic. By requiring players to state their zip codes, the ads can even be focused on local or regional businesses. This technique only works with online games and is not applicable to the vast majority of gaming consoles.

From inserting ads in existing games it is only a small step for an advertising agency to create a game, advertising and all, from scratch. Such advergames can be downloaded on to PCs or played within Web browsers. Being generally less sophisticated, they actually have a broader appeal to casual game players. An early example of such an advergaming was "America's Army," a shoot-'em-up game released in 2002 as a recruiting tool. At present it has over 5 million registered players and about 100,000 people download the game for free every month. A more peaceful game, "Food Force" by the UN World Food Program, is intended to raise awareness of global hunger. Dodge has a game, "Race the Pros," involving a hyperrealistic racing simulation. The race track is lined with virtual billboards of dealers close to the player (who must state his zip code).

Advergaming can be created relatively cheaply and be posted on the Internet for years. In comparison, a TV ad lasts 30 seconds and may cost half a million dollars or more. And there is no way to block the advertising content in a game. Action games appeal especially to the teens and young adults preferentially targeted by advertisers. No wonder that the advertising industry is steadily increasing investment in the games. (Based on an article in *The Economist*, 6/11/2005, with thanks to Louis Ritz).

Updates

Earlier this week (middle of June as I write this) Microsoft issued a set of major updates for Windows XP and Internet Explorer. If you use these programs make sure you got the updates. After I installed them I received another notice the next evening, seemingly for the same updates. I went ahead with the update for the second time, just for good measure.

About the same time I received notification from Dell that there was a new version of their Dell Support help program that keeps an eye on the applications in my Dell laptop and corrects or updates them where needed. In for a penny, in for a pound, so I told Dell to go ahead and install the new program, version 3. It promptly popped up a message that Internet Explorer was not set up to provide optimum security. After I gave permission, Dell graphically showed me what adjustments it was making in IE 6. Next Dell popped up to tell me that the new Microsoft updates I just downloaded might cause an obscure problem displaying RTF formatted files in Internet Explorer, and that MS had a patch available. This time Dell connected me to a Microsoft page to download yet another patch. With all

the patches and updates Internet Explorer is getting to be unmanageable. Glad Dell tries to help – I need all the help I can get!

When I logged on to the Webmail page of Sigecom, my Internet Service Provider, I found the following surprising message: If you experience the error "Session Timeout after 60 minutes" upon initial login with Internet Explorer, please try downloading and installing Mozilla Firefox Web Browser: <<http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/>>.

It doesn't look too good for Microsoft if ISPs advise their users to switch to Firefox. I long since switched to Firefox, so it doesn't affect me.

While we are on the subject of updates, Ad-Aware SE has a major update involving the way it detects adware. Lately Ad-Aware has gone down in the ratings versus other spyware fighters, so maybe this update brings them back up to par. Years ago I paid for the Plus version (\$25) that not only detects spyware on your system, but also stops it before it can install itself. I am still receiving updates and the latest upgrade without having to pay a renewal fee. Find out more about Ad-Aware at <<http://www.lavasoft.com>>.

Flickr

Flickr is a free photo-sharing program recently acquired by Yahoo. I heard about it in connection with our recent discussions of blogging. Flickr makes it easy to post photos to just about any blog (LiveJournal, Blogger, Moveable Type, Typepad, Manila, you name it!). In fact, by adding a comment to the photo, you can send a complete blog to your favorite blogging site.

Flickr provides a good way to share pictures from a vacation or a special event with friends and relatives without sending huge attachments via email to every one of them. You can rearrange your photos to form albums and join with others to form group collections. The program is still in beta version and lacks many of the functions currently available in Google's Picasa. Yahoo has moved Flickr from Canada to California and is providing better facilities. New features can't be far behind!



Win9x/Me/XP Computer tips & tricks Preventative Maintenance Part III

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.

This article has several tips to help you keep your computer free of problems. For example, if you have doubts about the effectiveness of your firewall, test it on the Internet. There are two sites that will probe your firewall for weaknesses. A good firewall will make your computer invisible. The two sites are ShieldsUp! and Broadband's Scan. You'll find them at, respectively: <<http://grc.com/x/ne.dll?rh1dkyd2>> and <<http://www.dsreports.com/scan>>.

Flat-panel Monitor

Some people have a problem when they view type on a flat-panel monitor. A process called "Anti-aliasing" is used to smooth the edges of type. Microsoft recognized the problem. It includes in WinXP a feature called ClearType. It can make the type on your flat-panel much more readable. The improvement may also be worthwhile on a Cathode-ray Tube (CRT). To access ClearType, press the Windows key and the letter "d" to go to the desktop. Right-click anywhere on an empty area of the desktop, click Properties, select the Appearance tab, and click Effects. Next check the box marked "Use the following method to smooth edges of screen fonts." In the dropdown box, choose ClearType. ClearType has to be fine-tuned. You can do that on Microsoft's Web site <<http://www.microsoft.com/typography/cleartype/tuner/1.htm>>. The site gives examples of type from which you must choose to meet your needs. Displays vary slightly among monitors, and selecting the type that looks best is an easy way to match ClearType to your monitor. To select the type, click the one that looks best to you. People using Win98/ME should be sure they have enabled the font-smoothing feature. To use it, right-click on the Desktop and from the pop-up menu, select Properties, click the Effects tab, and check the box next to "Smooth edges of screen fonts."

Hard Drive Scrub

If for some reason you either want to sell, give, throw away, or just completely clean your hard drive of all data, Hard Disk Scrub <www.summitcn.com/download.html> is free and it will rid your computer of all the sensitive files.

Hard Drive Space

You can use the Windows and Macs pie chart to determine the percentage of used/free space on your computer. When you want more detail, in Windows, open up each folder in Windows Explorer and right-click on the folder's name. From the pop-up menu, select Properties. To uncover the culprits taking up the most space on your hard drive, there are some free programs that will get the job done for you. "DirGraph" provides a graphical view of the space used by the files and folders inside your computer. You can see things in percentages or by the actual space used by those files/folders. It allows you to navigate around this view. You can zoom in to see greater detail and zoom out to see the bigger picture. It works with Win98/ME/2000/XP. You will find it at <<http://www.spillett.net/dirgraph/>>. Another program that does the same thing is "SpaceMonger" <<http://www.werkema.com/software/spacemonger.html>>. If using a Mac, a program called "DiskSurveyor" <<http://twilightsw.com/DiskSurveyor>> will help you uncover the hard drive space culprits.

Image-Recovery Tools

This tip will be of help to computer users who have lost files to virus, human error, etc. For files lost using memory cards, <<http://www.langa.com/newsletters/2004/2004-05-31.htm#5>> may be of help to you.

At <<http://www.softwarepatch.com/tips/howto>>, you will find computer tips, precautions, and download links. There's a free "Digital Image Recovery" tool at <http://www.z-a-recovery.com/digital_image_recovery.htm>. From the Zero Assumption website, "Zero Assumption Digital Image Recovery" is a freeware data recovery tool, specifically designed to work with digital images. It allows you to recover digital photos accidentally deleted from digital camera memory. It recovers these formats: GIF, JPEG, TIFF, CRW-Canon RAW data, MOV-QuickTime movie, WAV-Waveform audio. For recovering accidentally deleted photos from removable media, use "PC Inspector," a suite of free utilities from Convar. Smart Recovery is designed for removable media like flash cards. There is also a file recovery version there for physical drives at <http://www.pcinspector.de/smart_media_recovery/uk/welcome.htm>.

Malicious Programs

In WinXP, you can find out who's talking to whom by clicking Start, Run. Enter "cmd" (without the quotes) and click OK. At the command prompt, enter "netstat -no" (without the quotes). You'll get a list of active network connections, including the process identifier (PID) of programs on your computer that are running at that time. Make note of all that information and then click Ctrl+Alt+Del to open the Windows Security window, click Task Manager, and select the Processes tab. You can identify the PIDs there. If the PID column is not shown, click View, select Columns, and check PID, the second choice in the first column. Many obscure, legitimate processes, including a number from Windows, are listed in Task Manager. If you don't recognize the name, check it at the WinTasks Process Library or look it up in Google. Those sites are, respectively: <www.liutilities.com/products/wintaskspro/processlibrary/> and <www.google.com>. If the running program is malicious, update your anti-virus software. If you can't get rid of it, check the anti-virus sites for specialized programs. You can get them from McAfee, Symantec, and Panda, among others. Those sites are, respectively: <<http://us.mcafee.com/default.asp>>, <www.symantec.com>, and <www.pandasoftware.com>.

Malicious Software Removal Tool

Microsoft (MS) has developed security software. Microsoft's "Malicious Software Removal Tool" scans your computer for the most prevalent virus strains and removes them from the

computer. If your computer is set to WinXP's Automatic Update feature to automatically download and install updates, you've probably downloaded and used this tool with knowing it. If you don't have it, go to this software's home page <www.microsoft.com/security/malwareremove/default.msps>, click "Skip The Details And Run The Tool." Next click "Check My PC For Infection" and then click "I Agree to accept the license agreement" and click Continue. If you can't get this tool to work via the Web, click "Try Downloading The Tool Directly From The Microsoft.com Download Center" and click the Download button, and then Save. Now choose a location on your computer and click Save again. Find the downloaded file on your computer and double-click to install it. Users can now download the company's new "Malicious Software Removal Tool" at www.microsoft.com/malwareremove for free. It's essentially an amalgamation of several of MS' malware-removal solutions which attack dangerous viruses. You can also download MS' new "Anti-Spyware software for free at www.microsoft.com/spyware. This program targets slow computer performance, pop-up ads, unwanted changes to Internet settings, and unauthorized use of private information. Both of these tools will be updated on the second Tuesday of each month as are all of MS' monthly security updates.

Memory Space

To determine how much free space is on your computer, open My Computer, right-click the hard drive, and click Properties. Your information is on the General tab. But, to find the source of what's taking up space on your hard drive, download the DirGraph 1.3.5 Disc Usage Analyzer at <<http://www.spillett.net/dirgraph/#dni>>. It's free and provides a graphical view of your files and folders.

To print out a list of folders and files in Windows Explorer, you will need to use PrintFolder 1.2, from No Nonsense Software at <<http://no-nonsense-software.com/download.html>>. You can also test your memory without tearing apart your computer. Download and install DocMemory at <www.simmtester.com/PAGE/products/doc/docinfo.asp>. This free program is designed to capture all possible memory failures in your PC.

Modem Speed

If you are using a 56K modem and wonder if it is responsible for a slow connection, there are several checks you can make which may improve its performance. 1. Check the Web site of your modem manufacturer. There may be an updated driver available. If so, download and install it. 2. Ask the telephone company to check your line for noise. If it is not clean, it could be slowing the modem's signals. Be especially suspicious if you hear static when you're using the phone. 3. Be sure the modem is set to the proper speed. In WinXP, click Start, Control Panel, double-click Phone and Modem Options, select the Modems tab, click Properties, select the Modem tab, and set the maximum speed to 115200. On Win98/ME, click Start, Settings, Control Panel and double-click Modems. On the General tab, click Properties and set Maximum speed to 115200. Lastly, you should recognize that 56K modems can run no faster than 53K, because of phone line regulations. You'll rarely, if ever, see that speed. These modems almost always run under 50K, and may run less than 40K, despite your best efforts.

Memory Check

If you are having computer problems, perhaps they stem from bad memory. Memory is probably the most troublesome thing on a computer. Checking memory has always been difficult. Most shops simply swap out suspect memory with a good one. Since few individuals have a spare stick of memory. Microsoft

has come up with a software utility that will check your computer's memory.

Download and install it to a CD or floppy, and you're ready to go. It's free at the link below: <<http://oca.microsoft.com/en/windiag.asp>>

MsConfig

The Microsoft System Configuration Utility (MSConfig) tells Windows what programs to start on bootup. When Windows slows down, these programs are prime suspects. They eat up memory resources. To see what is running when Windows boots, click Start, Run, enter msconfig, and click OK. Select the Startup tab and clear anything you don't think you need in this window. It's difficult to know what needs to stay and what doesn't. Enter the name of a program at the following site to find out what it's used for at <www.sysinfo.org/>. If you still don't recognize the file names, check them at: <http://www.pacs-portal.co.uk/startup_pages/startup_full.php> or <www.answers-thatwork.com>. Win98/ME include programs needed by Windows in MSConfig, thus you should check before you clear anything more your computer. WinXP does not include critical services in MSConfig. For Win2000 users, you don't have MSConfig, but you can get something like it. Learn more at: <http://www.komando.com/tips_show.asp?showID=3920>

Microsoft's Service Pack 2 has updates that include security fixes and new features. The service packs are very large, which is a problem for people who download over a dial-up connection. Microsoft has made the service packs available free of charge on CDs. You can order yours right online at <<http://snipurl.com/officepackCD>>. SBC and Yahoo! has determined that some users will experience changes after loading Service Pack 2 when using the customized SBC Yahoo! Browser, Parental Controls, SBC Yahoo! Web mail, and Instant Messenger. SBC and Yahoo! have prepared an update for these software components that you should load to ensure compatibility with Service Pack 2. You can copy and paste the URL <<http://download.yahoo.com/dl/sbc/yxpsp2fix.exe>> into your browser to download the software update. In addition, if using a firewall on your XP computer, you will need to go to the firewall manufacturer's website and load any software updates it provides for Service Pack 2. You can find information and web-links for the major firewall companies at: Zone Alarm: <<http://www.zonelabs.com>>; Norton Personal Firewall: <<http://www.symantec.com/techsupp/sp2/faq.html>>; and McAfee Personal Firewall Plus: <http://www.secureie.com/c/002/firewall2004/firewall2004_02.asp?source=goog&keyword=firewall&>.

If you experience changes with other software on your computer, check the software manufacturer's website for information regarding Service Pack 2 software updates. You can refer to the SBC Yahoo! Help Site <<http://help.sbcglobal.net>> for more details on WinXP Service Pack 2 and SBC Yahoo! software updates that are available for your computer. If you want to know more about the WinXP Service Pack 2 update, refer to the Microsoft site at <<http://support.microsoft.com/windowsxp/sp2>> or call 1.888.SP2.HELP (1.888.772.4357). If you need additional help with SBC Yahoo!, refer to the SBC Yahoo! Help Site at <<http://help.sbcglobal.net>>.



CompanyWeb

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

Microsoft Small Business Server 2003 comes with a new Intranet feature, the CompanyWeb. This is an internal web site based on the new WSS (Windows SharePoint Services) that is available with Windows Server 2003. The CompanyWeb is configured as the start page for client browsers in a Small Business Server network so that users can quickly access it whenever they start their Internet browser.

The address for the CompanyWeb is simply `<http://companyweb>`. You don't have to put 'www' in front of it nor '.com' at the end. When you start CompanyWeb you will see it is divided into three sections. The center section automatically contains a list of announcements. You can use this to alert members of your company to happenings in the company, specials you might be running, warnings of things to be on the look out for, etc. When you add a new announcement, you can specify an expiration date so that the announcement will disappear from the Home page of the CompanyWeb after that date. You can add other sections here as well if you like. I like to add an Events section to list upcoming events by date. These also have an expiration date by default. You can use this to put in reminders for upcoming meetings or even parties.

The right section includes the Windows SharePoint Services logo by default. You can change this to your company logo, a picture, or whatever you like. You can also change the theme of your CompanyWeb to give it a jazzier look. Check out www.LentzComputer.net/SBS. The right side comes with a 'Links' section where you can list popular or important web sites and services. It comes pre-configured with a link to take you to Outlook Web Access to allow you to read your e-mail using the web e-mail client. As you can see from my CompanyWeb, I've added links to other local web sites as well, including my Microsoft CRM application. This can make it handy for users to gain quick access to frequently used web sites that are important to your business.

On the left side is where all the 'beef' is. In previous versions of Small Business Server, a Company folder was automatically placed on each user's desktop. This was a folder on the server where documents that were used by everyone in the company could be stored and available to all. The Company folder is now history, replaced by the CompanyWeb document libraries. Windows SharePoint Services can be used as a document management system. You will notice there is a section called Documents and under that are several selections called Libraries. You can add all the Libraries you want and call them what you want. Here you can store company documents where all appropriate employees can access them. A nice feature is that documents can be 'Checked Out' by users who are in the process of updating them. This way, others though they may be able to read the documents, will not be able to update them. This keeps several people from making changes to the same document at the same time and losing all the changes except those by the one who saved last. You can also create a 'Workspace' for documents (and just about everything else).

A workspace is a special web site where users can share information about a document, meeting, etc.

You may also notice the 'Incoming Faxes' library. Small Business Server has a built in fax service that can send and receive faxes. Faxes that are received by SBS can be sent to any of four destinations: E-mailed to a given user; Sent to a printer; Stored in a shared folder; and Sent to the Incoming Faxes library of your CompanyWeb. This way all the users in your company can access them if desired. Of course you can also delete the junk faxes.

The 'Help Desk' is a nice sample feature that shows another way the CompanyWeb can be used. Initially expected to be a place users can post issues they may be having with their computers or their systems, this can be modified (or you can add a new one) to be a forum for resolving all kinds of issues.

By the way, if you are using it as a computer support help desk, how do your computer support folks know you've posted something? Easy! Every section and library of SharePoint allows users to set an Alert that will send that user an e-mail notification when something changes. The notifications can be configured to be sent immediately or you can receive just a daily or weekly summary.

The 'Vacation Calendar' is really a handy corporate calendar. Here you can post events like meetings and such for all to see. You can also post the vacation schedules for the company employees so all will know when someone is to be gone. As mentioned earlier, you can create a workspace web site for a meeting. Here you can include sections for your agenda, attendees, objectives, documents, etc. This can be very useful in organizing your meetings. As you can see in Figure 2, you can have multiple workspaces for recurring events like weekly staff meetings. The calendar can also be linked to Outlook so you can view it there as well.

There are many more features such as discussion forums and surveys that come stock. You can also add other 'Web Parts' to add additional features like news and weather, forms libraries, and much, much more. If you are running Small Business Server 2003, check out your CompanyWeb. If not, get it!

News Brief

Paralyzed man controls his PC and TV using thought alone

Cybernetics - the fusion of human beings and technology - is helping one paralyzed man control his environment by connecting his brain to his PC. Quadriplegic ex-American football player Matthew Nagle is using a system that converts his thoughts into actions on a computer. Nagle's brain is connected to his computer by the BrainGate system, which thought impulses using a sensor implanted in the motor cortex of his brain. Now, neuroscientists monitoring his progress hope he will soon be able to use the system to control other devices including electric wheelchairs.



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Is Linux truly the budget alternative to Windows?

Shane Hicks, (certified certifiable)

Shane uses a PC. He wants someone to show him how to get work done with Linux. E-mail him at <shane@vpwn.com.>

I think I'm open to new things. Linux is gaining in popularity on the desktop and starting a move to the server. So, if I can bring a client a Linux-based solution, as functional and efficient as a Windows based solution, saving them money in the process—why not? But I'm not one to blindly follow trends. I decided to review available research, avoiding Microsoft-sponsored evaluations.

After finding several Microsoft-sponsored studies evaluating total cost of ownership (TCO) of Windows vs. Linux, The Yankee Group/Sunbelt Software performed an independent research study published in March of 2004.

The cost to replace Microsoft

Linux appears to be low cost. Many Linux distributions are FREE, and finding a retail version between \$20 and \$100 is certainly more palatable than the equivalent Microsoft OS (operating system) at over \$300. Add the office productivity suites, with the most popular Linux solution (Star Office) selling for \$40, compared to Microsoft Office between \$200 and \$400 per copy. On the server side, research shows that a Sun Solaris solution can cost up to three times as much as Linux, and Windows servers cost at least twice as much. Licensing for businesses, such as database applications, show a staggering difference when compared to a rollout of an Oracle solution at \$5,000 to \$10,000.

However, the Yankee study made some good points: "Linux is most assuredly not free...a fact that corporations now begin to realize." All of the major Linux vendors and distributors including Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Novell and Red Hat "have begun charging hefty premiums for must-have items like technical service and support, product warranties and licensing indemnification."

And there are other costs. The biggest issues are support and training, which are required for administrators as well as users. This can amount to a substantial sum of money depending on the number of individuals in a particular organization.

"And in large enterprises, a significant Linux deployment or total switch from Windows to Linux, would be three to four times more expensive and take three times as long to deploy as an upgrade from one version of Windows to newer Windows releases," the study found. The study also found that despite the stories of companies reevaluating Windows as a result of security concerns or other issues, most large enterprises will stick with their current Windows (or Unix) operating systems and not switch to Linux.

Linux's reliability advantage

One major claim from the Linux camp is the OS's incredible reliability, which provides reduced maintenance costs and concerns for administrators and users alike. Studies based upon relatively small implementations of Linux, as web servers and such, demonstrated that Linux servers run for months

without rebooting once set up. But, to date, Linux's reliability remains untested with more complex applications running on higher-end solutions (this is according to the Gartner group for IT research). Their examples point to the fact that only a few enterprise resource planning (ERP) and customer relationship management (CRM) solutions are offered on Linux at this time.

The Yankee group surveyed over 1,000 IT administrators and executives. Laura DiDio, the senior researcher and primary analyst, stated, "Corporate customers report Linux does indeed provide businesses with excellent performance, reliability, ease of use and security." But "hype notwithstanding, Linux' technical merits while first-rate, are equivalent but not superior to Unix and Windows Server 2003."

The Results

Their results: "Linux provides smaller companies with customized vertical applications or who have no legacy networks with better TCO than Windows.... [but] for the vast majority of customers, and especially those that are already Windows shops, Windows still offers better TCO value." Most Linux installations from this study come in at the price of mid-range Unix systems, which are not as cheap as Windows. Within 24 months, the Yankee Group projects that businesses will expend as much time, money, and resources securing their Linux systems and servers as they now devote to Windows security.

For more information on Windows versus Linux, check out the following website: <www.microsoft.com/getthefacts>.

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The Switcher



...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac Intel Inside?

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

At its Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC) on June 6, 2005, Apple announced plans to incorporate Intel processors into its Macintosh computers by June 2006, and to transition all of its Macs to Intel by the end of 2007. Apple even demonstrated Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger running on a Pentium 4 computer. This announcement may seem shocking to Mac loyalists, but Apple is clearly disappointed with the progress IBM's made with the PowerPC. Steve Jobs promised 3GHz G5s in 2003 and Apple still hasn't made a G5-based PowerBook. Steve stated: "Our goal is to provide our customers with the best personal computers in the world, and looking ahead Intel has the strongest processor roadmap by far."

When I first read the announcement, I read it as the death of Apple computers. I mean, isn't Intel the enemy? Hasn't Apple tried to convince us we're computing "differently" and that we shouldn't equate a 2GHz PowerMac G5 against a 2GHz Pentium 4?

It's still true that processors can't be compared entirely on megahertz. There are many pieces incorporated into the processor and they all combine to produce a level of performance. Even certain Intel processors can't be compared simply by processor speed. From Steve's remarks, Apple clearly feels that Intel's chips have the best "growth path," and with Intel's advances in chip technology, Apple is no longer bashing them. One Mac insider points to a positive aspect to the shift: "having Apple use Intel chips will eliminate the ability for PC users to use the gigahertz of a Mac's processor against them."

So, what will keep Macintosh computers special? Apple is only replacing the "brains" of the system, most likely the processor and motherboard combination. If they still make a great hardware infrastructure to support the new platform, there'll still be a difference between using a Mac and using a PC. The reason I initially paid for a Mac laptop was because the screen, keyboard, and expansion ports (i.e., USB 2.0 and Firewire 800) were superior to any other laptop on the market. While I'm not too fond of the G5 case due to my perception that it has a lack of expandability, the PowerMac G4 cases were sweet! For a general user, I even think the design of the Mac Mini and the iMac are pretty cool. So, Apple can still differentiate themselves through better total design, as long as they avoid becoming another DELL or Gateway.

Will this mean cheaper Macs? It might. With certain aspects of production falling to Intel, the processor giant, production costs may go down. However, most don't expect Apple to fall into the budget PC category that many PC-clone makers are pursuing.

I initially felt Apple faced a major hurdle in re-writing Mac OS X for the Intel platform. Imagine my surprise to learn Apple's already created an Intel version of every version of Mac OS X to date!

My next concern becomes: Will Windows run on an Intel-based Mac? Probably. So, what keeps users from abandoning OS X for mainstream Microsoft? From a user perspective, Mac OS X will look exactly the same. It will continue to rely on a different code base than Microsoft's offerings, which means Mac users

will still be able to avoid the deluge of viruses and spyware that PC users endure. Mac OS X can continue to be an appealing alternative for PC users based on its ease of use and its handling of digital photos, movies, the Web, and e-mail.

Can we now run Mac OS X on any PC? Apple's intent is for Mac OS to only run on their hardware. They claim there'll be some sort of protection in place that prevents running OS X on basic PC hardware. But if the OS is Intel compatible, I won't be surprised to see some enterprising hacker producing a "patch" that allows such a system to run.

The final piece of the puzzle will be application compatibility with the new version of the Mac OS. Apple's new "Universal Binary" code will allow developers to deliver software that contains both Intel and PowerPC versions, where the computer will use the right code for the processor it has. Apple also announced a new technology, Rosetta, that'll run PowerPC Mac programs on Intel-based Macs. Third party developers, including Microsoft and Adobe, have already announced support of the transition following Jobs' announcement. Software availability is entirely in the hands of software development companies.

I'll still have mixed emotions seeing an Intel Inside sticker on my Mac, but perhaps it isn't the death of Apple as I thought. Maybe Intel is needed to breathe new life into the line. Time will tell.



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CSS - II

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 month we continue our exploration of Cascading Style Sheets by making a simple external style sheet, linking to it, and beginning to learn the syntax for creating rules.

Your external style sheet can be constructed in Notepad, just as you can write your HTML code in Notepad. You will save it with a file extension .css. So open up notepad and type or copy this:

`/* style1.css – my first style sheet */`

`body { margin-left: 100px; margin-right: 40%; color: brown; background: "#CBC67E" }`

`H1 { font-family: Arial; font-size: 300%; color: FFFFFF; text-align: center; text-transform: uppercase }`

Save the file as test1.css.

Now that we have a style sheet, let's use it. Create a separate, simple Web page that includes at least one paragraph of text, with at least one line tagged as H1.

Now, insert this line into your Web page's head tag, right before the title tag:

`<link type="text/css" rel="stylesheet" href="test1.css">`

Make sure that the style sheet and the html document are in the same directory. Look at your Web page to see what the style sheet does!

Let's deconstruct what we have here:

`/* style1.css – my first style sheet */`

This is a comment. The `/* . . . */` serves a similar function to `<!-- --!>` in HTML. It doesn't show up on the screen or do anything except act as a reminder/documentation. Your notes might say something like "this is the style sheet with the pink background that I use on the 2nd level of the wid-get site." You can put in as many comments as you want, wherever you want them. It's a good practice to help keep things straight.

`body {margin-left: 100px; margin-right: 40%; color: brown; background: "#CBC67E" font-size: 12pt}`

Now we are starting to define some rules, but let's start by defining some of the language we will be using. In the above example the element body is called the selector. This is what the rules will be applied to. Margin-right, color, etc. are called properties. Brown, 100px, 40% are called values.

Note the format. We start and end with a curly paren. Then a space, a property, followed by a colon, a space, the value for the element, a semicolon and a space. Then repeat with the next rule. Got that?

These are the rules for body, and since body is the top level parent, most of the rules we set here will be inherited by everything on the page unless we override them by giving a child (such as `<P>`) different rules.

The first two rules set the right and left margins; we can also follow this same format for margin-bottom and margin-top. Margins can be set as pixels (margin-left in this example will indent the text 100 pixels in from the left) or as percentages (here, 40% in from the right.) This margin property is an important one. HTML does not let us set margins with this level of precision.

The next rule, color, is the color of the text, then background color for the entire screen. Note that colors can be expressed either as words or as RGB values. Also note the "" when the RGB value is used.

Finally, we set the value for the text size at 12pt. Unlike in HTML, there are many options for setting font size.

We can use a unit of measurement: px (pixel); pt (point); pc (pica (a pica is 12 points)); em (for practical purposes, the same at pt, although technically the em size is the width of the letter M in a font); ex (think of it as a half em; it is the height of the letter x); in (inches); mm (millimeters) and cm (centimeters).

Or, we can use an absolute size: xx-small; x-small; small; medium; large; x-large and xx-large. The format for this is `P { font-size: x-small }` We can use a relative size: larger or smaller. This will change it one level from the parent object.

Finally, we can use a percentage. We'll see how that works in the next example.

`H1 { font-family: Arial, sans-serif; font-size: 300%; color: FFFFFF; text-align: center; text-transform: uppercase }`

Now we are setting the rules for H1, headline level 1.

The first rule is for the font-family, which is the same as font face in HTML. As in HTML, the font has to be installed on the user's machine, so it's a good idea to offer a generic alternative, in this example, sans-serif, which will be employed if your first choice is unavailable. The other generics you can use are serif (like Times); monospaced (like Courier); cursive (like Zapf-Chancery) and fantasy (like Western or Impact).

The next rule is for the font size. It's set as 300%, which means three times as big as the parent font, which is 12pt (we set that in the body, remember? If we hadn't, it would be 3x the default size) or 36pt.

We've already covered color; I made H1 white. Next is text-align: the options are left, right, center or justify.

The last property is text-transform. Here I made it all uppercase; even if it was typed in lower case, it will appear on the screen in all caps. The other options are lowercase and capitalize, which will make the first letter of each word a capital letter. You can also specify text-transform: none, which will remove any transformations that were inherited from the parent.

I was curious about H1's relationship to H2, H3,, etc. Are they considered children? If I set the values for H1, do they descend to H2, suitable smaller? The answer is no.

However, I can group a bunch of elements together if they share some values. Here's an example:

H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 { font-family: Arial, sans-serif; color: FFFFFFFF; text-align: center; text-transform: uppercase}

H1 { font-size: 300% }

H2 { font size: 250% }

H3 { font size: 200%; text-transform: capitalize} etc.

The common properties – font-family, color, alignment, etc. – are specified as a group. Then, I listed each one individually to specify the differences. In H3, capitalize overrides uppercase in the rule above it. Values listed higher upper are superceded by values further down on the list.

Your assignment this month is to play around with CSS – if you want more properties to fiddle with, there's a list at <www.w3.org/TR/REC-CSS1>.

Next month we will explore some more rules, learn how to use DIV, SPAN and classes, and begin to learn about some advanced layout rules.

News Brief

Digitally Enhanced Photos May Be "Too Good"

Kacie Powell, a photographer for Centre College in Danville, Ky., tried to get some digital photo shots printed at Wal-Mart, but employees said they looked "too professional." She ended up signing an affidavit that included pictures of college employees who were authorized to print her pictures. When a colleague whose portrait was included among the authorized photographers went to Wal-Mart with some candid shots from graduation, she got turned down too.. Photo Labs, fearful of being sued by professional photographers, are in a tough spot: should they anger their customers or risk a lawsuit? Don't be surprised if your digitally enhanced personal photos are turned down by WalMart and other fast-photo labs.

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



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Dreamweaver MX 2004

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 >.

If you are building web sites and are not a code junkie than you probably want to use a program that will allow you to build the pages in a graphical manner. By this I mean working as you would in a page layout program like Adobe InDesign or QuarkXpress. Macromedia Dreamweaver is by far the choice of professionals in this field. This month I'm taking a look at Macromedia's Studio MX 2004, which includes not only the aforementioned Dreamweaver, but Fireworks, Flash and Freehand as well.

First an overview. Dreamweaver is a program for graphically assembling web pages. Fireworks is an image-editing program similar to Adobe Photoshop and ImageReady. Flash is a vector animation program that can be used for web and video animations as well as complete web pages, dynamic applications and games. Freehand is a vector illustration program that can do double duty as a page layout application. Studio MX 2004 features a tighter integration between the component applications than in the previous version.

Studio MX 2004 is a complete web-authoring package. Everything you need is right here. You can layout a site map in Freehand and export the drawings to web pages for client approval. You can then design the site in either Freehand or Fireworks. Freehand exports easily to Flash so you do not have to recreate assets for animations or web pages. Fireworks allows you to slice up your design and transfer all or select parts of it to Dreamweaver.

Dreamweaver is the star of this suite (Fig 1). The app features Macromedia's Roundtrip HTML technology. This means that you can bounce back and forth between code and design view while maintaining high-quality code. Dreamweaver gives you everything you need to work on a site by yourself or collaboratively. Users can check in or out of a site to avoid the mistake of overwriting files that have already been updated. Dreamweaver is compatible with major application server technologies for building dynamic sites. Macromedia includes their own ColdFusion MX 6.1 Developer Edition, but it will also work with ASP, ASP.NET, JSP and PHP.

Dreamweaver MX 2004 adds enhanced support for Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). CSS properties are easier to edit (Fig. 2) and you can see visual representations of styles in the Style pop-up in the Properties panel. You can now copy and paste from Microsoft Word and Excel while preserving fonts, colors and CSS styles. Dreamweaver also now automatically checks for cross-browser compatibility issues. You can specify which browsers you want to support and Dreamweaver will check the tags and CSS for you.

Several image-editing features that you would previously need to use in Fireworks or Photoshop for are now integrated into Dreamweaver's Image Editing toolbar (Fig. 3). Cropping, resizing, sharpening and brightness/contrast adjustments are easier than ever. If that is not enough, you can edit an image directly in Fireworks and then simply click the Done button to save and return to Dreamweaver. Editing a Flash object works the same way, and like in the previous version, you can create Flash text and buttons directly in Dreamweaver without even having to know a thing about Flash!



Figure 1

Fireworks MX 2004 adds several new features, the best of which is a generous speed increase. Fireworks MX was wickedly slow, especially with larger images, but this new version feels much peppier with Macromedia claiming it is as much as 85% faster. The Check-In/Check-Out features of Dreamweaver have been migrated to Fireworks further leveraging the workgroup potential of the package. Text anti-aliasing has also been improved.

With any new version of a graphics program you want to try out the cool new effects and Fireworks delivers on this front. Take a look at the new Contour Gradients, Replace Color and Red Eye Removal tools. New Live Effects include Linear, Radial and Zoom Blurs. These are not just filters like in Photoshop; a Live Effect can be turned off or on and is non-destructive to the image. The new Smart Shapes (Fig. 4) are a great time-saver; the bent arrow's curve can be modified, the circle can be easily divided into pie sections.

Flash now comes in two flavors: Flash MX 2004 and Flash MX Professional 2004. Flash is a very powerful application. On the surface it is simply an animation program, and a very good one at that, being able to control video and audio clips. But Flash also features database connectivity and the powerful ActionScript programming language. The Flash browser plug-in has been widely adopted with over 515 million installed clients and is now installed automatically with most browsers.

Flash's core vector animation is very well suited to the web. Complex animations can be created while maintaining a very small file size. Vector animations are also scalable so they can look good on any size screen. This new version even allows you to share a CSS style sheet with Dreamweaver for a consistent look throughout your site.

The Professional version gives developers more control over interactive applications. Forms are easier to build and implement, connecting to data sources for dynamic content can be accomplished with minimal scripting and advanced prebuilt components can be data bound making it easier to display that data in your final project.

While it is the oldest of the Macromedia's applications, Freehand is the red-headed stepchild of the package. Freehand MX (not MX 2004) is a great illustration program, but it has limited interoperability with the other apps. There is no great inherent benefit to using Freehand (over, say, Adobe Illustrator or Corel Draw!) to build or design objects for your site. That said however, it is a robust tool. I have been using Freehand since version 3.1 (Freehand MX is version 11) and I recommend it highly.

Macromedia Studio MX 2004 lists for \$899 with upgrades starting at \$399. Studio MX 2004 with Flash Professional will run you an extra c-note. You will need to have Windows 98 SE, 2000 or XP or Mac OS X 10.2.6 or higher, at minimum a 600 Mhz Pentium III or 500 Mhz PowerPC G3 processor, 256 MB RAM (512 MB is recommended) and 800 MB of free drive space. Macromedia Studio MX 2004 is a fantastic integrated web development suite and is highly recommended for anyone wanting to make a professional presence on the Web.

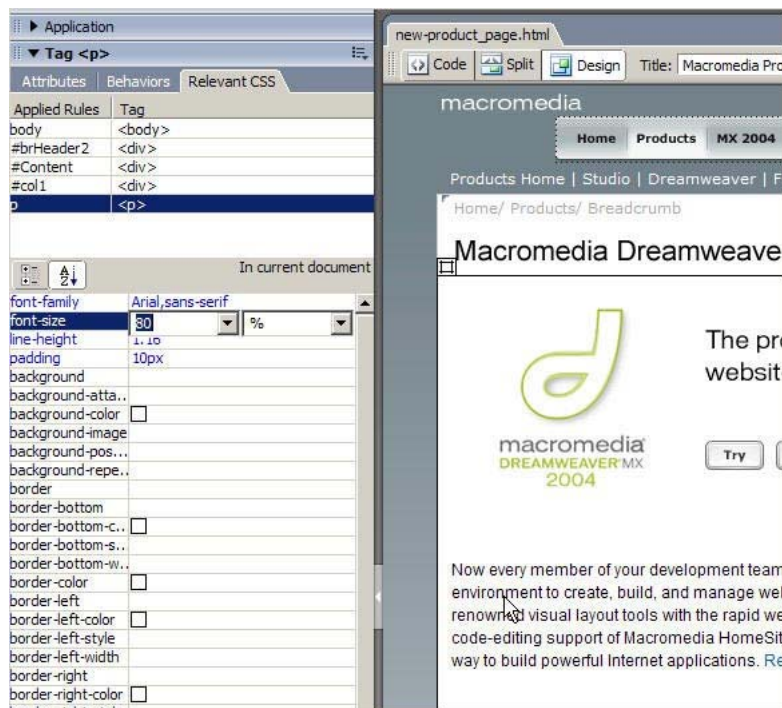


Figure 2

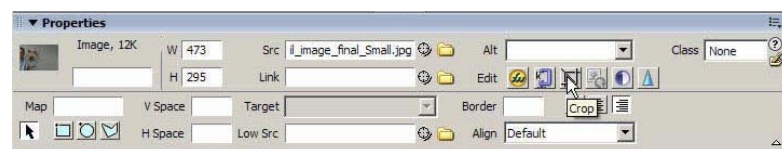


Figure 3

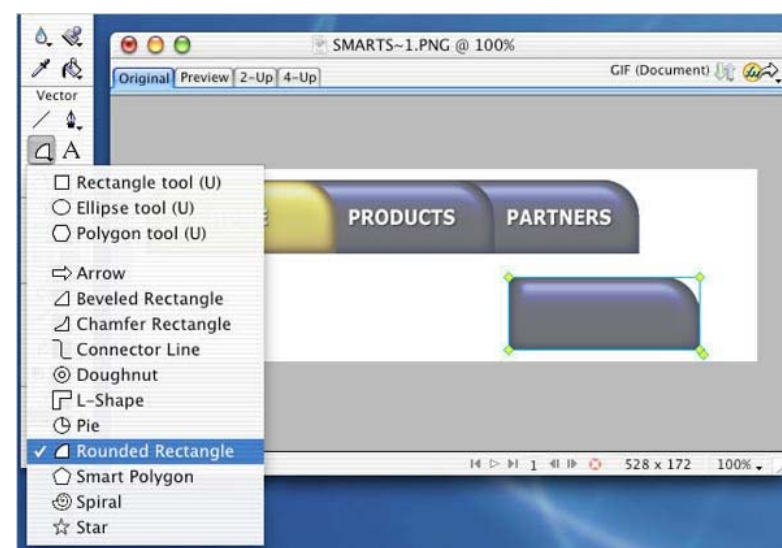


Figure 4

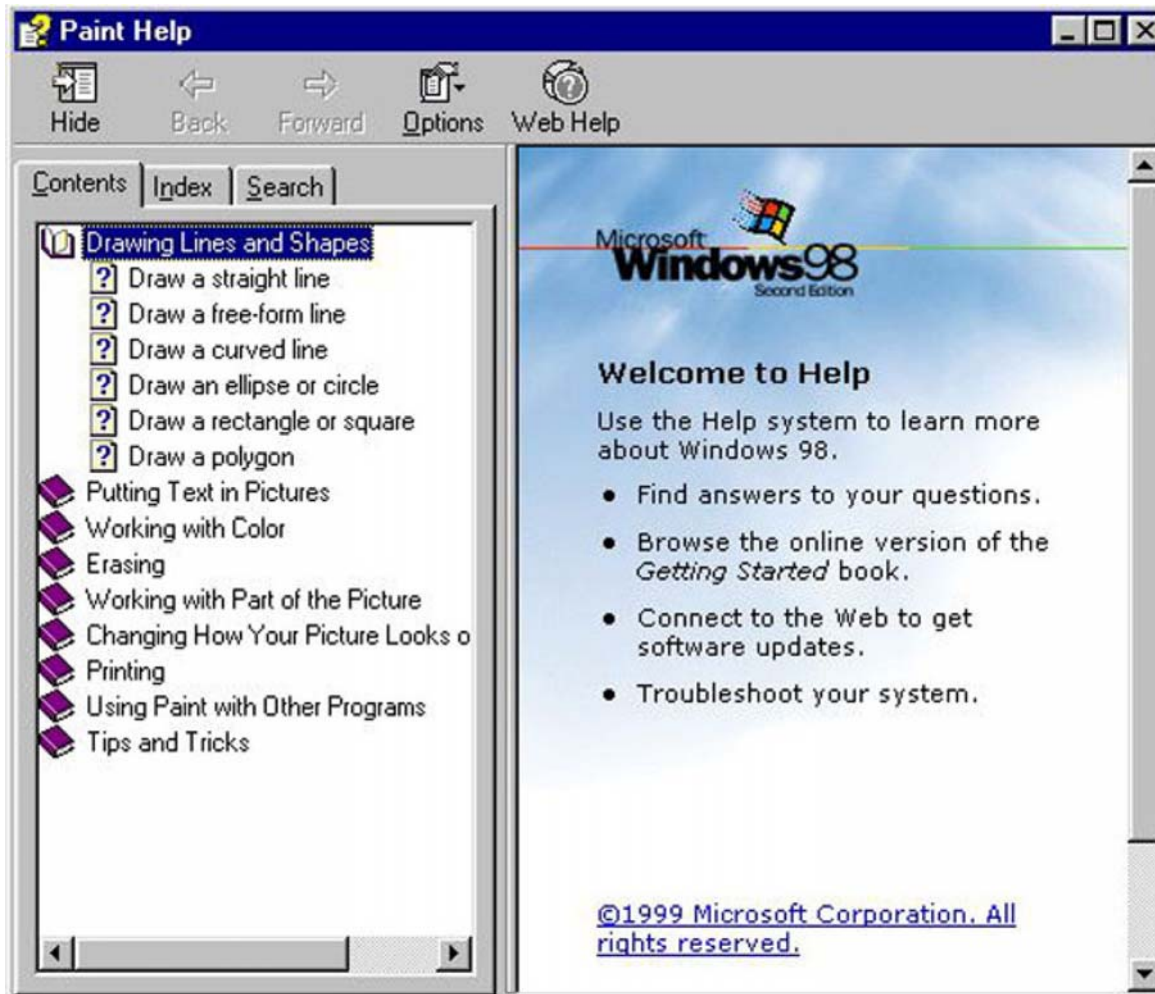


Windows Accessories "Paint"

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 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.

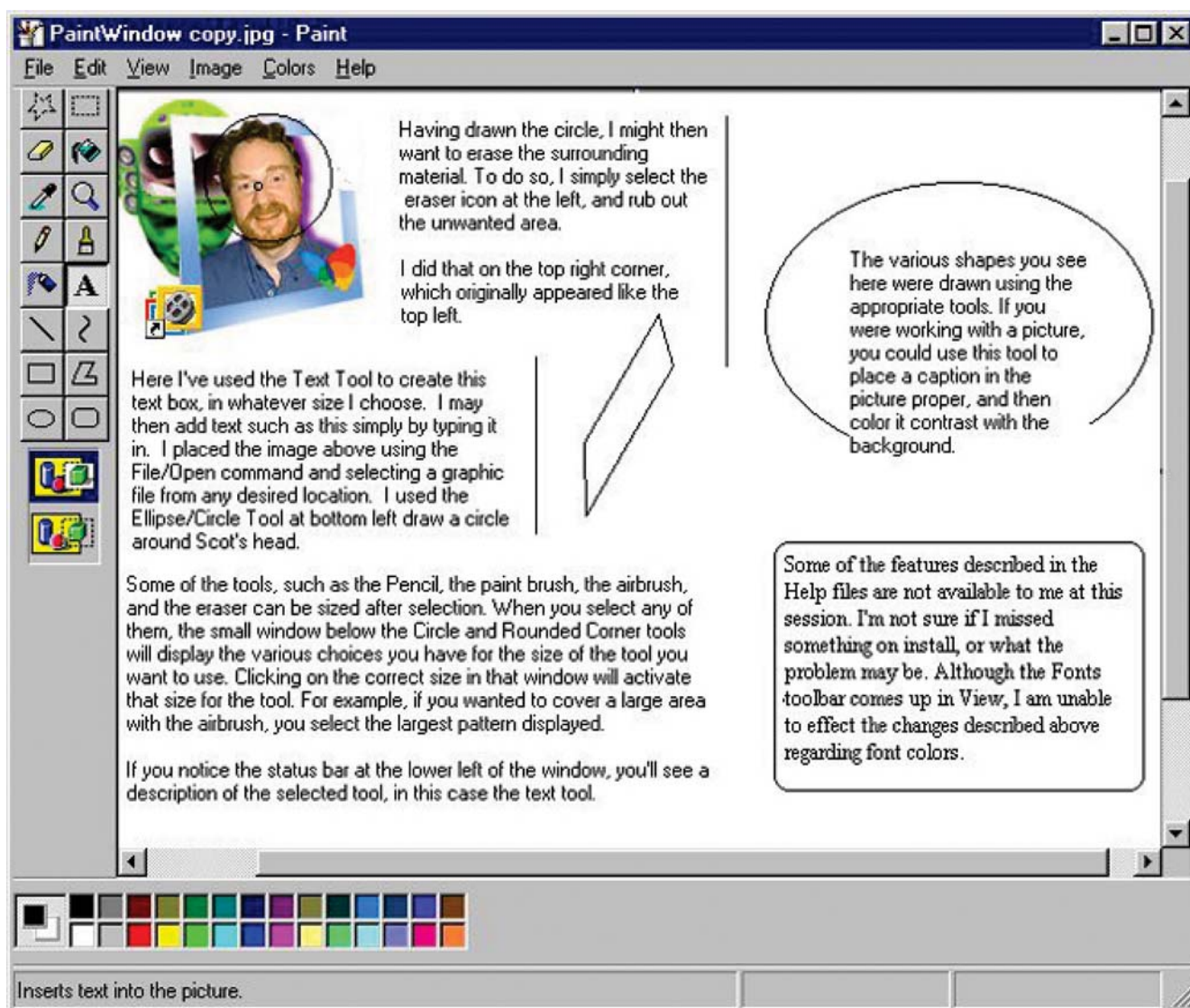
I tried in the window on page 31 to demonstrate some of the uses of the various tools available in the Toolbox. Some of those can be seen as the vertical lines, using the Line Tool, the polygon done with the Polygon Tool. The Oval and Rounded Corner Rectangle were done with the respective tools. Each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

A book I picked up recently, titled “How Would You Move Mt. Fuji”, describes Microsoft’s employment candidate interviewing techniques. Software companies are often hiring developers right out of school, and the cost of a bad decision can be huge. Among their interviewing tactics is to present the candidate with puzzles. This helps identify a candidate’s ‘depth of context’: their ability to see beyond the ‘obvious’ or most immediately recallable answer, and recognize what might be more a significant meaning or outcome.

They would also asked to ‘design’ something, such as a spice rack for blind people, or a microwave oven controlled by computer. The hapless candidate might remark that they weren’t going to leave frozen food in a microwave all day, simply to have it wake up at 5:15 and make dinner for whomever arrives home at 5:30. Often such interviews ended on a sour note, even though the candidate was probably correct in identifying this product idea, as described, as pretty pointless.

If you are applying for work at Microsoft, you might have more success with the following response:

A microwave oven is a component in a suite of appliances in a kitchen, so the relevant question is not how do you interconnect a microwave, but how do you automate a kitchen. Clearly the microwave does nothing for salads or fresh fruit. Presumably, we intend to improve on the commercial equivalent of MREs, food that could be left in an Egyptian tomb for 3000 years and still be ‘edible’.

The kitchen components begin with various stores, which are a combination of cold storage, dry storage, and one or more freezers (we’ll leave the lobster tank out of the scenario for the moment). These ‘feed’ a collection of cutters, mixers, peelers, skimmers, and so forth that handle the ‘first round’ of processing. These are often labor intensive components of food preparation.

Some foods, such a bread, marinating meat, and pinto beans, may need to sit for awhile before anything more is done. Typically this is done in pans or bowls, with or without covers.

After another round of mixing, separating, sprinkling, etc. some components are cooked, primarily meats, vegetables, and some cereals. Tea and coffee also go through high-temperature cycles, even though the eventual result may be a cold beverage.

Following the cooking, there is again a round of cutting, and then migration from preparation vessels to serving vessels. These are then circulated to the family and/or guests.

After dinner, the appliances need to be self cleaning, so much of the ‘work’ in the system is still to be done. The various appliances, tools, pans, trays, etc. are treated with specific cleaning regimens that are targeted to their makeup, function, and residue.

In certain respects this system looks like a model train set, where supplies are dispensed from ‘warehouses’, deposited in various stations, processed, moved to other stations and processed again. In some cases, the tools are what move around; those that are needed are visible, the remainder remain ‘retracted’.

This system would obviously need to be run by computer. There would be several layers to the user interface, most of which would be accessed through a browser. One layer is menu composition, where the day’s dishes are specified, along with their serving sizes. In some cases the menu is prepared in advance and ‘triggered’ by a command, in other cases once the menu is defined the user activates the processing cycle immediately.

Another layer is the inventory, which includes the usual staples such as flour, cooking oil, and potatoes, but also the fresh produce and meat that have limited shelf lives. The user combines the expected menu with the existing inventories, whatever is missing makes up the shopping list, which may be expanded to handle snacks, household items, etc.

Then there is the recipe set, containing the procedures for cooking each of the separate dishes. Some of these ‘cross-feed’, if the pan drippings are used to make gravy, for example.

And there will be a ‘diagnostics’ screen set, both for configuration the collection of appliances within the particular household and procedures for exercising and testing each unit. The results from these may dictate repair or replacement of certain units.

Any number of people would look on this entire creation in horror, thinking that the kitchen is the place where the family congregates for daily doses of hugs, cookies, parental bonding, and message exchange. The idea of it becoming a robotic factory is blasphemy.

As such, it probably makes more sense build something like this for commercial kitchens, such as mess halls, student unions, and restaurants. A homeowner might spend as much on such a kitchen as they would on the rest of the house, which is a shame when half of all meals in the US now are eaten outside the home.

Since a drive down any major thoroughfare shows ‘help wanted’ signs on many restaurants, this idea is ripe for exploitation.

Our ‘burger flippers’ could become robot techs, with (perhaps) a corresponding rise in effective pay.

And so on....

Now lets say that you interview with Microsoft and they hire you based on this design session. Lets say that you get stock options after working there for a length of time, and you are actually able to cash them in for \$1 million. If all those things happen based on what you read here :

YOU OWE ME, BIG TIME!

Scrapbooking

Hobby/Craft Rescues Baby Boomer Memories

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

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

As a baby boomer, I'm hardly unusual in having a large box of photographs in my closet. Also likely common is my photos' diversity: fading Polaroid baby pictures, travel shots, family gathering commemorations, images of people and places I can't identify, some professional photography, and quite a lot of etc. In addition, I have a few photo albums -- created when my parents thought I was cute and when I worked to record and remember vacations.

But the years have generated a lot of unorganized pictures, and I'm falling further behind in making sense of them. Worse, the photographs suffer from improper storage: being folded, fading, cracking, sticking together. Even the ones supposedly preserved in albums are being damaged by invisible hazards.

An antidote to my generation's mistreating photographs and neglecting family histories may be "scrapbooking". This inclusive term can mean anything from arranging pictures in scrapbooks (what albums are called when they contain pictures) to using computers. Whether high- or low-tech, it includes rescuing pictures from hostile environments. Old-style photo albums with adhesive corners or sticky pages can damage pictures. Scrapbookers use acid-free archival-quality paper and supplies (photo-safe adhesives and pens), aiming to produce material that lasts for generations.

Some people come to scrapbooking with organized materials, with pictures already sorted and documented. Others are in my camp, with a chaotic and ever-growing stash of family snapshots. Either way -- and especially if starting from scratch -- there's a fleeting opportunity for this, as memories and generations are lost.

I'm told that most scrapbookers are women, many of whom start as girls, assembling books about friends and activities, then continue as young mothers recording their children's growth, and as grandmothers making scrapbooks about their extended and extending families. But technology also draws men into the hobby, especially with improving capabilities and lowering costs of digital equipment such as scanners, cameras, and printers. Pixifun's [<http://pexagontech.com/pixifun/>] child- and budget-friendly kits for creating keyrings/magnets/stickers/badges/CDs include software and parts for creating instant photo keepsakes.

Scrapbookers develop unique styles and personalities, matching goals and resources available. Some keep things simple, using pictures, decorations, and a little labeling to tell visual stories. These scrapbooks are great for documenting oral history and reminiscing. They can follow themes such as genealogy, school events, family milestones, travel, etc. Beyond pictures, scrapbooks can contain anything meaningful, such as mementos, postcards, clippings, cartoons, tickets, etc. This can be supplemented by decorations made with tools such as circle-cutout tools, edge scissors, and lettering stencil templates; accessories including colored and patterned pages, border trims, themed stick-ons; and stamped images. Some enjoy feeling connected to the past by producing final works from physical memorabilia rather than working with images.

Scrapbookers call telling a narrative story "journaling", finding this a way to create meaningful and long-lasting collections. Examples are keeping chronological scrapbooks of and for family and children, and creating time-capsules for events such as the new millennium. Pages can combine photos, captions, and decorative material so that each tells a visually appealing story. Alternatively, some people build pages with

single images surrounded by cutouts, stickers, decals, lace, etc. -- less interested in telling a story than creating a picture. There's no rulebook, no single right way to scrapbook!

Scrapbooks can be wonderful gifts, conveying connections and feelings beyond those of any store bought gift. A dedicated scrapbooker I know is happy that her children will be able to leave home with their own history books.

Higher-tech approaches include using a digital camera or scanning original images into computer files, using photo-editing software to improve their visual characteristics or create effects such as the antique look, creating photo-montages blending multiple scenes, and producing "scrapbooks" on printed pages, CDs, or the Web. This technique protects precious -- and often fragile -- records, while allowing viewing and handling easily recreated digital replicas. And we've all seen "mini-scrapbooks" produced by technology: photo collages used as family holiday cards. Digital technology lends itself to producing multiple scrapbook copies -- for wedding guests, for example, or even as commercial ventures.

Techno-scrapbookers often use Adobe [www.adobe.com] Photoshop Elements and Photoshop software products; the vendor features kid- and adult-friendly tutorials. Click the link and search for "scrapbook". Other popular software includes Corel photo products [www.corel.com], Macromedia Dreamweaver [www.macromedia.com], and Pinnacle Systems Studio 8 [www.pinnaclesys.com]. As photo capture/editing/printing demands increase, so do hardware requirements. One 20-year veteran scrapbooker

suggests a flatbed scanner with minimum 600 ppi (pixels per inch) without interpolation; a slide scanner for negatives and slides; 80 GB hard drive; 512 MB RAM or more; high-end graphics card with expandable non-shared memory; CD/DVD burner and minimum P4 processor. She uses a multimedia PC, digital camera, and camcorder to go beyond photo basics, adding design touches like antique finish and repairing defects such as tears and scratches.

Useful resource sites are Scrapbooking Top50 [www.scrapbookingtop50.com], Stamping Top50 [www.stampingtop50.com], and Digital Scrapbooking [www.digitalscrapbookplace.com]. Stores frequently mentioned are Michael's and Craft Country.

People discover scrapbooking by accident or design -- some take classes at community colleges or recreation departments, others discover commercial sites such as Creative Memories [www.creativememories.com] or see friends' scrapbooks. Whether your taste runs to scissors or scanner, paper album or CD, narrative or decorative scrapbooks -- get out those picture boxes and preserve those memories!



It seems like everyone wants to learn more and more about computers. If you want to be more like a “techie” read on. Three sections cover lots of ground for the geek wanna-be. Start with operating systems to understand more about what controls your computer. Next read about some cool hardware issues. Round it all about by understanding help/support issues. Now your on your way to be a real “techie”!

News Brief

No IE7 for Win 2K

According to an unnamed employee, Microsoft will not be releasing IE 7 for Windows 2000 as this would involve a lot of work for an operating system that is in the later stages of its lifecycle and some of the security work in IE 7 relies on operating system functionality in XP SP2. Win 2K users argue that Microsoft is committed to provide extended support to Windows 2000 through 2010. Microsoft was also criticized for building a Web browser that cannot run independently of the operating system. IE 7 will be available in beta this summer, offering improved security features, basic tabbed browsing and improved standards support, including support for CSS 2 and PNG transparencies.

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.

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Help! My Computer Is Down and I Can't Get It Up

by Ira Wilsker, APCUG BOD
and columnist for the
Examiner, Beaumont, TX



I am embarrassed to say this, but I had a major problem with my computer recently. It would only boot to a blue screen that said that it had a problem, and Windows XP stopped to prevent any damage, and gave an error code. It said to uninstall any recent programs or hardware, and recommended starting in safe mode. This can happen to anyone at any time, and has happened to me before. Most of the time, a simple power-off then reboot will resolve the problem, as these blue screens are often itinerant, and may not recur, and a simple reboot may rectify the problem. I turned the power off, waited a few seconds, powered on, and attempted to reboot, and that discouraging blue screen reappeared, instead of my desktop. I rebooted again, and selected safe mode, allowing the computer to fully boot in that manner. As designed, since many drivers and programs do not load when booted into safe mode, it loaded normally. Usually, when I had this problem in the past, exiting from safe mode, and rebooting generally rebooted the computer properly, and I could do my work. Not this time, the computer was being stubborn; now I could better sympathize with some of the callers on my show who express frustrations, and even state that their computer hates them.

I went into safe mode again, and uninstalled the Microsoft Critical Update I had downloaded and installed the previous evening. Confident that this was the problem, as there are often such complaints posted online after every critical update, I was sure that this would resolve itself, and my computer would then reboot normally. Feeling twangs of anger, my computer rebooted into the now familiar blue screen of boot failure.

While approaching despair, I knew that all was not lost because the previous evening I had performed an incremental backup (only new or changed files since the previous backup are saved) to my external hard drive, so I was certain that all of my critical data could easily be restored if that option became necessary. Still the frustration of being unable to boot the computer was mounting. Fortunately, in addition to a very current backup which could be restored as a last resort, there are other less stressful and viable options to overcome whatever was creating my problem.

Windows XP and ME have a not very well known feature "System Restore" as an integral function. Ideally, the system restore function should take a snapshot of critical system files and settings at each successful boot, and prior to any major changes. I have been certain to make sure that my system restore is always functioning, and also manually create another restore point prior to making any changes in software, registry, or other critical items. It is important to note that those people who leave their computers on 24 hours, may not have new restore points periodically created automatically by the system, making it quite possible that a restore may not use the most up to date information. System restore can be located in XP at Start – Programs – Accessories – System Tools – System Restore.

When opened, two choices will be presented: create a restore point, or restore the computer to an earlier date. By default, unless intentionally changed, XP will save restore information until 12% of the hard drive is used for that purpose. Once the limit is reached, older restore points are deleted using "FIFO" (first in, first out). Other than a few minutes of time, it almost never hurts to create a restore point, unless the hard drive

is approaching capacity. Many users are not aware if there has been a recent restore point created, and it is easy to find out by opening the system restore function, and clicking on "Restore the Computer to an Earlier Time". A calendar will appear, and dates that contain restore points will be in bold. Clicking on a date will show the restore points

created on that date. To restore the computer to that time, click on the date and time desired, and the automated process will run, rebooting the computer upon completion, and making the computer as it was at that date.

Once created, restore points cannot easily be modified, which may create problems if an unknown virus or Trojan is infecting the computer. When this happens, the virus or Trojan is saved along with the requisite necessary data. If such a restore point is selected, then the malware is restored along with the desired data, re-infecting the computer. This is a surprisingly common way of re-infecting a computer after antivirus software deletes active threats.

A system restore function is not included with Windows 95, 98, NT, or 2000, but there is an excellent alternative, that also works well with ME and XP. WinRescue, available at www.superwin.com, creates a separate registry backup each time the computer is booted. With WinRescue, the system registry can be easily restored if problems occur.

Now I have to get back to work, and restore my computer.



GOOD MOUSEKEEPING

the seal of approval for computer tips

Most of you know that you can close the active window with the key strokes ALT + F4. But the desktop is also a window and you can use the same keystrokes to quickly shut down Windows:

Click any open space on the desktop, and make sure no icons are selected. Press ALT + F4. Release both. When the shutdown dialog box pops up, press enter.

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

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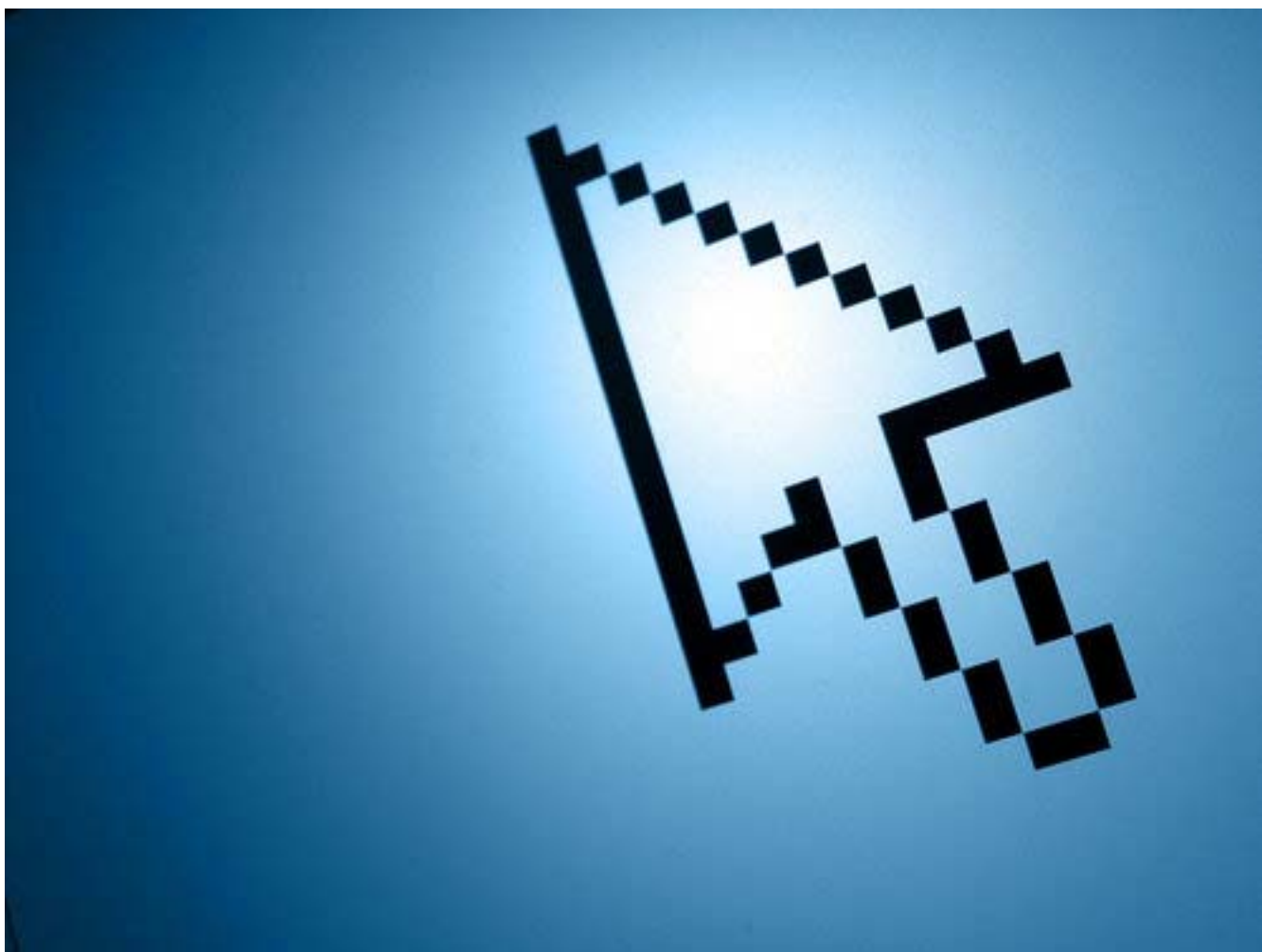
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Classes starting every few weeks.
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Small Classes with hands on training.

We hope to "empower" our Seniors to be
active participants in the information age.

Windows: Better Safe (Mode) Than Sorry

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



Though the Windows operating system isn't usually dangerous, it includes a special "Safe Mode". This is a handy way to boot a PC to investigate and fix problems. You may have read advice about when to use this, and even how to run it. But scarce and fragmented Safe Mode information can make it sound more exotic than it is.

Windows XP books' indexes provided surprisingly few entries for "Safe Mode". I found the best coverage in two O'Reilly books [www.oreilly.com], "Windows XP Pro: The Missing Manual" and "Windows XP Home Edition: The Missing Manual". Naturally, Google found a gazillion hits. But they're mostly "just the facts" writeups targeting people who already know "what" and "why" and just need "how" information. So this article provides background for this built-in Windows facility.

Over the years, as it became more powerful and reliable, Windows grew significantly from its slender 1992-era Version 3.1 self. There's no free lunch; learning new tricks required more software. But that complexity gets in the way when problems occur. Just as doctors rarely diagnose patients through heavy winter coats, Windows needs to shed layers to expose problems' causes.

Safe Mode slims Windows down, only loading and running specific pieces needed for basic operation. So your video display looks strange in Safe Mode because Windows doesn't load the monitor's specific driver program. This lets you recover from problems caused by buggy drivers you may have just installed. There are other restrictions: you likely can't get online and may not be able to print. But Safe Mode lets you perform tests, fix problems, and install/uninstall programs.

If you think your PC may have a virus or spyware, it's worth installing the antidote in Safe Mode, since some malware prevents installing anti-virus software. If installed anti-virus software can't remove a virus, Safe Mode may let it succeed. (Some experts recommend always running virus/spyware scans under Windows in Safe Mode.) If defragmenting your hard drive <www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/howto/Articles/a2004-06-16-defrag.html>

never finishes, Safe Mode may remove programs that keep interrupting it. And it lets you erase files that Windows normally says are in use (though only do this when you're sure what you're doing).

Windows XP defines two kinds of user accounts: "administrator" and "limited". An administrator can install/remove software, change settings, etc., while a limited user can only run programs and use facilities. Even if only one account is defined, a secret companion called Administrator is available. Booting in Safe Mode lets you access this account, handy when normal accounts won't work -- for example, uninstalling software that doesn't want to leave.

Enter Safe Mode by repeatedly pressing F8 as your PC boots, just after BIOS information displays; then select Safe Mode from the options list. Leaving Safe Mode is simple -- just reboot via the Start button and your usual procedure; Windows will return looking normal again, not holding a grudge for being run in diagnostic Mode.

Here's an important point: It's worth practicing booting into Safe Mode when you're relaxed and your PC is working properly. Consider running a PC in Safe Mode to be like starting your car's engine with the hood up at a service station. It's routine; there's nothing alarming about it. But just as you wouldn't want to open the hood for the first time (Where *is* that latch release?) when something is wrong with your car, you shouldn't first use Safe Mode when you're already worried about a PC problem.

And a PS: It's sometimes hard picking between a dozen competing books on a topic. A helpful technique for evaluating choices is searching for a few topics -- like Safe Mode -- in the books' indexes and judging them on coverage.



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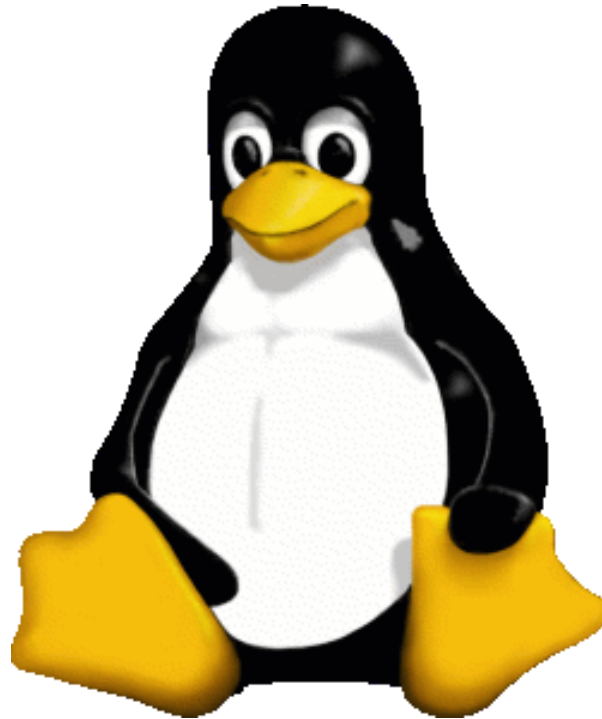
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News Brief

Man vs. SuperComputer

Michael Adams, United Kingdom's strongest chess player, is the latest player to take on a supercomputer. Adams and the Hydra computer will play up to 6 games for a prize fund of \$150,000. Some experts are already predicting that Hydra will win the contest. But correspondence chess grandmaster Arno Nickel, who recently beat Hydra 2-0 in a correspondence match, has predicted that Adams could secure a 3-3 draw. According to the team that developed Hydra, it can calculate 200 million moves per second and see up to 40 moves ahead.

Adventures in Linux-land



By Siles Bazerman, APCUG Representative, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, California

As many of you know I became bored with Windows XP a while ago. Bored with both writing about it and actually using it. Windows went from “Gee, look what I found!” in Windows 3 to using an appliance in Windows XP with the release of SP2. Very usable but not much fun to play with.

I decided to give Linux another try. The first time was with Red Hat 3 back in 1998-1999. At that time it was not ready for Prime Time and there was still a lot to discover in Windows 98 and 98SE. Also, there were only one or two other distros (distributions) available and little in the way of a GUI, so you used mostly command line.

Now there are many, many distros out there, some commercial and some free. Red Hat went commercial, but is available as Fedora for free download. One of the more popular free distros is Debian (Debra and Ian Murdock, authors). It too is available in several varieties. The two most useful for beginners to Linux are Knoppix and SimplyMepis. I use the latter. Both of these are downloadable, fit on one CD with a number of useable programs, and can run from the CD without installing on your hard drive. You can also install them if you so desire.

After downloading Mepis, using it and finally installing it, I decided I needed more information than was available on line. I found a book Point and Click Linux by Robin Miller that was written to exactly parallel the CD. For less than \$22 from Barnes and Nobel on line I received the book, a CD (exactly the same as the download) and an instructional DVD. The distro uses the KDE (K Desktop Environment) and includes several editors, Open Office Suite (similar to Microsoft Office, but free), a CD/DVD writing program, GIMP graphics program (GNU Image Manipulation Program) and Mozilla web browser. There are numerous other programs included but I have listed the main ones. Also you can download and install many other programs free to enhance or replace the ones on the CD.

If all you want to do is send and receive email, browse the web, do some word processing or similar things, then you can use Mepis as installed. Web browsing is relatively virus free and almost totally popup free. Both Mozilla and its successor, Firefox, are also available for Windows, but windows update will not work in any other browser but IE. Linux is relatively free of viruses for two reasons. First, it represents only a very small percent of desktop installations and virus writers want the biggest "bang for the buck" so they don't bother. Second, you work in Linux as a user, but all changes to the system must be done as either an administrator or "super user" which are not accessible from outside and are password protected. Also the browser does not allow popups. This would be labeled EASY.


If you wish to do customization or add established Debian packages then it can be easy or difficult depending on the need for the command line interface. Many of the commands are arcane and rather like in a foreign language, although they are really in English. I believe much is written in C, Perl, and Python. I am

sure some other programming languages are involved also. Many of the free backup programs are written for Tape Backup Units, although they might be configurable for other media such as HD or CD/DVD. These things would rate DIFFICULT.

I have one MUST HAVE, no substitutes allowed, program. It will run only in Windows, not in Linux or on a MAC, or any other operating system. I have tried to port it to Linux using four different Windows Emulators. The commercial three all have free trials available that are time limited but otherwise full. The free qemu (Q EMUlator) requires an installation of Windows 98 from a full install, and does not seem to ever access the CD drive or, for that matter, any drive outside the virtual machine. This prohibits the addition of other programs. Of the commercial ones, Crossover Office allows installation of Microsoft Office and a number of other programs whose hooks are built in. It will also allow the installation of some others but it is hit or miss. Paint Shop Pro 7 will install and work, but will not print, as an example. Newer versions of PSP will not even install. Photoshop 6 or 7 will work but not later versions. Crossover Office does NOT require a copy of Windows to work. All the others do.

VMWare never did load on my system as I could not find one compatible with the kernel version I am using, and I do not have sufficient knowledge to recompile one myself; besides who wants to bother? That leaves the two versions of Win4Lin, regular and Professional. The regular version works with all the DOS-based Windows up and including Windows ME. The Pro version works with Windows 2000 and XP. I did find that loading WINDOWS XP in the pro version was about like loading Windows 3.1 on my old 286. S----l----o---w. It loaded Windows 2000 about the speed it loaded on my P3; I am running an Athlon T'bread 2600+ with 1G of memory. Under Windows XP, when I tried to load my program I received the message "Catastrophic Failure." What the Hey? Under 2000 it installed but when run would fail with "ActiveX could not create a database module." I spoke to one of the programmers of my program and he never heard of the first and could not suggest how to fix the second. As a matter of fact, he asked me to call him if I had any success in porting it over. He knows of no one else even trying. (Figures) I could devote several pages to just this area, but not now. This whole area is very FRUSTRATING.

Keep tuned and I may present more Adventures in Linuxland in the near future. That is if I don't find playing more appealing than writing.



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If Moving Can't Be Fun, At Least Make It Painless

Hardware

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



It's said that "two moves equals one fire" in terms of inconvenience and turmoil. Fire victims might disagree, but there's no doubt that moves range from disruptive to agonizing. Having just moved -- and, in the process, reengineered my family's computing and Internet setup -- I'll share tips for recreating or transforming technology when moving.

Some aspects of moving are the same whether the trip is cross-country or down the street: packing boxes, dealing with new quarters, etc. But moving locally allows shuttling between old and new sites, avoiding the long-distance "D-Day" moment when everything must be in transit.

I'll focus on technology: computers, Internet issues (ISP/cable/DSL), system backup, telephone (local, long distance, cellular), and electricity. (Just ensure that someone attends to non-tech services such as gas and newspaper delivery!) And remember, just as insurance needs differ, no single move strategy fits everyone. Decide what to do based on your technical skills and how you'll be affected by problems.

It shouldn't be hard to identify what you've got -- computers, accessories, network connections, etc. But listing local dependencies may be challenging. What do you depend on locally? Just as you know your doctor and plumber -- what's your technology support structure? If you use a local ISP (Internet service provider), will it be available after you move? If you rely on neighbors or local user group for technical assistance, who will replace them? Remember that AARP's technical community at <http://community.aarp.org/rp-computers/start> is always as near as your Web browser!

Make and update to-do lists; take notes on conversations with vendors to track progress and follow up when (all too often) necessary.

First, inventory your technology and set goals. Balance recreating your current setup against improving it. The first choice reduces change and perhaps stress; the second can offer better computing.

Next, identify what you need. If you generally keep a list -- mental or written -- of technology problems (slow computer, fuzzy monitor, pokey Internet connection), moving may be the time to solve them.

Finally -- and most fun -- think about what you want. If you're moving when retiring, you may take up new hobbies. Dealing with music, digital photography, and movies all require more computer power: CPU speed, RAM, and hard drive space. And losing access to the office computer and network can suddenly make an upgrade essential.

Plan your new place's technology; decide where to place your computer(s). Custom space and furniture are nice but not essential. Make sure there are enough electrical outlets and that circuits can handle the load. Locate other connections you'll need such as telephone and cable (TV/Internet). Draw a floorplan and experiment with placing

furniture and equipment -- it's much easier to redraw lines than move heavy objects.

When your move is set, deal with utilities at both ends. You may not care when service is terminated, but there's sometimes a wait to establish telephone and cable service. For local moves I've had good results from visiting utility offices rather than making changes by phone: I could look at current products/services literature, discuss options, and read contracts. Consider new service plans -- for cable TV, ISP, cell phone, long-distance calling. Your post-move needs may be different and plans have likely evolved since you last evaluated them.

My wife thinks -- likely correctly -- that my first priority after moving is getting online. Even if you've arranged broadband service, there may be problems: wiring or account setup may not be done; your PC configuration may not match the new service; etc. If access is essential, establish and test backup dial-access service before moving -- even if it requires a long-distance phone call.

Keep essential materials such as manuals and software install disks handy. Locate a user group where you're going, perhaps join before moving and introduce yourself to group leaders so you have a welcoming committee ready. Solicit recommendations for consultants or service shops, just in case.

If movers will handle your equipment or you're shipping it, make sure it's adequately insured.

If staying in touch is essential, warn people that you're moving and that you'll be offline and explain how you can be reached (cell phone, new address, etc.). Auto-responders (sending a canned message to people who e-mail you) can be helpful but should be used with caution so they don't respond inappropriately (e.g., to mailing lists to which you're subscribed).

If you're moving locally, set aside fragile equipment or anything you want to keep in sight, such as financial or medical records, and shuttle it to your new place.

For longer moves, allow extra time to pack electronics carefully in original boxes. (Now you know why you keep boxes!) Consider carrying or shipping boxes containing irreplaceable material (one data backup, software CDs, etc.)

Label cables when you disassemble your PC and network and record where they connect. If you're nervous about disassembling your equipment, a local consultant can likely prepare it for shipping. That's better than having movers do it! For extra protection, remove your hard drive and pack it in soft clothing you'll take with you. That will doubly protect you: from damage if the computer is dropped or banged, from losing data if the computer is lost or stolen.

Carry a tested backup (software and data) separate from your PC. If you have desktop and laptop computers, you may be able to back the desktop system up on the laptop hard drive.

Once you arrive, even if you're in a hurry, don't neglect power protection -- using at least a surge protector, preferably a UPS (uninterruptible power supply).

Update anything displaying your address such as Web pages and email signature files. Tell tech-involved organizations such as your ISPs and domain name registrars that you've moved so you receive bills and notices. Now kick back and relax; enjoy your well-organized technology.

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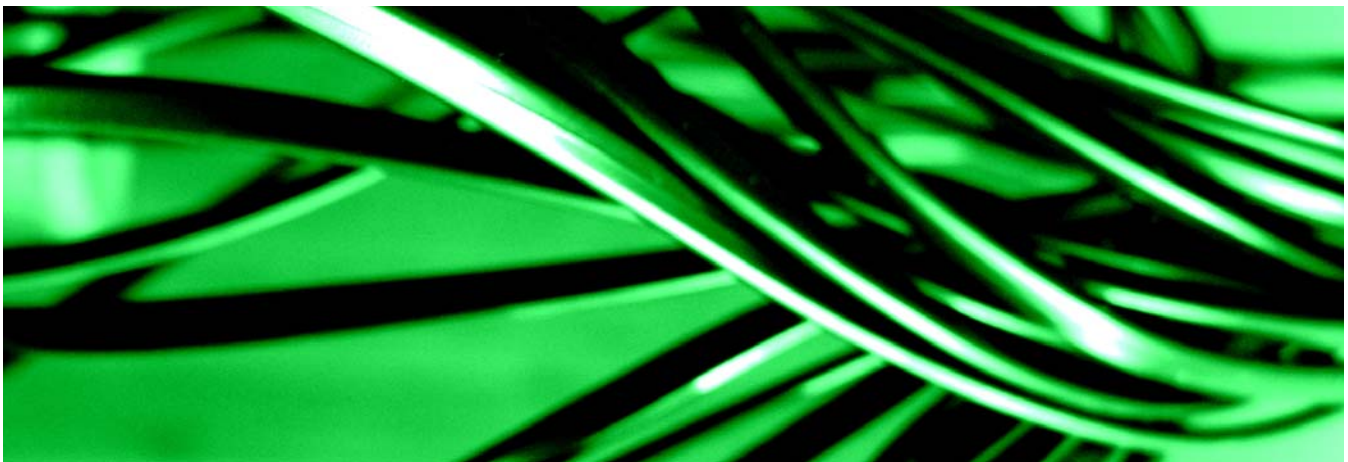
Cables: The Missing Part of Upgrades

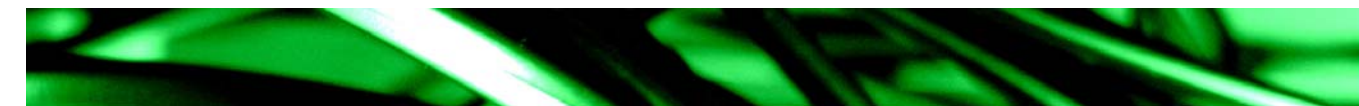
By **Timothy Everingham**, TUGNET, Granada Hills CA

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When you are in the process of building a new computer or upgrading one; you may just think you have to only buy the component parts such as CPU, motherboard, case, power supply, RAM, video card, hard drives, and CD/DVD player or writer. However, what a lot of people don't think about are the cables to connect all of these together. Many people have gone to the computer store or swap meet and when they get to install a part they realize they don't have the cable or adapter needed and have to take the time to go out again to buy it. Thinking through your computer purchase cabling needs before you leave home, or at least before you leave the computer store, can save you the hassle and time of making that additional trip. If you have to order from a catalog and have it shipped to you days may be lost before you can complete your installation.





These days motherboards do come with a lot of cables, but are they the right ones for your application and are there enough of them? We are in a transition from the EIDE interface for hard drives and CD/DVD players and writers to the SATA interface. With EIDE cables you have up to two drives on a parallel cable that are flat ribbons or twisted into a round cable; but SATA drives are connected via thin serial cables that have one for each drive connecting directly to the drive controller, usually on the motherboard. If you have a floppy drive you will need a cable for that too. So far I have only been talking about data cables, not power cables. SATA drives also have different power cables than EIDE drives. Also CD/DVD players and writers some times have different power connectors than EIDE hard drives, sometimes using a floppy drive type power connector. Also, if you have a mid to high level 3D video card you may have to plug in one or two power connectors because they need more power than what they can get from the motherboard, and the power connectors for PCI Express video cards are different than those for AGP video cards (There are two different type of connectors for AGP cards too). Then there are the different connectors for case fans.

Also a lot of newer motherboards are connected to the power supply via a 24 pin connector instead of the more traditional 20 pin. Some 24 pin motherboards can have you just plug in a 20 pin plug, but others do not recommend that. Then of course we get into the audio cables for your CD/DVD player/writer to plug into the sound card or sound circuit on the motherboard. You also may need USB or Firewire (IEEE 1394) cables for within the case to get them from the motherboard to the sockets or external ones to get them out to your devices.

So how do you find out what cables you need? If possible you can look at the parts themselves or the box they come in. There is the visual of the connectors and information on the part or box about what the part needs. Be wary however on just taking it from the visuals. Some cables that have the same type of connectors at their ends are rated differently on speed or other factors. An example of this is EIDE data cables. Typical rating for these cables is 33, 66, 100, or 133 MHz. In with EIDE components hooked together it is the slowest component that sets the data the data speed on the EIDE bus. If the EIDE drive controller cannot communicate with the drives at one speed because the cable is not capable of handling data transmission at that speed without errors, the controller will drop the speed of the entire EIDE data bus. As such having EIDE components rated at 133 MHz and connecting them together with a cable only rated at 66 MHz greatly increases the risk of the drives data transfer operating below 133 MHz. You also get into issues of it may be the right type of cable; but has the wrong connectors at the ends, which you can run into with Firewire (IEEE 1394), USB, and other cables. Other sources for this information are the manufacturer's website or those of online retailers that sell the part. You may have to look at the parts manual to find information about its power connectors. However, how do you get to see the manual before buying the part? Many manufacturers have the manual to their parts on their website in PDF format so you can just download the manual. This is sometimes the only way you can easily find out whether a motherboard needs a 20 or 24 pin power connector or it can take either. From these same sources you can also find out what cables come with a part.

You should look at the power supply you are going to use or if you can't examine it, probably because you have not bought it yet, find out the specifications. There are different ATX standards for power supplies, with ATX 12V 2.01 being the latest (For additional information read "More Performance: The New Power Supply Standard, ATX12V 2.0" at Tom's Hardware Guide www.tomshardware.com. Look at what connectors it has and how many of each (20 or 24 pin, P4, and EPS motherboard connectors, 4 pin Molex for 5.25" format EIDE drives and some fans, floppy drive, SATA, auxiliary, and PCI Express video card. Depending on what you find and your needs you may need power splitters or adapters. Many older power supplies do not have SATA drive power connectors, but only those that are used for EIDE (Be aware that some SATA drive power adapters do not have a +3.3V connection, which is required by some drives). Only some of the recently introduced power supplies have a PCI Express video card power connector. If you have enough components in your system where your present power supply may not be able to handle the load, it might be better to get a new power supply which has the newer type of connectors you need.

One thing you also should consider is how your cables will affect airflow in your computer. May people use round EIDE cables rather than flat because of this issue. The good use of cable ties can help with this problem. Especially if you live far away from a computer store, are using online retailers, or going to a computer swap meet that you would have to pay again to reenter it is especially important to be sure you have all the cables you need for your computer upgrade or building project. Researching what you need ahead of time can prevent wasting time and money and increasing your frustration. May you have the cables you need, and not buy cables you can't use.

Timothy Everingham is CEO of Timothy Everingham Consulting in Azusa, California. He is also Chair of the Los Angeles Chapter of ACM SIGGRAPH. Timothy is also part-time press in the areas of high technology, computers, video, audio, and entertainment/ media and has had articles published throughout the United States and Canada plus Australia, England, & Japan. Further information can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~teveringham>.



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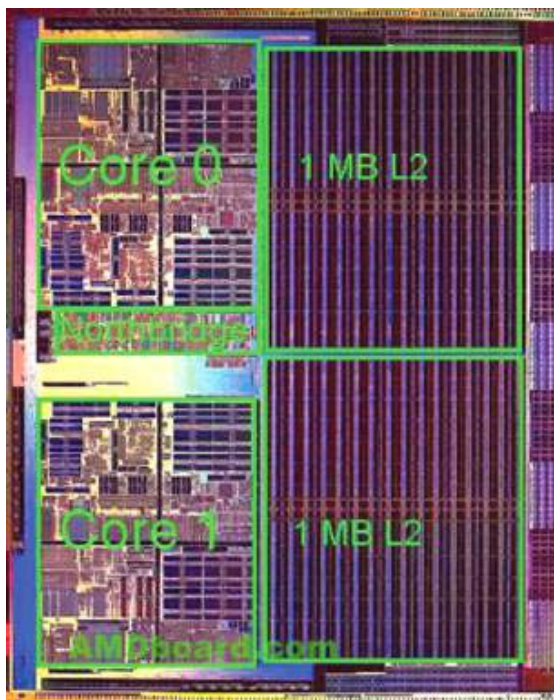
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Dual-Core Processors Are Coming!

By **Timothy Everingham**, Member of TUGNET, California
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Both Intel and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD) are screaming, “Dual-Core Processors are Coming.” They say they are the future of microprocessors for computers. With both companies planning to introduce these processors in the next few months it is important to understand the significance of this development.

So what is a dual-core processor? Basically it is two microprocessors on the same integrated circuit or chip. Having more than one processor in a computer has been around for a long time. It is normal for servers to have them. Multiprocessor workstations (high end desktops) are used mostly for scientific, engineering and digital content creation for TV and movies. Dual-core is not Intel's hyperthreading that is on its Pentium 4s, which lets the operating system think it has two processors rather than one. In a dual-core processor there are two actual processors, each one having its own L1 & L2 caches.

Why are we going to dual-core processors? One of the main reasons is heat. The higher a processor's clock speed, the more heat it produces. The 3.6 GHz Pentium 4 did have heat problems. Of course what we have been doing is just put more than one processor on a motherboard to increase performance beyond what you can get with a single processor (The general rule has been that adding a second processor improves computer speed by 60% over a single processor of the same speed). However, to make this more cost effective, similar, use less space, and reduce power requirements putting two processors together on one chip is better. This is especially true in the desktop and notebook markets. As we move to high-definition TV resolution video on computers the need for the average computer to have very high processing speed will appear, leading to dual-core processor computers being dominant a few years from now. But can you upgrade your current system to a dual-core processor? If you have an AMD socket 939 motherboard you can upgrade to an AMD Athlon 64 dual-core processor with only a BIOS upgrade. The same is true for AMD Opteron socket 940 motherboards for Opteron dual-core processors. Intel said last fall that some Intel LGA 775 motherboards would be able to use their dual-core processors, called "Pentium D", but they now say the first generation of them will have to use a modified LGA 775 socket. This of course means getting a new motherboard.

For an application program to take advantage of multiprocessor systems both the operating system and the particular application you are running have to have the ability to use more than one processor (multi-threaded program). If the operating system is able to take advantage of more than one processor, but the applications you are running are not, you may get different applications running on different processors, but each will only use one processor. Windows 98 & ME are designed for only one processor, so they can only use one processor even though there are two processors on one chip, real or virtual. Windows XP Home can use only one processor chip, but up to two processors on that chip. Windows XP Professional is designed to use up to 2 processor chips and up to 2 processors on each chip. Novell's SUSE Linux is already ready for dual core processors, and Red Hat Linux soon will be. Both are multithreaded and multiprocessor chip operating systems.

Most current multithreaded application programs are mid-high end scientific, engineering, CAD/CAM and digital content creation programs. This includes video editing and 2D and 3D animation and image creation/editing programs. However there are some home applications that already have this multi-threading capability, such as the Adobe Premiere Elements video-editing program. The first programs for the home user to go multithreading should be content creation/editing, multimedia, and games. There seems to be an expectation by Intel that the transition over to most programs being multithreaded will be three years from now. However, some software companies base the licensing fees of some or all of their programs by the number of processors using the program. The question then becomes will software companies start charging licensing fees per processor core on the current per processor chip? Right now it looks like the trend says no. Microsoft has already said for its pro-

grams that are licensed on a per processor basis it will continue doing so and not go to a per processor core basis. Also to consider in upgrading both Intel and AMD systems you may have software you have to activate that logs the system components. Upgrading processors and motherboards can cause these programs to say that this is now a new computer you are running the program on, which you are not authorized to do, and refuse to run. This could include your operating system. Check with your program's publisher/manufacturer to see what their policy on this is. Home and office use policies effectively have been known to be different.

So when will these marvelous dual-core processors appear? For Intel it will be the second quarter of 2005. For AMD it will be mid-2005 for the high level Opterons and second half of 2005 for the desktop Athlon 64s. As normal the price should originally be high, but then drop significantly over time.

We are moving this year to dual core processors. They will improve the speed of computers, and reduce the related heat and power requirement issues. They will be originally for those high-end power users, but over the next few years they could easily become the norm. They will be in a computer store near you later this year.

Timothy Everingham is CEO of Timothy Everingham Consulting in Azusa, California. He is also Chair of the Los Angeles Chapter of ACM SIGGRAPH. He is also part-time press in the areas of high technology, computers, video, audio, and entertainment/media and has had articles published throughout the United States and Canada plus Australia, England, & Japan. Further information can be found at <<http://home.earthlink.net/~teveringham>>



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If you get an error message when you run scandisk or defrag it could be because you have a lot of stuff running in the background. Try running them from Safe Mode.

To get to Safe Mode, hit the F8 key just as Windows starts to load. You need to press the F8 key just before you see the first Windows splash screen. Once you're into Safe Mode, press the Start button, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, then either Scan Disk or Defrag.

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

Freecycle Network Offers Never-Ending Garage Sale (And It's All Free!)

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

"It's not easy being green", sang Kermit the green Muppet frog. But it's getting easier, as people, corporations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies recognize benefits of conserving and recycling resources of all sorts. There have always been opportunities such as garage sales, flea markets, and thrift shops for casual/local exchanges of goods. Most of us have likely both bought and sold: giving new life to things we've enjoyed but no longer need, cashing in gifts we can't quite imagine using, and finding economical goods courtesy of neighbors and charitable organizations.

Before we recently moved <http://www.aarp.org/learntech/computers/life_online/Articles/a2005-01-05-preserving_tech_moving.html>, my wife and I took the opportunity to get rid of anything we thought was surplus. Fortunately, we beat the year-end crush at places like Salvation Army. But in December I did see 18-wheelers being loaded with goods from people who suddenly remembered the tax deduction for making such donations to charitable organizations. And I wondered how much of the tonnage being hauled would actually be sold and reused.

As in many other areas, the Internet lends new sparkle and efficiency to an old idea: using things until they're completely worn out. It's really true that one person's junk can be another person's treasure. In fact, the worldwide Freecycle(tm) Network <www.freecycle.org> offers goods at the Internet's favorite price (at least for buyers): free! Perhaps best of all, the Network offers in-person one-to-one transfers making it likely that goodies will go places where they're cherished.

The Web site notes:

The worldwide Freecycle Network is made up of many individual groups across the globe. It's a grassroots movement of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free in their own towns. Each local group is run by a local volunteer moderator (good people). Membership is free.

The Freecycle Network was started in May 2003 to promote waste reduction in Tucson's downtown and help save desert landscape from being taken over by landfills. The Network provides individuals and non-profits an electronic forum to "recycle" unwanted items.

Freecycling is interesting because, while it could only be done on the Internet, it has a very local focus. That is, while Web sites and discussion mailing lists draw worldwide clientele, physical transfer of free goods is constrained to relatively small areas.

So Freecycle operates as locally oriented mailing lists. For example, in the Washington, DC region, there's a huge list for the central city (one of the top ten lists with more than 6,000 people), and many suburbs have their own lists with dozens or hundreds of subscribers.

The main Freecycle Web site lists rules and etiquette, which are echoed by welcome messages to new subscribers. It's all simple and reasonable:

Goods offered must be available for pickup in the local area; stick to recycling, avoid politics, spam, and off-topic messages; begin all e-mail subject lines with one of the words OFFER/TAKEN/WANTED/RECEIVED

Rules such as "Keep it free, keep it legal, keep it safe for all ages" prohibit offering or requesting items such as guns, prescription drugs, "adult" material, alcohol, and cigarettes. Pets are OK, though. Only free and physical stuff is allowed; barter/exchanges/sales are barred, as are services offered or wanted.

I'm told that the list is best read in individual messages rather than digests (which collect dozens of messages into one e-mail) since offered items are often snatched up in just a few minutes. A reply in five minutes might be too late!

Messages are transmitted by the Yahoo! Groups Web site [groups.yahoo.com] so list archives can be searched. This allows making sure that no TAKEN or RECEIVED has been sent for the OFFER or WANTED you're about to answer.




Donors can decide which request gets the goods. First-reply-wins is a fine approach, but some decide based on why a person needs something. Businesses can use Freecycle to dispose of goods -- for example computing equipment that's usable but not marketable. A company with 25 monitors might offer them to a Freecycle list -- perhaps specifying minimum pickup of five. So smaller companies, recycling organizations,

or community-minded individuals could collect and redistribute them where they're needed.

A very unscientific analysis of about 40 postings divided into 16 OFFERs, 12 TAKENs, 10 WANTEDs, and two RECEIVEDs -- a very respectable success rate for OFFERs and WANTEDs! As of when I'm writing this, more than 2,000 large and small communities have Freecycle groups with more than 700,000 members. And the Web site gives step-by-step instructions for starting one where there is none. Go forth and Freecycle!

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PC Help Is -- Sometimes -- Just a Mouseclick Away

by Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor, Region 2, and columnist for AARP's Computer and Technology Web Site



Who'd have thought that a Beatles song highlights a great PC resource for solving problems and answering questions? No, it's not "Ask Me Why" or "Do You Want to Know a Secret". It's "Help!". All Windows versions (Windows 95, 98, ME, XP, etc.) and most applications have built-in Help facilities. Knowing how to fetch Help information leads to happy PC use, saves having to wait for others to answer questions, and can even make you an expert resource for other people!

But there's no free lunch; Help can't read your mind and answer questions before you ask them. And to get information you need, you have to look in the right places.

Help info is stored in special files and retrieved through Help software. The info and software is similar but not identical throughout Windows versions and applications, so general rules apply. The good news is that it's easy to explore Help information; since it's most useful to read about topics in which you're interested, feel free to replace my examples with your own questions or areas of interest.

Most applications respond to several cues for help: pressing the F1 key, clicking the word Help on the menu bar, and pressing alt-H (hold Alt key and press H key).

Pressing F1 opens the Help system, while pressing the alt-H key or clicking menu bar Help provide a short pulldown of Help options. However you enter Help, you'll see buttons or tabs such as Contents and Search. You may also see buttons such as Getting Started, Basic Features, Errors, and Frequently Asked Questions.

For example, I recently installed the Mozilla browser. Its Help provides four tabs: Contents shows main topics and subtopics, Search explores Help information, Index lists all topics alphabetically, and Glossary provides definitions of terms used. Many applications use Microsoft Help standards tabs: Contents, Index, and Answer Wizard. This wizard replaces searching, allowing entry of questions needing answers.

Clicking Contents reveals a list of topics aimed at getting specific things done. Mozilla's tasks include Browsing the Web, Using Mail, and Bookmarks. Many tasks have a "+" next to them; clicking the + reveals lists of subtasks. Most helpful in learning to use Mozilla Help is Using the Help Window, whose subtasks include Finding the Topic You Want and Search Tips.

When you have a question that isn't task related, consult the Help information index for an alphabetical list of entries. Mozilla Help entries range from Account Settings, Address Books, and Bookmarks, to Toolbar, Uploading Pages, and Working Offline.

When you aren't sure what task or major topic includes info you need, try searching. Searching Mozilla Help for "bookmarks" found many places the topic is mentioned which are not listed in the index. Unfortunately, computers still only do what we tell them to do, rather than what we mean. So words you search for must match how Help information is labeled. If a search fails, search again for other words that describe the information you're seeking.

You can open Windows Help by clicking Start and then Help or pressing F1 when viewing the desktop; retrieve tips on using Help by entering (in the Index or Search boxes) a term such as "getting help". Similarly, valuable productivity tips are available by searching on "keyboard shortcuts".

As you explore Help and navigate through its information, remember that you're leaving a trail, as you do when you surf the Web. You can always click the Back button to return to a previous display, and click Forward to repeat your path.

Other information nuggets are available.

Many dialogue boxes -- often requiring making baffling choices -- include a Help button. It's easy to miss this valuable button; dialogue box Help buttons have the special advantage of providing "context help" -- that is, taking you directly to info de-

scribing the open dialogue box without requiring searching or clicking.

Another tool, even easier to miss, is the "What's this?" symbol on many dialogue boxes, a "?" in the upper right corner. Clicking this turns the mouse cursor into a traveling question mark. Move the ? over a term or menu and click; this will display a brief explanation of the item you clicked. Beware, though: usefulness of this tool varies. It requires developers to spend thought/time/effort supplying suitable information for each box and button. Some do this, others cut corners.

Finally, the most automatic information is displayed when you place the mouse cursor over a toolbar button. Called hints or tooltips, this information usually displays by default. If it doesn't, application-specific options can be changed to enable it.

It's easy to forget that Help info is available. A colleague reported that after wondering for quite some time how to add multiple rows to an Excel spreadsheet, he finally consulted Help. He was rewarded by the simple answer: "To insert multiple rows, select rows immediately below where you want the new rows. Select the same number of rows as you want to insert". Lesson learned: Help is your friend.

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*Technical
Help*

How to Report Tech Problems to Get Answers

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor and Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Website. <ggoldberg@apcug.net>

Using computers and technology means having questions and problems. But you can't get answers and solutions without asking the **right** questions. A little preparation can be a big help in solving annoyances, mysteries, and disasters. The more we use computers and technology, the more questions we have and problems we need solved. But it's hard to get answers and solutions without asking the **right** questions and describing the problem at hand. We're specific when visiting the doctor or auto mechanic: we describe what's wrong and when it began. We may even imitate the noise our car makes for the mechanic.

But when faced with computer oddities and malfunctions we sometimes revert to unhelpful generalities such as "My email is broken" or "My printer stopped working" or "I get an error when I start Word". Problem reports such as these don't allow diagnosing a problem; at best, they elicit a response like "Tell me more".

It saves time to collect as much information as possible before asking for help. As a bonus, gathering problem details and considering relevant factors can often allow solving problems oneself!

Just as a doctor or mechanic needs details, someone analyzing a computer problem must know the environment in which it occurred. So describe your computer (hardware/software/networking/application/etc.) to provide context. Mention your operating system (Windows 98/ME/XP, Mac OS, Linux, etc.), what version of what application failed (Internet Explorer 6.0, MS Word XP, etc.), what Internet connection is used (dial or cable/DSL), and any other details that may help.

Don't omit details -- it's better to have too much information than to miss a crucial factor. Sometimes it's worth capturing screen images showing a problem; tools for doing this will be described in a future article.

Other important steps in describing symptoms and getting help are:

Distinguish facts from guesses and interpretations.

If an error message was issued, write it down, word-for-word. Then check it for accuracy. (Often searching Google for the error message text or a distinctive chunk -- entered in quotation marks -- will yield information on a problem.)

Note what you did just before the problem occurred and whether anything else odd happened since you last rebooted and before the problem at hand.

Mention whether the problem happened before, and if so how you resolved it.

List whatever (hardware, software, settings, network, *anything*) changed recently.

Explain if you attempted to solve the problem and what resulted. (Remember that rebooting often cures problems, though without explaining them.)

Note where you've already looked for information (product manual or Help, company Web site or FAQ, etc.).

Reread your query imagining you know nothing about the problem except what's in the query. Add what's missing that someone else needs to know in order to help.

To help friends or service personnel respond to your question -- and to let the question be filed and found -- use a meaningful Subject line, not Help!, Urgent, or Question. Describe the context (e.g., Windows XP) and the problem (e.g., Windows Update never finds new patches).

To help your helper help you --

Be clear about your overall goal, don't focus on an intermediate step you think is necessary -- you may distract someone into addressing how you're trying to do something rather than what you actually want to do.

Ask for help in the right/best place. AARP's Computers and Technology Web board <<http://community.aarp.org/rp-computers/start>> hosts many people with deep and diverse experience who are most generous with their time offering help and advice. And the Internet hosts thousands of mailing lists and newsgroups specializing in every imaginable topic. Searching for find the best place to pose a question will get you better and more complete answers and avoid your seeming like a novice for posting out-of-place queries.

As you work with an individual or a group, collaborate -- don't try to overpower them. Be respectful, not belligerent; don't make them feel stupid even if you feel they are. They may have missed a detail, you may not have conveyed the whole story.

If you're working with someone at a company help desk, don't try to "pull rank" based on age or experience or professional credentials. Mention past interactions with the company, emphasizing positive outcomes.

Finally, a longish document from Eric Raymond -- an influential leader of the "open source" (shared software development) movement -- at <http://www.catb.org/~esr/faqs/smart-questions.html> provides useful tips, though it's a little too harsh in places for my taste. But his comments on how to ask questions and where to seek help are interesting and helpful.

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Computer Hysteria: Crash!

by **Berry F. Phillips**, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City
and a regular writer for the CCOKC website and the eMonitor
<bfpdata@gbonline.com>

Crash! Crash! That was the sound of Stephen King's sledgehammer bashing the car that hit him while jogging. Perhaps he thought Christine from his earlier horror novel had come back to haunt him! Crash also strikes terror in the hearts of computer users. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project approximately two thirds of Americans use the Internet and about 87% of them through connections in their homes. While there is no research data on the number of computer users that cannot master their computers, there is evidence of anger and frustration with computers that could escalate into what one psychologist calls "computer rage."

University of Maryland Professor Kent Norman says, "Men and women are taking out their frustrations on the computer and unfortunately, sometimes misdirecting it to other people." Norman, who directs the Laboratory of Automation Psychology and Decision Processes at the University, conducted an online survey where twenty percent of the respondents admitted they dropped a computer on the floor out of anger. They described smashing, microwaving, and cursing their computers. One claimed he threw his laptop in a fryer and several claimed to have shot hardware. The study further suggested computer users were most annoyed by: e-mail snafus including spam, waiting while a computer completed a simple task, having to redo something because of a glitch and having to upgrade obsolete programs. Microsoft ranked high on the list of objects of ire. With the increased popularity of wireless networks, DVD players, and game systems, the possibilities of irritations are almost endless.

You can lower your cyber blood pressure by taking some preventative medicine. Increase your knowledge to make yourself a more-informed user. Join the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and network with other computer users and learn from their experiences (misery loves company!). Do NOT go on the Internet without a regularly updated and weekly-maintained complete computer security system including antivirus, anti-spyware and firewall software. (Not having the money for commercial applications is no excuse as there are several excellent freeware security software pro-

grams available online. Often forgotten is a good registry and unnecessary-file cleaner that has automatic backups, which can substantially reduce your crashes. Defrag weekly if needed and scandisk at least once a month. Do not forget to make an emergency boot disk.

Finally, in case of a crash, do not panic. Write down what you did immediately prior to the crash, and any instructions you receive from your computer. Make sure you have been taking fruit to lay at the feet of your computer guru or lay money on your friendly computer tech. The life you save may be your own computer. SOS stands for Save Our System!



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To find out what version of a program you have, just go to the "Help" section on the top text links of any program, then select "About". It will reveal the author and what version the program is.

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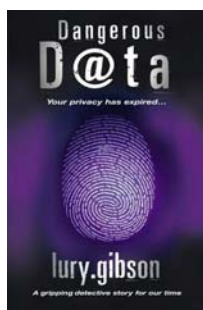
Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Dangerous D@ta

by lury.gibson (Adam Lury and Sam Gibson) Paperback, Bantam, 2002, £9.99. 272 pages

An anonymous client hires Arthur C. Dogg, a data detective, to check out the garden flat at 81 Bryanston Road, London NW6. He reports that there are three roommates, Cynthia, Robert and James. Learn more, the client says. And Dogg learns a lot, revealed to us through the records that he has hacked into, from university transcripts and Amazon book buying records to credit card transactions, archived e-mails and national health files. When one of the flat mates is killed, an intriguing little mystery unfolds.

The subtitle of this book is "Your privacy has expired . . ." and if you weren't worried about the electronic

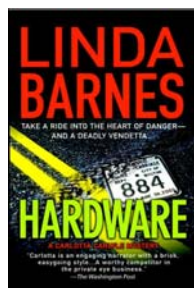


trail that leaves you vulnerable to snoops like Dogg, you will be after reading this novel. It even includes tips of Web site to visit to spy on people! The format of stark records interspersed with Dogg's commentary is very effective, reminiscent of epistolary novels of old. This is a British book that I ordered from a little shop in Wales through the American Booksellers Exchange <www.abe.com> but you can check it out from the Alamo PC Learning Center library. What a deal! Highly recommended.

Hardware

By Linda Barnes. Hardcover, Delacorte, 1995, \$19.95, 338 pages

In her sixth adventure, Carlotta Carlyle, a red-headed six-foot tall ex-cop, part time cab driver and part-time private detective is asked to investigate a string of cabbie beatings that look like part of an extortion scheme to corner valuable

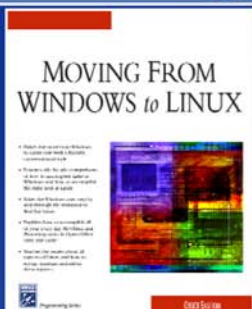


Boston cab medallions. The title is a double entendre: faced with unprecedented danger behind the wheel of her cab, she upgrades her "hardware" from a lead pipe under the seat to a gun and buys her first computer "hardware" from a shadowy friend of her sometime lover Sam, son of a Mafia don.

Without spilling the beans too much, Sam's computer buddy is using his hacking skills to embezzle cash from the Mafia. Not too many technical details, but a neat little plot about computer-based embezzling. If you like tough female PIs like Kinsey Millhone or V.I. Warshawski you'll like Carlotta too. Recommended.

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

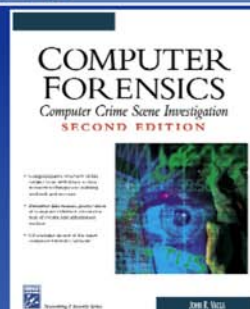
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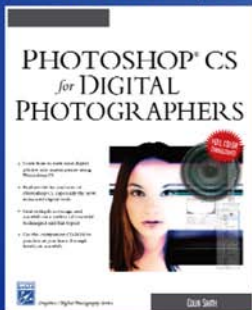
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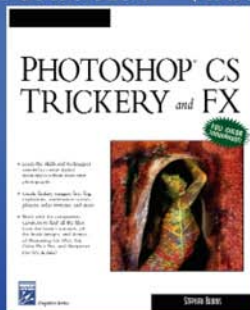
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Software Review

CorelDraw 12

\$179.00

Published by Corel

Review by: Larry Grosskopf, Alamo PC

Corel offers CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 12 as the latest (and greatest yet) version of its major software suite of programs with several new features and enhancements. If you are not familiar with CorelDRAW Graphics Suite and what it includes, I hope this review will shed some light on the subject. CorelDRAW 12 is meant for page layouts and vector-based drawing, in other words, it draws using lines and 2D and 3D geometric shapes. Engineers, architects, designers, draftsmen and even artists might utilize this program in their work. It also includes Corel Photo Paint, a pretty good photo-editing software program. Photo Paint is a fairly typical photo editing program, and as such it is based on bitmaps, or a series of individual dots that make up the image. In digital photos each of these dots or pixels is assigned a specific color. Finally, Corel RAVE is an animation program that allows the user to animate designs, text and even add audio clips to enhance the project or movie clip you have created. CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 12 has import and export capabilities for Microsoft Office, WordPerfect Office, and to some Adobe file formats.

In addition to CorelDRAW 12, Corel Photo-Paint 12, and Corel RAVE 3, the box also includes CorelTrace 12 and CorelCapture 12. There is a very nicely done User Guide and a Digital Content manual. There are Corel tutorials built into each program that take you through the basic steps and at least help you get started learning how to use the applications. What must be said up front about this suite of programs is that Corel made a significant decision to stop supporting Macintosh users and to no longer support Microsoft Windows 98 or Me with this latest version of the software. It does work on computers with a Windows 2000 or Windows XP operating system. If you want to use the program on a Macintosh or Windows 98 or Me system, then stop reading here, because you are out of luck.

From an overall view, this suite of programs is an excellent investment if you need an integrated, comparatively inexpensive package that will let you do line-drawings, illustrations, vector drawings, photo editing and painting as well as animating text, graphics and illustrations. The cost of this whole suite of programs is much less than that of some of the offerings from their main competitors. If you are a professional, this may or may not be the program of choice, but if you are an occasional user or if you have a small business or a home office, you might want to consider this suite.

In CorelDRAW 12, a graphics design application, you have some significant new features. For me, the most outstanding of these is the Smart Drawing tool, since I am not as artistic as I would like to believe. I discovered this tool by opening the program and attempting to freehand draw a circle. My circle was uneven and lopsided, but this tool waited a second or so and changed my crooked circle into a perfectly round, beautiful orb. I was pleased and then experimented with rectangles, ovals, squares, and other shapes only to discover that this tool also smoothed out and converted these shapes to more streamlined (and easier to recognize) designs. Once it converted these lines and shapes I drew, the lines were straighter, the angles more acute and the

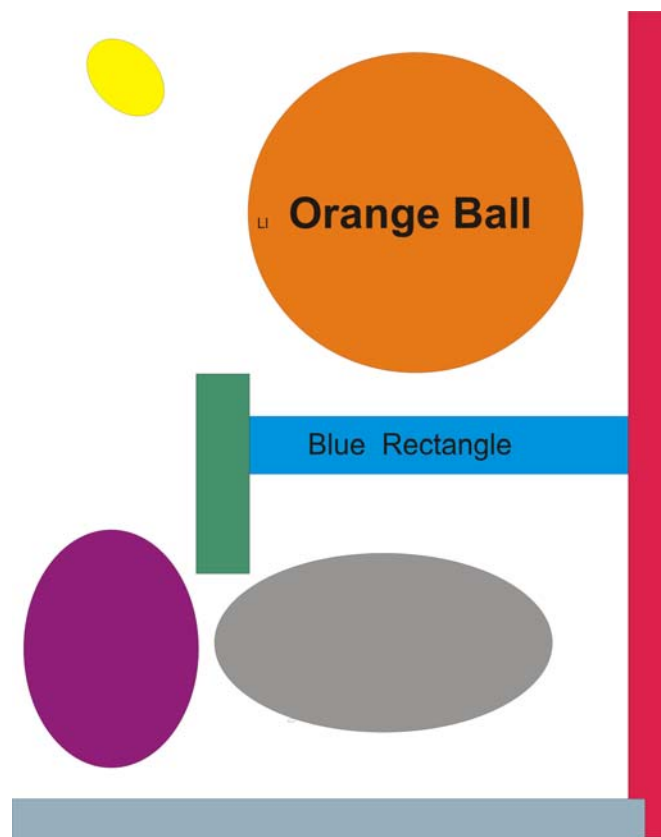


Figure 1



Figure 2

curves were smoother than what I actually drew (See Figure 1). I was impressed by this tool's functionality. Another tool, Dynamic guides let me know what moving an object would look like by leaving the original object where it was and using snap-points from the original design to create a line-drawing of the original and letting it move easily with the mouse to where I wanted it to go. Thus, I could see what it would look like in the new position before I actually moved it. In other words, this is a great way to preview the change in the image before actually applying the changes. Of course, as is true in most programs, you can apply changes and if you don't like them, you can go back and use an undo, but this tool saves you time by eliminating unnecessary steps, thus allowing you to work more precisely and reducing your editing time.

CorelDRAW illustrations are made up of objects stacked on top of one another. These objects and their order in the stack help determine what features of a drawing are prominent and what ones are less noticeable. This is the same concept as layers in a photo editing program such as Adobe Photoshop. You can create new objects, change their properties or order in the stack and even move, reposition or copy objects within and between layers. Another new feature that works well is the ability to snap an object to another object at various "snap" points.

This is a time-saving feature because you can lay projects out quickly and precisely draw or edit objects in relation to each other. Similarly, you can align text objects to or with another object "in a snap". When your project includes text, you can view detailed changes to text and you can play with and manipulate text effortlessly. You can also import from or export to Corel or Microsoft office suites, providing the capacity to import graphics files into text documents, slide presentations and spreadsheets without having to make sure you have a compatible file format. Finally, even though you are working with your project in English, you can incorporate multiple languages using the Unicode text integrated into these Corel products. This would allow you to share the project with someone who spoke a different language and they could view the project text in their native language.

When I used Corel Photo Paint 12 for editing some digital images, I played with some of the tools. The touch up brush tool is for removing defects (dust, scratches, etc.) from digital images. You can then view the effect of the changes you make. The touch up brush is also flexible in that it allows you to modify the strength of the tool. The red-eye removal tool was easy to use and did a good job. I also used the erase tool and the blur tool to create an interesting image of a picture of my son with a ghost I had created and added into the photo (See Figure 2). Other tools were useful but I would not select Photo Paint 12 as my digital image editing tool of choice. Some of

the tools did not function as well as I would have expected. Overall, however, the program worked adequately. The Photo Paint program works very nicely with CorelDRAW and images you work on with Photo Paint 12 flow smoothly into your CorelDRAW project. The same thing goes for Corel RAVE, which is an animation program that lets you create animated designs, logos or movie files. After you have created the image in CorelDRAW or edited the image with Photo Paint, you can drag it into RAVE and add motion to it. The packages are very well integrated. Within each program you can create your own specific interfaces with configurable toolbars and so forth, for particular types of projects and

then save them and re-use them later on. This feature would lend itself especially well to projects that occur on a daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly basis.

CorelTrace was fun to use. I took a digital photo of my daughter right after she finished her heat in her swim team meet. I edited the digital image with Photo Paint and then I used CorelTrace to convert it to an image that appears to be a water-color portrait (See Figure 3). The program will also let you trace to 3D, mosaic or sketches in addition to many other fun features such as skewing, distortions and so forth. CorelCapture lets you

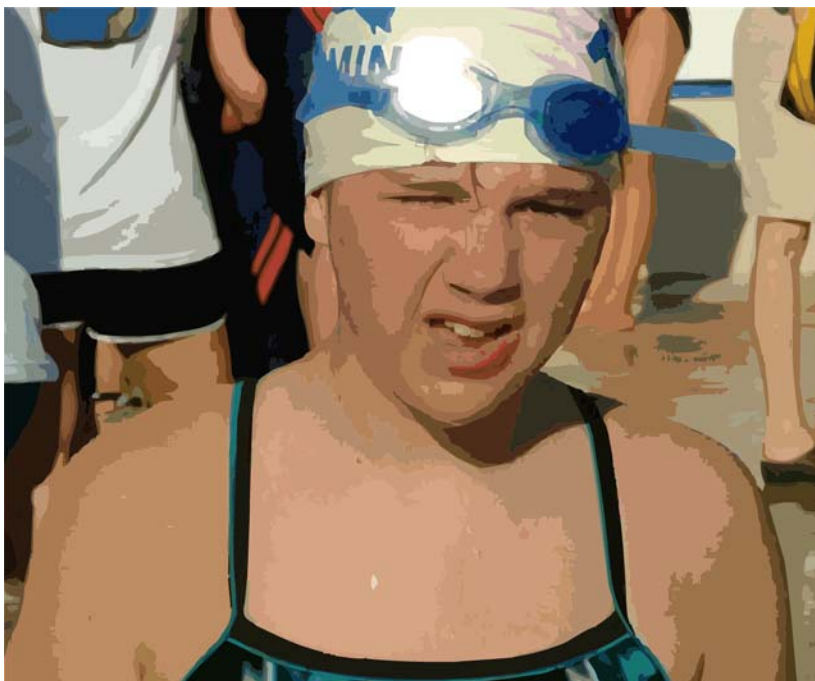


Figure 3

capture full-screen images, menus or portions of the screen and use them later in other Corel programs.

In conclusion, for the functionality and integration you get with these programs, I would recommend this suite of graphics programs. Their new features and enhancements are a major plus. The price is not inexpensive but it is in comparison with some of the equivalent Adobe products. For example, at the time of this review, the upgrade version was available online from as low as \$148.99 (usually \$179.00) and the full-version was available for as low as \$205.00 on sale from one online dealer to typically between \$345.00 and \$399.99 from the majority of online stores.



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Software Review

Studio (Plus) Ver. 9

\$99.99

Published by Pinnacle

Reviewed by Lindy Lindemann

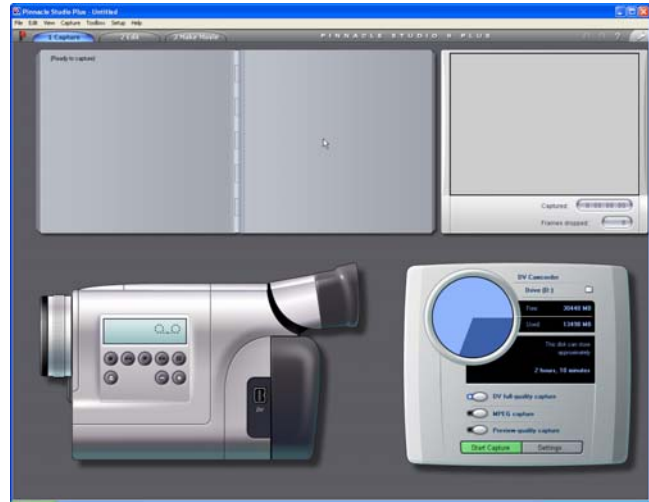


This remarkable program from Pinnacle is one of their three products in the “studio” class that can be used to capture, edit and create videos. As a professional videographer with over 30 years experience, I am amazed at the features that this product offers and how well it compares to the more costly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



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.

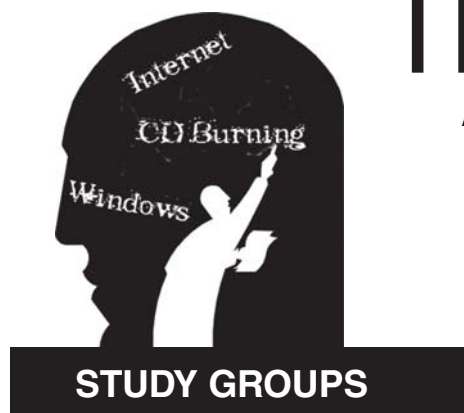
The MSRP for Pinnacle Studio Plus Ver. 9 is \$99.99 and can be ordered at www.pinnaclesys.com. It can also be purchased locally at CompUSA or Best Buy for the same price. There is a \$20 competitive rebate. Additional information about Pinnacle and their other products can be obtained at the web site. 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>.



August 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M. (Cancel)	2 BOD 6:30 P.M. Word 2000 7 - 9 P.M.	3 <			



The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

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 Small Business Server Special Interest Group (APCO SBS SIG) celebrated its first birthday on Friday, July 8th. We had a record turnout of 24 despite several 'regulars' having to be out of town or taking care of clients. The technical portion was a brief discussion of how to configure Internet Over the Internet (RPC over HTTP).

Our next meeting will be on Friday, August 5th. After the Taco Social we will have a discussion of WSUS, Windows Software Update Services.

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.>

Small Business Server Certification Study Group

The SBS Certification Study Group will focus on presentation of material related to Microsoft's Small Business Server Exam Preparation. The target audience includes computer consultants, and network administrators holding advanced Microsoft certifications MCP and MCSE. Experience with small business server product support is important. Due to the anticipated pace of the class and complexity of material, attendees should have previously passed an advanced Microsoft Server Certification Exam (MCP or MCSE) and be experienced and competent with SBS Win2000 or SBS Win2003.

Contact: Ed or Therese Weitz for information and registration.

Phone 210-946-4700 or e-mail <ed22@satx.rr.com>

When: Tuesdays, 6-9 pm

We will not meet on the Tuesday when the Alamo PC board meets

Where: Learning Center

Technical Rating Code: ★★ ★★

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 ★ - ★★ ★★

STUDY GROUPS (cont.)

Power Internet Study Group

This Study Group is intended for intermediate to advanced users - those who are now on the Internet and want to learn more. Each month a different Internet application will be discussed, such as 64 bit computers, SATA HDD technology, DSL and direct cable broadband connectivity, e-mail, browser use, MS Outlook, and virus protection in communications. This is a good place to share interests and insights about your experiences on the World Wide Web.

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: TBA, instructor needed

FREE CLASSES

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

Where: Resource Center

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

Technical Rating: ★

CorelDRAW I Class

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

Contact: Steve Tech
<stephentechnr@yahoo.com>
210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

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 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 Six (to Eight if

needed) Session class will begin a new cycle each March and September.

Contact: Mike Bianchi
<webmaster@alamopc.org>

When: Saturdays, 4-8 pm

Where: Learning Center

Prerequisite: Home Page Jumpstart Class, 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: ★ - ★★★

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.

FEE-BASED CLASSES

Power Point class

This course features a structured curriculum for Microsoft PowerPoint. Students will be introduced to PowerPoint and will experience hands on development of an entertaining PowerPoint presentation. Emphasis will be placed on Inserting Graphics, Text, Layout, Titles and Slide Transitions. Students will also learn to modify their presentations through Adding Sounds, Multimedia Movies and Timing. Some homework will be required to produce the finished PowerPoint Presentation. Call the Alamo PC Computer Learning Center to place your name on a Waiting List for the class. You will be notified when the next class is available.

Contact: Learning Center 736-0700

When: Dates and time to be announced

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 Sundays of odd numbered months, 2pm-5pm.

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: ★ - ★★★

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 Thursday 1pm-5pm

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 Thursday 1pm-5pm

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

October through November -

Photoshop 7 classes - 8 weeks on Fridays, 1 to 5 p.m.

The course will teach you how to modify and combine images to create realistic composite images. You will learn to use several tools for selecting parts of images, and will move, duplicate, and resize images. You will also learn to use layers, and to apply layer effects and filters to create special effects. Additionally, you will use painting tools and blending modes to create blending effects, and will perform adjustments to enhance images. A text is supplied, a CD with the images for the entire class and creative printed lessons are provided. Prerequisites: Participants MUST be a member of Alamo PC and know how to use a computer.

Students need the Software for Photoshop 7 or Elements 2 on their home computers to join these graphics instruction classes. Students need to have completed Computer Literacy or Senior Comp's Introduction To Windows or equivalent to be able to function properly and progress in these graphics programs.

When: Fridays 1-5 pm except holidays

Where: Learning Center

Fees: \$90 Alamo PC members (includes textbook) \$20 for Previous Students to retake the same class

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

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★

Contact: Beverly Bihn

<bihndolls@att.net>

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: ★

Help Numbers

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

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

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

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

Step One

0	ACT!	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.

- 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: <joecool@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

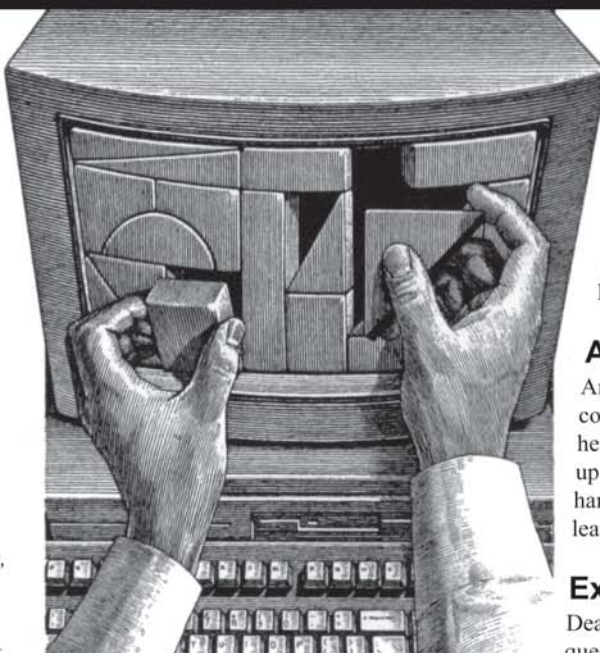
Every month you can attend a presentation meeting, which is open to our 2,500 members. Local and national companies provide the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

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

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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 you 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.

