

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

INTERNET ISSUE

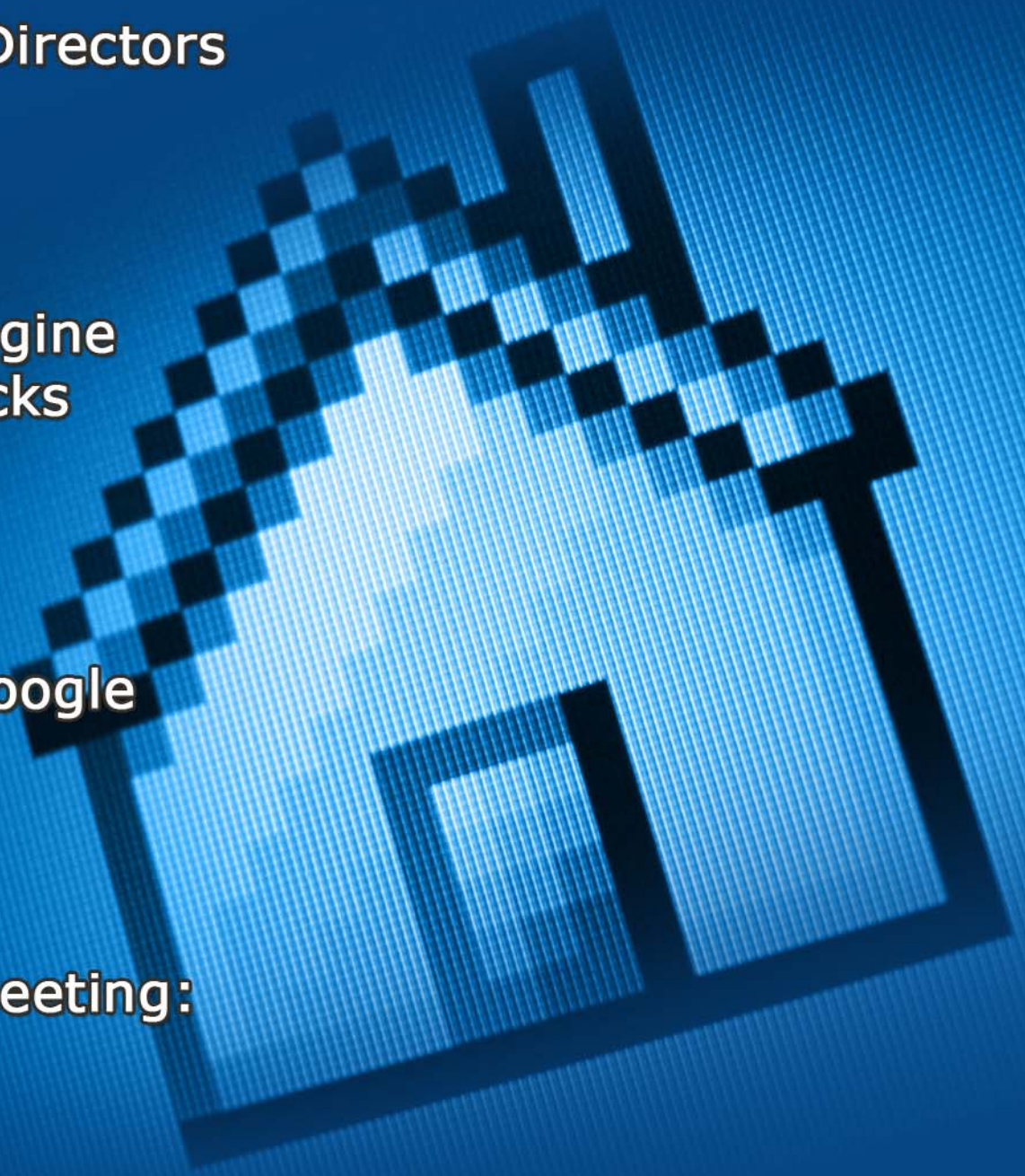
www.alamopc.org
September 2005
\$4.00

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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:

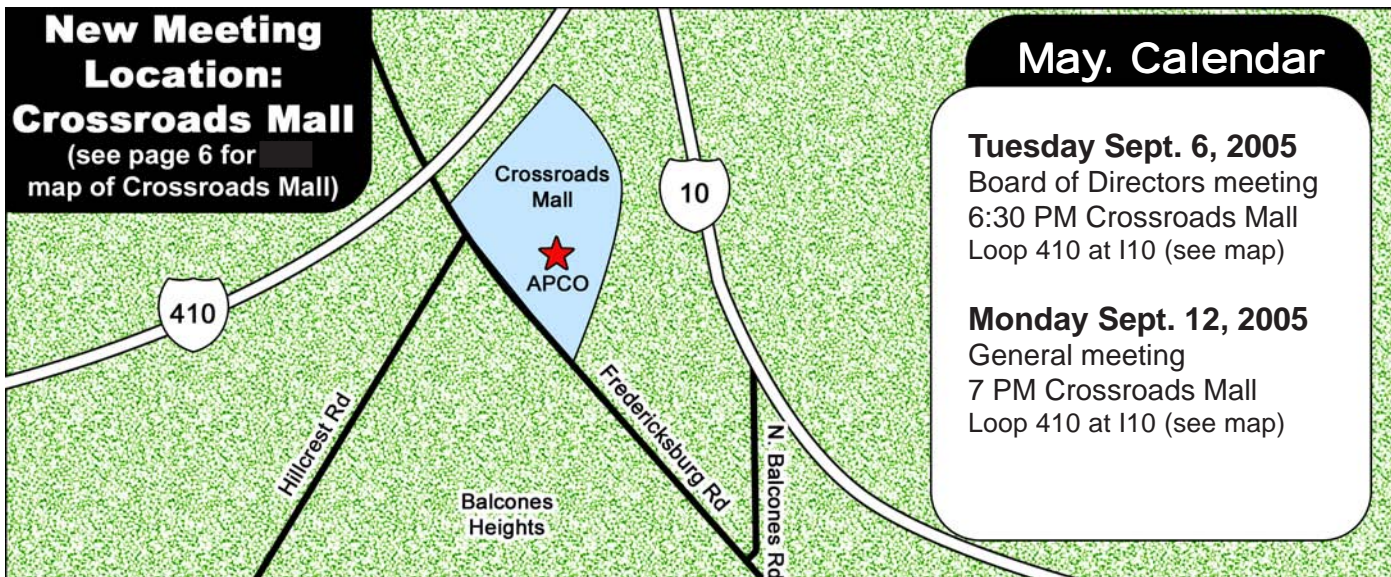
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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

Monday Sept. 12, 2005
General meeting
7 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I10 (see map)

Internet Junkie

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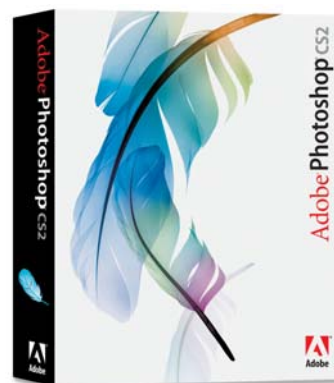
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Reviewed by Paul Vaughn

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Sharing Your World *Vinny Labash*

Everyone's a Publisher *Gabe Goldberg*

Browsers

Adding a New Dimension *Gabe Goldberg*

Doochiekeys, Doodads & Gizmos *Vinny Labash*

First Phishing, Now Pharming *John Pearce*

E-mail

Don't Fall for "Human Engineering" *Ira Wilsker*

An Examination of Google's Gmail *Richard Johnson*

How Spammers Get E-Mail Addresses *Dave Gerber*

Search Engines

Tips and Tricks *Richard Johnson*

Beyond Google *Richard Johnson*

product reviews

Book Reviews

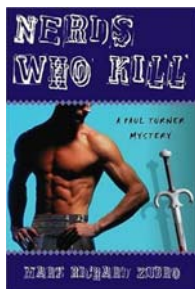
Computer Crimes *Susan Ives*

PC Hardware Annoyances *Catherine Haenze*

Photoshop CS Down & Dirty Tricks *Jim Morrison*

Software Reviews

CuteFTP Home *Bruce Cramer*

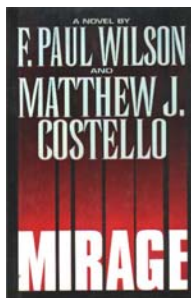


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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

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:

editor@alamopc.org

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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
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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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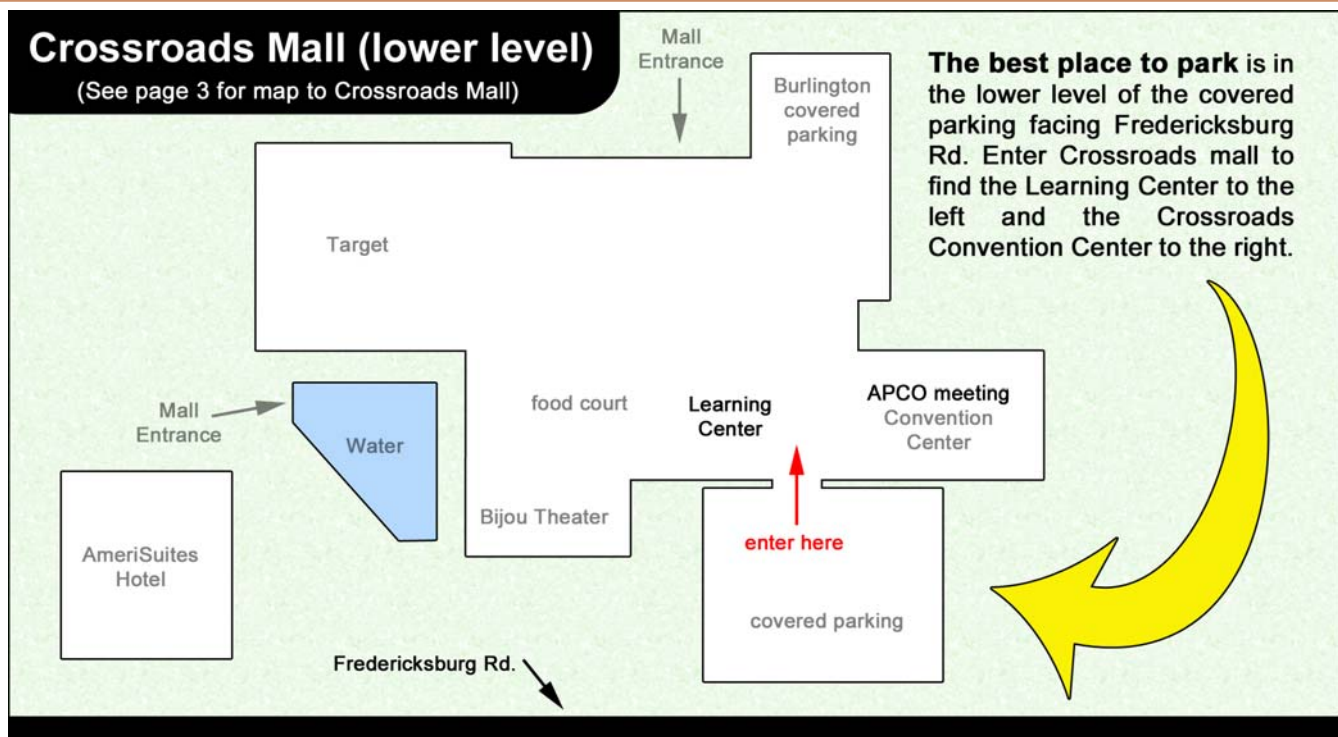
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

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



PC Alamode Links List

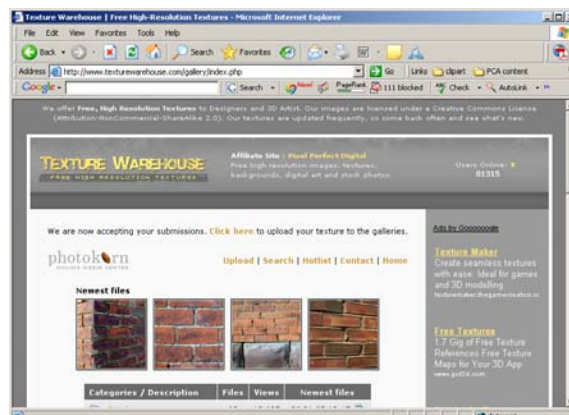


WordNet 2.1

<<http://wordnet.princeton.edu/>>

Submitted by Joseph de Leon, editor, *PC Alamode*

WordNet® is an online lexical reference system whose design is inspired by current psycholinguistic theories of human lexical memory. English nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are organized into synonym sets, each representing one underlying lexical concept. Different relations link the synonym sets.



Texture Warehouse

<<http://www.texturewarehouse.com/gallery/index.php>>

Submitted by Joseph de Leon, editor, *PC Alamode*

Free high resolution digital stock photography for either corporate or public use. A huge resource of awesome textures for any use. Works great for backgrounds or for creating patterns in Photoshop.

← enter

Board of Directors elections is this month. Please take a look at the President's Message for details on this year's election. You should also familiarize yourself with this year's candidates on page 34. Please log on to <<http://www.alamopc.org>> to cast your vote.

Internet issue

This issue of the PC Alamode takes you into a few very popular segments of the Internet. More and more people are taking advantage of blogging, or keeping a Web log. One of the hottest topics in journalism is the concept of the citizen journalist. Join the forces by keeping an online journal about anything you can think of... from severe weather to scrap booking.

Every one who accesses the Internet uses a browser. Gone are the days when you could choose from a handful of browsers. Keep up to date with some of the new and interesting things browsers can do today.

The Internet wouldn't be as powerful a communication tool without e-mail.

Learn about Google's G-Mail as well keeping abreast of the latest e-mail based scam: pharming. You will also gain insight into how spammers get your e-mail address in the first place.

The highlight of this month's issue is the section on search engines. Google is probably the most frequently used tool for searching the Internet. After reading the section on search engines, you will learn ways to make Google do things you never thought of. It doesn't stop there... read about other search engine options too!

New columns

For some time I have been experimenting with new columns. This month features a new column called RAM & Reason by Rob Rice of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City. Rob's first article in PC Alamode deals with Opera, a powerful browser that is quite popular in Europe.

I have received several comments requesting that PC 101 resume. I'm pleased to announce the next issue of PC Alamode will comply.

If you have any ideas or comments about your magazine, please let me know.

Joseph de Leon, Editor

<editor@alamopc.org>



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

Joseph has worked in the graphics industry for 7 years and teaches graphics and web classes at San Antonio College.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

We Need You!



to take time to evaluate the relationship that exists between you and The Alamo PC Organization. Why? Because without you, but especially individuals willing to give the Organization some time and talent, this organization will be a "Use to Be."

Voting

Last month I indicated that "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 - Bylaws and directors."

A postcard was sent to each member addressing the voting, and the subject was again mentioned at the monthly meeting on August 8th.

Bylaws Voting

The first vote was for the members to accept or reject the proposed changes to the Bylaws. A copy of the current Bylaws and the proposed Bylaws were posted side-by-side on the Alamo PC web site so a comparison could be made. When the 14 day voting period ended, the total votes cast indicated that only about 10% of the members took the time to vote. Not a very impressive figure for such an important vote. But, the amended Bylaws were accepted. [Probably the most noteworthy change was reducing the number of directors from thirteen (13) to seven (7).]

Director Voting

The second vote, which is currently in progress, is to elect directors. Our August 8th membership meeting was the

annual meeting and was the time when Article 5.4 of the Bylaws was 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." It was the final time for accepting nominations for the 2006 fiscal year (Oct 05-Sep 06) Board positions.

At the meeting, nine (9) nominations were made. Three (3) of the nominee declined, leaving only six (6) for seven (7) board positions. (It doesn't take a rocket scientist to do the math! Think about where we would be if we still had 13 positions to fill.) The biography of each of the remaining nominees has been posted to the web site for members to review. Voting on 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. However, it may if individuals are not willing to help.

CAUG Example

Remember the two examples I provided in my June article, of other user groups making appeals to their members for help in "Making Things Go," within the respective group. The first was an article by the now past president of the Coastal Area Users Group (CAUG) <caug.org>, that meets in Corpus Christi, Texas. The second was a notice from the Twin Cities PC User Group (TC/PC) <tcpc.com> that meets in the area of Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota. Both had the same basic underlying theme - "HELP - We can't seem to get anyone to step forward and fill positions!"

And remember the follow-on article last month, again from the past president of the Coastal Area Users Group (CAUG) <caug.org>, that meets in Corpus Christi, Texas (a follow-up to his previous article): "...We just held the board meeting for May at which much was discussed ... it was decided by the board, that I would write this one last plea for volunteers, and if none step up by our July social, we the board ... will put CAUG on 'Life Support' until such time we get members willing to take some of these key offices...."

CAUG Latest News

"Starting effective August 2005, the Board of Directors of the Coastal Area User's Group (CAUG) have decided to go the 'life support mode.' Since there were no takers for vacant officer positions to this date, despite repeated pleadings by the board, the decision was made...." This appears to be a user group traveling the "down hill" road to the end. I remain hopeful that we are not on that road, but with the interest level being shown in the Bylaws voting and the number willing to serve as a director, we may be flirting with traveling that road.

Ask not what...

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 "members" password protected section). Also, keep track of when your membership expires, and renew well in advance, to save the organization a notification 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 through the organization <president@alamopc.org> or privately <wlklutzjr@juno.com>. Also, if you have anything (comment, question, statement, concern), please make someone aware of it. I welcome all communications, especially those on how we can improve the Alamo PC Organization and increase member interest!

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 Lois Trull



September Program

David Steward

Microsoft and Board of Directors Election

September will be a very special month for the members of the Alamo PC Organization. We will be honored by a visit from our long time friends at Microsoft. The main presenter, Lara Pryor, will be showing off her Tips and Tricks for Office 2003.

We all know that Office 2003 is a very powerful desktop solution to all of the facets of everyday life, both at home and in the office, but do we actually know how powerful it is? Do we know how many things have been built into the package that we could be using to simplify our lives. Chances are, we are not using even a fraction of what this marvelous package can do. Well, after Lara's presentation, we will be using more of these functions.

I am very excited about having these folks come and present to us. It is something that all of us, can make use of. In addition, Lara is a Microsoft expert. So if you have questions about Microsoft, now is the time to speak up and get your question answered.

As usual, the meeting will be held at the Crossroads Convention Center located in Crossroads Mall on Fredricksburg Road, at 7:00 PM on September 12th. Why don't you bring a friend and let them experience the camaraderie of being a member of the Alamo PC. I look forward to seeing everyone there.



Senior Comp

A program of Seniors teaching Seniors
Classes starting every few weeks.
No previous experience necessary.

Small Classes with hands on training.

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

Significant Happenings...

John Gaddis, Education VP

Recently, there has been some interest shown regarding a camera workshop. Joseph de Leon, Beverly Bihn and Clarke Bird have done an outstanding job of teaching Apconians how to improve their pictures after they have been taken. Now, Joe M. Davis, a professional photographer, would like to show members how to get better pictures when they take them.

When it comes to photography composition, or computer enhancing of photos, Joe says that he is very experienced. He has just purchased a Canon EOS Rebel XT digital camera. In bright sunlight it records each photo at approximately 4MB. He has photographed many weddings in the past using 35 MM film, but switched to digital about 4 years ago.

Joe is very well versed in Microsoft Digital Pro 10. It is rated by consumer report as user friendly, and is reasonable in price, about \$70 on sale, or \$120 at Best Buy. In his opinion, it can do anything that Photoshop can do. He says that with confidence and has just completed a class in Introduction to Macromedia with Northwest Vista College. Part of that class included Photoshop 7.

Joe is a retired public school teacher and has taught photography to students of the Northside ISD. He graduated from Sul Ross State University with a bachelors degree in Industrial Technology and a secondary teaching certificate. Photography was part of that degree.

One of Joe's main interests is in Texas wildflowers and he has developed certain techniques for using them in the creation of e-greeting cards as well as hard copy.

Joe is considering making field trips a part of his workshop. The first workshop will not have a fee, but latter ones may have a fee added. If you want to learn how a professional takes pictures, call the Learning Center, 736-0700, and pre-register. Details to be announced.

Beverly Bihn will be offering her **Playing Cards Class** on all Thursdays of October, from 1:00 - 5:00 pm. *Prerequisite:* must have com-

pleted either Photoshop 7 or Elements 2 instruction classes at Alamo PC from Beverly Bihn. Participants from Clarke Bird's Photo Editing class will not be eligible. Everyone must have Photoshop 7 or Elements 2 software on their home computers. The fee will be \$20.00 for the class. Beverly says, "We will construct a deck of personal playing cards using photos provided by each participant for their own cards." A small laminating machine (\$14.00) and pouches of laminating sleeves (\$5.00 for a packet of 100) may be provided for the extra fees or she will give addresses where they may be purchased. Registration is required and will be limited to 14.

Calendar Classes will be offered on all Thursdays in November (except Thanksgiving day) from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. *Prerequisite:* must have completed either Photoshop 7 or Elements 2 instruction classes from Beverly Bihn at Alamo PC, no students from Clarke Bird's Photo Editing class are eligible. Students must have the software on their home computers. We will construct a calendar for each month of 2006, using personal photos provided by each participant. Fee is \$20.00 for the class, limited to 14. Registration is required.

Photoshop 7 Instruction Classes will be each Friday of October through November from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. *Prerequisite:* must have the Photoshop 7 software on their home computers. Software available from www.CDSalesUSA.com for \$49.00 plus shipping. Must have working knowledge to operate a computer, having taken some basic class at Alamo PC. Fee is \$90.00 which will include a text and CD from Beverly that will include the images for the lessons. Written lessons are provided each week so the class can follow the lessons. Those who have previously taken the instruction class may repeat the class for a fee of \$20.00. Class is limited to 14 and registration is 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

Who knows better than the companies that make the product how best to use it? This month we'll look at some classic recipes off the back of the box to make something good, fast and easy to prepare.

Chicken Caesar Tetrazzini

8 ozs. uncooked spaghetti
2 cups shredded or cubed cooked chicken
1-cup chicken broth
1 cup Hidden Valley Caesar Dressing
1 jar (1-1/2 ozs.) sliced mushrooms, drained
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 Tablespoons dry breadcrumbs

Cook spaghetti according to package directions. Drain and combine with chicken, broth, dressing and mushrooms in a large mixing bowl. Place mixture in a 2-quart casserole. Mix together cheese and breadcrumbs; sprinkle over spaghetti mixture. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 25 minutes or until casserole is hot and bubbly. Makes 4 servings.

Spinach & Orange Salad

10 cups torn spinach
2 cups fresh orange sections
1/2 cup sliced red onion
1 package (4 ounces) Athenos Crumbled Feta Cheese
1 cup prepared
Good Seasons Fat Free Italian Salad Dressing

Toss spinach, oranges, onion and cheese in large bowl.

Add dressing; toss lightly

Variation: Prepare as directed, substituting 2 cans (11 ounces each) mandarin orange segments, drained, for fresh orange sections.

Variation: Prepare as directed, adding 1/4 cup toasted slivered almonds.



French Onion Bread Stix

1-1/3 cups French's Taste toppers French Fried Onions, crushed

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 container (11 ounces) refrigerated soft bread sticks

1 egg white, beaten

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. combine Taste toppers and cheese in pie plate. Separate dough into 12 pieces on sheet of waxed paper.

Brush one side of dough with egg white. Dip pieces wet side down into crumbs, pressing firmly. Baste top surface with egg white and dip into crumbs.

Twist pieces to form a spiral. Arrange on ungreased baking sheet. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown.

Dulce de Leche

1 (14 oz.) can Eagle Brand Sweetened Condensed Milk (NOT evaporated milk) Assorted dippers, such as cookies, cake, banana chunks, apple slices and /or strawberries

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Pour Eagle Brand into 9-inch pie plate. Cover with foil; place in larger shallow baking pan. Pour hot water into larger pan to depth of 1 inch.

Bake 1 hour or until thick and caramel-colored. Beat until smooth. Cool 1 hour. Refrigerate until serving time. Serve as dip with assorted dippers. Store leftovers covered in refrigerator for up to 1 week.





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.

In response to my comments about misleading HD warranties, Ira Wilsker, APCUG board member, sent me the following: "The federal Magnuson-Moss Warranty Improvement Act, effective July 1, 1976, **REQUIRES** any seller of an item that has a retail selling price of \$15 or more AND has a warranty, to make a copy of that warranty available on request **PRIOR** to purchase! In the future, wherever you buy items covered, **ASK** for the warranty **BEFORE** you buy it. Under the law the seller **MUST** let you see a copy prior to any purchase. Look at the FTC web site: <<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/buspubs/warranty.htm>>" Thanks Ira. I don't know if my readers in Canada have any protection like that for consumers?

*Last Chance For The Biometric Unlocking Device Deal

This deal was only supposed to be for two months, but Hassan will probably still give you the discount on the fingerprint unlocking system for your locks, if you ask. Unlocking your doors doesn't get much better. E-mail him and ask for more information so he knows you read about it. To order, e-mail him at <Hassan.Hares@ekeyUSA.com> and check for product description at <<http://www.ekeyusa.com>>. 30% off is a great discount on the product.

*Special Rebates For Zio Corp. Products

Chris Allen, Channel Sales Manager, has set up rebates on several Zio Corporation products. This is a special situation and you can download a PDF containing all the rebate forms from my Web site's Announcement page. This rebate is specifically for the DealsGuy column, although a rebate form is also on their own Web site right now. Use the rebate code "DealsGuy" on the form. This way you can shop wherever you like getting your best price when purchasing the products, then send for your rebate listed below.

CameraMate VideoSafe CM-53000: \$10 MIR
 CameraMate Real Time Video CM-50000: \$20 MIR
 Dazzle Universal Media Reader/Writer DM-24001: \$20 MIR
 Dazzle 990 (Digital Camera/Camera Phone Manager): \$20 MIR
 Dazzle 8 in 1 DM-22000: \$15 MIR

MIRs not valid with any other promotion, and one rebate per household.

My Dazzle 990 mini-review is below and the two CameraMate products were written up in the May issue of the DealsGuy column. I have not tried the other products.

I received the Digital 990 (Digital Camera/Camera Phone manager) to try out. It is 4" long by 2 1/2" wide by 1/2" thick and does some neat things. You connect it to your computer's USB port and it goes to work. There are five slots to accommodate popular media cards for a digital camera or phone. It also has two USB slots that act as a hub. They say the Dazzle 990 Hi-Speed Reader/Writer allows you to manage your digital stuff; you can transfer photos, contact lists, ring tones, MP3s, etc. between your mobile phone, digital camera, MP3 player, flash drive, and even any USB flash memory device and your PC. The package lists 17 different types of supported media for your camera phone or digital camera.

Packaged with it are two CDs containing ProPix Sound that enables you to add music or sound to your photos, ProPix on TV that allows creating a slideshow for your TV, and automatic backup on a CD. That CD includes ProPix Address Manager that works with SIM based mobile phones and updates your contact list from your PC. Also included is ProPix Share to share photos with friends easier and faster than using e-mail by using peer-to-peer technology. The other CD contains Paint Shop Photo Album (standard edition). There is more and you can check their Web site at <<http://www.ziocorp.com>>, although their Web site needs work since I didn't find as much information as on the package.

I enjoyed adding commentary to the photos taken on our Panama Canal cruise and setting up a slide show. Since I don't have a picture phone, I couldn't try those functions. I did move around some of the image files from the media cards to my USB external HD, USB thumb drive, PC, etc. and it worked well. It handles both USB speeds. You need Windows 2000 or XP for this product. An available free download on their Web site is Orb Networks that allows accessing the photos, video and music on your home PC (broadband connected) from your Internet enabled mobile device. As for using it as a USB hub, it normally handles low powered USB devices, but an optional accessory power supply is available. MSRP for the Dazzle 990 is \$49.95.

Dazzle Universal Media Reader/Writer DM-24001: MSRP \$39.99

Dazzle 8 in 1 DM 22000: A high-speed reader for eight different card media: MSRP \$29.95

CameraMate VideoSafe CM-53000 allows you to capture analog video/audio from any VCR or camcorder and burn it to a CD or DVD and includes some hardware: MSRP \$49.99.

CameraMate Real Time Video CD-50000 is an adapter and software for capturing the video/audio from any VCR or camcorder for the purpose of burning to a CD or DVD. However, Real Time Video software also offers Autoedit Wizard, Autoedit Storyboard Wizard, Randomize Wizard and a DVD Burn Wizard. Software and drivers are included on a CD. Adapter cables for RCA audio/video/SVHS plugs are not included, but are easy to obtain and many folks have them lying around: MSRP \$69.99.

Some After-Thoughts About MGM vs Grokster

John Brewer, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

John Brewer practices law in Oklahoma City, is a member of the Governor's and Legislative Task Force for E-Commerce, and enjoys issues relating to eBusiness and cyberspace. E-mail him at <johnb@jnbrewer.com>

In July, this column discussed the MGM v Grokster opinion that had just been issued by the U.S. Supreme Court. The case pertained to file sharing and the liability of the companies who are developing and distributing file sharing software. A reading of the opinion gives me the impression that it was a fair assessment of the issues.

The opinion of the Court was unanimous and was written by Justice David Souter. The mechanism for opinions of the Supreme Court is interesting. One justice is given credit for the opinion but that does not mean the other justices do not play a role in the drafting of the opinion. "Draft" opinions are circulated between the members of the Court and the final opinion generally is a compromise document that seeks to secure the acquiescence of the other members of the Court. When other members of the Court agree with an opinion, he or she "joins" the opinion. Sometimes the justices will agree on the final result but disagree with the reasoning in the opinion. When this happens, one or more other justices may write a concurring opinion. If a justice disagrees with the result, he or she may write a dissenting opinion.

In this case, Justice Ginsburg filed a concurring opinion and Justices Rehnquist and Kennedy joined her opinion. Justice Breyer also filed a concurring opinion that was joined by Justices Stevens and O'Connor. So three justices formed the majority opinion and three justices each formed a concurring opinion. This probably means that there were three "major" opinions circulating within the Court. Justices Scalia and Thomas signed off on the Souter opinion. This can make it difficult to determine the final result regarding the law because the reasoning can differ within the three opinions. However, I think the rule is that the Souter opinion will govern as to the law.

The bottom line is that the Supreme Court sent the case back to the trial court for further proceedings and offered some clarification as to the law regarding copyright. The Supreme Court did not overrule the Sony Betamax VCR case from twenty-plus years ago. Individuals can still use their VCRs to record and "time shift" television programs. The Supreme Court ruled in 1984 that if the device had a "substantial non-infringing use" then it was permissible within the framework of copyright law and did not constitute a copyright infringement on its face. That ruling is still the law. There are a number of devices that are legally in use because they are capable of substantial non-infringing uses. CD and DVD burners are a classic example. However, the Sony Betamax case did not declare open season for copyright infringement. It was limited to the legality of the device itself.

In more recent years, Napster entered the picture and set up a central server system that permitted the easy transfer of copyrighted works. The courts ruled that the Napster system had crossed over the boundaries of permissible conduct. The end result was the shutdown of Napster.

Grokster and its similar entities learned from Napster. There is no central server at Grokster. The software enables two users who are both using the same software, and who are both connected to the Internet, to identify files on the computers that have been put into "shared" folders. Then the computers can interchange files. Multiply these two computers

by millions of computers and one can readily understand why the owners of copyrighted content object to these companies developing and distributing file sharing software.

However, the mechanics of the Grokster model make it more difficult to show that Grokster is engaging in "direct" copyright infringement (as was Napster). The fallback theory is one of secondary infringement; i.e., is Grokster engaging in contributory (inducing others to infringe) or vicarious (profiting from another's infringement and not trying to stop it) infringement. The trial court's opinion that was upheld by the Circuit Court of Appeals said the Grokster software was capable of substantial non-infringing use and was sheltered under the principles of the Sony Betamax case.

In the Grokster case, the Supreme Court said there was simply too much smoke to apply Sony Betamax to the facts. Grokster and its sister companies jumped into the Napster vacuum and also profited by selling advertising. So there appears to be elements of both contributory and vicarious infringement. That issue has been sent back to the trial court for fact-finding and a decision on the merits, with the additional guidance that has been furnished by the U.S. Supreme Court.

So, after working through this process, what is the bottom line? The bottom line is that the peer-to-peer software companies will rework their software to try to fit within the new rules. That means more litigation as to what is permissible and what is not. It also means the recording and video industries will spend lots of US dollars to lobby Congress to strengthen the copyright laws. It does not mean there has been a change in the law that permits the sharing of copyrighted content via the Internet. The sharing of copyrighted content is still improper.

There is one other important element that should send cold chills through the recording and video industries. If the software company is situated in a venue that is outside of the reach of U.S. copyright laws or similar national law, then there is a limited remedy against the Groksters of the world.

Is the battle over because of the Grokster decision? No. A better observation is that this case is simply another chapter in what will be a very long book.

STUDY GROUPS

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



Opera: Better than the Best

Rob Rice, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Rob Rice is a computer specialist working in Anchorage, Alaska. Rob can be contacted at <articles@isp.com>

I'm one of those people who uses at least three different Internet browsers every day and at times even more. The reasons vary, but typically it is because someone at work has built an Intranet Website that will only display correctly in Internet Explorer, or I need the tabbed browsing feature of Firefox while doing research, or I want to see how one of my Websites looks in Mozilla/Netscape or some other type of browser. But when I come home and kick off my shoes, Opera is my browser of choice. The only browser I have ever paid for.

Opera, (<http://www.opera.com>) is a fast, easy to customize and secure browser from Norway. The speed and the tabbed windows feature is what first attracted me. With a multitude of skins that can be downloaded to change Opera's appearance and the numerous button and search field combinations available, Opera can have a setup for just about everyone.

But it was the many security features that enticed me to stay with Opera. Two of my favorites are the ability to have your Internet cache and cookies deleted automatically when you shut down Opera and the one click deletion of cookies, cache, history, and all private data.

I have also come to love "mouse gestures". This is a way of navigating back and forth between web pages by simply holding a mouse button and sweeping it to the left or right. Are you tired of pop-up ads? Opera has a built in pop-up blocker that is one of the best I have ever encountered.

Opera also has a very nice download manager that allows you to stop and resume downloads. If you ever add up the cost buying a pop-up blocker, download manager, and a cache and cookie cleaner you will see I saved time and money by buying Opera. For purchasing and pricing information check the opera Website. A free version is also available that is advertiser supported.

Features found in the latest version include:

Small size - Opera is less than half the size of most major browsers. **Sessions** - Opera lets you save a collection of open pages as a single session. **Multiple Document Interface** - Displays multiple pages in the same application window, allowing you to resize and position the pages next to each other. **Changing clients** - Opera can import bookmarks and e-mail messages from the most commonly used applications and formats. **The Wand** - Opera's password manager, the Wand, remembers your usernames and passwords so you will not have to. **Pop-up blocking** - Opera lets the user control whether Web sites can use pop-ups. Select to block them all, or let the browser open only pop-ups that you have requested. **Opera MailIn** - Opera's e-mail client, the full texts of messages are indexed to allow for speedy searches. There is a built-in spam filter that learns as you add and remove messages. You may also set up custom filters. **Voice Interaction** - The voice feature allows you to control the interface by talking and to have documents read aloud. The voice feature is

customizable and adaptive according to your needs. Voice is currently offered in English and runs on Windows 2000 and XP. **Chat Client** - You can now use Opera to connect to IRC servers and chat in rooms or privately, send files to other users, and so forth. The chat panel lists previously-visited chat rooms and contacts that are on line. **WAP** - Opera can access WAP and WML content (content designed primarily for mobile phones) without a mobile phone connection. **Mouse Gestures** - Opera supports mouse-movement recognition, allowing users to perform certain movements with their pointing device in order to access commonly- used features. These gestures can all be customized. **Fast Forward** - Opera can automatically analyze the current page and work out the most likely URL for the next page in a sequence, and provides a button for this purpose. For example, when visiting an image gallery with numbered images, clicking the fast forward button will move you to the next image in the sequence. **Hotclick** - Double clicking on a word on a page will pop up a menu that provides options related to the selected text, such as a Web, dictionary or encyclopedia search. **Delete Private Data** - Opera can be configured to clear the history and cache when exiting, to protect the user's privacy. Any kind of private data can easily be erased at any time. **Cookie Control** - Opera gives you detailed control of which cookies to accept and reject, such as allowing for different set-ups for different servers. **Master Password** - Set a master password to block access to e-mail downloads and Wand logins. **Browser Spoofing** - When sites are poorly written and set up to work with only one or a limited set of browsers, Opera provides the user with the ability to masquerade as another browser to get optimized content. **Off-line Mode** - Set Opera to "work off-line", and no attempts will be made to contact remote hosts. Only cached Web pages will be displayed. **Print Preview** - When printing the whole document, Opera supports previewing what pages will look like before they are printed. **Favicons** - Opera supports favicons (Web site icons) in the address field and in bookmarks. **Standards Support** - Opera prides itself in supporting all major Web standards currently in use, including CSS2, HTML4, XHTML1, HTTP1.1, DOM1, JavaScript, PNG, Unicode, and the Unicode Bidirectional Algorithm. **Validation** - Opera provides Web authors with immediate access to page validation, thus encouraging good practices on the Web. **Check Your Spelling** - If your computer has Aspell with one or more dictionaries installed, Opera will recognize this on startup and let you spell-check any input to an e-mail message or other text edit field in Opera. **Kiosk Mode** - Registered versions of Opera support a lock-down mode in which the browser can be used for unattended information stands in public environments.



Reducing the Pain of Google Searches

K. Joyce McDonald, Alamo PC

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

“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.”

I wrote this in my August article. Since then, I have been using Google a lot, and looking for methods to refine my searches to produce a manageable number of returns. I haven’t discovered any magic formulas, but I have discovered some methods for using the Google tools that will help get rid of a few thousand patently irrelevant returns. Please note that my methods have been derived from pure trial and error rather than any education I have received via book or classroom. Consider my methods a stopgap until I give this issue more serious study.

Google is something that the home PC user probably can’t live without. Google is a powerful search engine in spite of its shortcomings (which it shares with just about any search engine) and it is still an extremely useful tool. The problem is getting a manageable number of search results, since returned results can easily number in the millions.

People who are not familiar with computer search methods may have ignored the options whose links appear to the right of the Google search window. Even those PC users with a rudimentary knowledge of search algorithms may have avoided the advanced features surmising that “ands” and “ors” and quotation marks get too complicated to put together. The options, however, named “advanced search,” “preferences” and “language tools” don’t require “ands” “ors” or even quotation marks. Google has eliminated the coding from search arguments (I prefer the term “search criteria”) and provided blanks with clear labels in which to enter your search terms. Google has also provided you with a means to set up your preferences as if Google itself were your browser. Thus, you can set up your standard preferences for future searches. If you close your browser, the preferences are still there when you navigate back to Google.

I strongly recommend setting up your preferences, as it can painlessly pare down your search results by eliminating results in other languages and filtering out Internet porn from your returns. To set up your preferences, click the “Preferences” link that appears to the right of the blank window where you enter your Google search term. You can set up five different preferences on this window.

The first preference is “Interface Language.” The Interface Language is the language in which the Google tips, messages and buttons appear. Your language is probably set to “English,” and doesn’t need to be changed, but, just for a lark, you might want to change the language to Elmer Fudd.

The second preference is the “Search Language.” Changing this option will greatly narrow your search results, especially if you have no interest in viewing search results in any language but English. Click the radio button next to the words “Search only for pages written in these language(s)” so that a green dot appears in the center. Now click the “English” checkbox.

The third preference is SafeSearch Filtering. Assuming that you’re not interested in viewing pornographic or explicit websites as part of your search, links to sexually explicit sites will only clutter up your search results. The default is “Use Moderate Filtering.” Un-

less your searches require explicit material, it makes more sense to select “Use Strict Filtering,” so click that radio button until you see a green dot in the middle.

The other two options won’t eliminate clutter in your search results, but they will make them more friendly. Preference four allows you to change the number of results per page, which is actually determined by how much scrolling you will tolerate (and possibly, how long it takes your computer to download a page of results.) If you set this number to 20, you get more results per screen, which requires more scrolling but less jumping back and forth between links and pages. If you’re on a slow connection, such as a dialup line, changing this value to “5” might speed up the loading of a page of results.

The fifth option “Results Window” allows you to elect to keep the Google search window open and have the results be returned in a separate browser window, keeping your Google search window always at the ready. I like this, because some sites disable the “back” button once you arrive, which means you may have to navigate back to Google and start your search again. When you set your preferences, click the “Save Preferences” button. This will return you to your Google search window with your preferences ready for action.

Last month, I mentioned I was searching for information on Antarctica, which has proved to be a broad search topic. I started with just a standard Google search, entering “Antarctica” in the Google search blank. I got 17,600,000 results. Setting “English” as my “Search Language” in Preferences narrowed the search to 16,200,000. Setting my SafeSearch Preference to “Strict Filtering” cut the number of results to 16,100,000. So I didn’t reduce my results by a large margin, considering the number of returns I got, but it does show you how many irrelevant pages you can get if you don’t filter out explicit pages and languages you can’t read.

You can further filter your search using the “Advanced Search” feature. To do this, click the link next to the Google search blank—the one that says, understandably, “Advanced Search.” Here you can reverse some of the options you set in “Preferences” by setting “Language” and “SafeSearch” options for this particular search. However, assuming that you have already set your global search preferences, the most useful features of the advanced search are the items you enter in the “Find Results” section.

By entering both “Antarctica” and “Vostok” (separated by a space) in the box labeled “with all of the words” I narrowed my search to 49,100 returns. In the box labeled “without the words” I entered “Viagra Cialis Levitra.” My search narrowed to 48,600 results. In the box labeled “with at least one of the words” I typed “coldest” and in the box labeled “with the exact phrase” I typed “coldest place on earth.” My search is now down to a manageable, if daunting, 618 returns.

Since starting to use the advanced features, I am much more confident in my searches and much less frustrated with the search process. Maybe it will work for you too.



Good Things about the Internet

Preventive Maintenance

Russell James, Alamo PC

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

ALAMODE COLUMNS

With all the bad things that can get you on the Internet I tend to spend a lot of time in this column pointing them out. Things like viruses, spam, hack attacks, bad software, and computer things that don't work the way you think they should. With me pointing out all this negative stuff all the time I thought it might do some good for us all to take a look at all the good things that technology has done for us.

Even those that don't have a computer have been affected by technology more than they can imagine. Non pc owners use mobile phones, digital audio/video equipment, digital cameras, computerized appliances, autos, atms, voicemail, and many other items that would not be around and working as well and as fast as they do without the advances that we have seen in technology. The chips that run these devices are being made smaller by the day and they are running faster than we could have ever imagined. Prices are dropping because of the advances that have been made. It is still going to cost a lot to be on the edge of technology but you can get some pretty good stuff at pretty good prices because it is not the latest and greatest that is available.

Computers have come a long way in the last few years and with the increase in the speed and availability of computers has come the growth of the Internet. If there is some information that you would like to have, it most likely can be found by searching Google. Where do these people find the time to put up Web pages about anything and everything that you could imagine? The numbers tend to astound me.

Then there are the many daily tasks that we can now do from the comfort of our easy chair. I recently installed a wireless router so I can do this now. Shopping online saves time, money, and gas. Even if you don't buy the item online, you can find out where the item is available and at what prices and then use MapQuest to find out the best route to the store.

We use the Internet to check bank statements, transfer funds between accounts, pay our household bills, pay college bills for the kids and any other bills you might have. We have the ability to check on our savings and investment accounts in real time and make changes just as fast. The Internet has increased the speed of our money to no end.

Computers and the Internet have allowed many professions to move out of the office and back to the house. Writers and transcribers do not need to go into an office anymore. Most of the writers for this magazine write from the house and e-mail their columns to the editor at the last minute. Well maybe the last minute thing is just me. The research that is available on the Internet would rival most major libraries. We don't have to use typewriters and white out because we have automatic spell-check and a backspace key that will remove any error. The only problem I have not found a solution for is having the wrong word spelled correctly in the right place. That grammar check just doesn't work the way it should all the time. But then neither do my typing fingers or brain.

Many people use the Internet to go back to work from the house without actually being at work. You don't have to stay at the office until 9 or 10 and miss supper with the family. You can go home at a reasonable hour, have supper and some quiet time. After you have relaxed for a couple of hours you are going to be much more alert and the report or project will go much faster. We are able to use programs like pcAnywhere to perform maintenance on our servers and workstations from the comforts of our homes and without the bother of having the user waiting on us to finish. Most of the updates that are done are scheduled and performed without a human present but some still need

the human touch. Now it can be a virtual touch from anywhere around the globe.

We have the ability to keep in touch with family and friends through e-mail and chat programs. We can communicate with vendors without having to play phone tag talking to voicemail. We send an e-mail, they get it and they answer it. No more waiting for someone to call us back and talk to our voicemail because we were on the phone trying to call them back. Phone number, address and zip code lookups are done with the click of a few keys in half the time.

Does anyone know where the holiday schedule for mail and trash pickup is? They sent it to me in the postal mail and I always end up looking it up on the Internet when I need it. I can finally remember where I put the favorite but I have given up on printing it out because I always put it in such a good place I can never find it at the next holiday.

Technology has made all of our lives easier and given us the ability to have a lot more free time. It never seems to work out that way because it seems that the faster I move the behinder I get. That must be the real way of the world.

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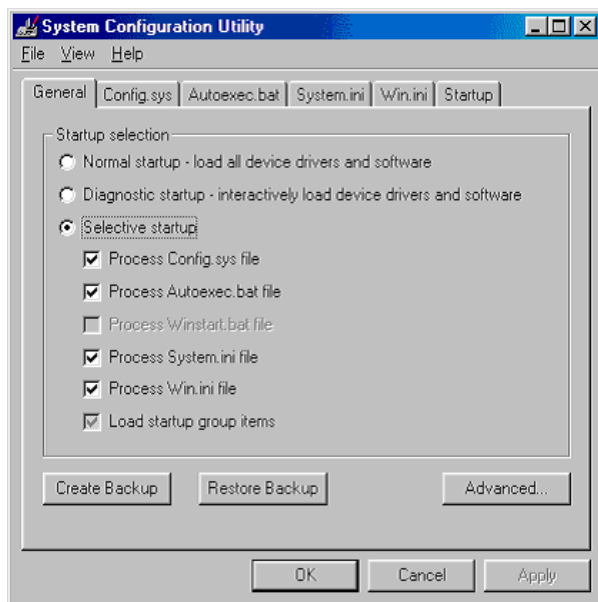


Bruce Cramer, Alamo PC

A+, Network+, Microsoft Certified Professional (Windows XP). Bruce is retired from the Army. He is the owner/operator of PC Pro Computer Services <www.pcp4u.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 31.

As viruses and spyware evolve and get tougher to combat more stringent measures have to be taken to stay safe from them. I can remember when as long as you had "some" type of antivirus application to check the floppy disks you inserted in your computer you were "safe". Today with the proliferation of broadband connections, email and Internet surfing you can get attacked by malware in too many ways. The problem is that most people don't recognize the symptoms of a malware attack. In this article I will discuss a few symptoms that you can look out for and cures for ITDs (Internet Transmitted Diseases) before they get a chance to bring your computer to it's knees.

Symptom #1: Is your computer running slow, does it take a while to boot up? This is a sure sign that too much is going on behind the scenes. Most systems today come with plenty of RAM or random access memory, to deliver all the resources you may need for your basic computing needs. However, malware is known to insert itself in your computers startup menu meaning it is running from the time your computer boots up and is there for the whole show taking up valuable resources that are needed by other legitimately installed programs. There are different methods to see what processes are running on your computer. Lets start with Microsoft's msconfig.



By clicking on the start button in the bottom left of your screen, then clicking on run and typing in "msconfig" you will be presented with a menu that has several different tabs on the top. If you click on Startup you will be presented with a list of the items that startup with your computer. The ones with a check mark next to them are actually the only ones running when your computer starts up. Now comes the tricky part, deciding which ones are needed and which ones aren't. You will find that many are needed such as your antivirus, firewall, possibly your mouse and other hardware that you may have attached to your computer. You may find several that are not needed and some that are potentially dangerous. I do not advise that you use guesswork in this area. Many times I find myself going to google.com for the

answer. Simply go to www.google.com and type in the unknown item name. Usually you find many good answers. If it is a legitimate file leave it alone. At times I have found a checkmark and next to it is a blank line. If the item is not identified it is a sure sign of something evil lurking, uncheck it. Another way to find out what is going on is to push Alt+Ctrl+Del at the same time. Your Task Manager will come up showing you what is currently running. Click on the Process tab and you will see lots of things running. Don't be alarmed, there is naturally a lot going on in the background that you are unaware of. However some of it might not be so good. Again picking these processes apart good from bad is not an easy task. I recommend that you go to a site like <<http://www.liutilities.com/products/wintaskpro/processlibrary/>> where they have an exhaustive list explaining many process. Once you identify a bad one simply click on End Task. I do this a lot because if a malicious process is running it is hard if not impossible for an antispyware program to effectively get rid of it. Once you've ended the task your antispyware application should be ready to finish the off the malware.

Symptom #2: You can't get to the website you want to or your home page keeps changing. You've been hijacked. Browser hijacking is a common form of malware. While not critical to computers operation it can be very frustrating and annoying. To resolve this issue you will need the help of an antispyware application. As I may have mentioned before no one antispyware application is top dog. There is an application that is specifically designed to remedy problems like browser hijackers but it does take some knowledge of computers. The application is called Hijack This. It is a free download from <<http://www.spywareinfo.com/~merijn/downloads.html>>. The program will show you items that run from your registry, Internet Explorer and other areas. This application isn't to be run by the faint of heart. There are several forums that you can post Hijack This logs to and experienced users will advise you as to what items should be checked to remove. That said there are a few antispyware applications that can also remove browser hijackers.

Two that I have had good experiences with are Spysweeper by webroot - <<http://www.webroot.com/>> and CounterSpy by sunbelt software - <<http://www.sunbelt-software.com/>> I have found both to be able to rid computers of browser hijackers.

Be leery of a program that you have not installed popping up and telling you that you are infected with malware. Most likely the application will tell you that it has found malware on your system and offer to remove it after you purchase it. Many of these programs are rouge software simply out for your money. There is an huge list that goes into detail about such programs at <http://www.spywarewarrior.com/rogue_anti-spyware.htm>



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 advergimes 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 advergime 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).

Advergimes 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!



Preventative Maintenance Part IV

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.

Everyone experiences a computer problem at some point. When such a problem occurs, there are a few quick steps to take to seek a solution. First check your connections. A loose cable or cord could be the problem. Second, reboot your computer. Many problems are resolved by this simple step, too. Third, try to isolate when and where the problem happened to you. This step may give you a clue as to how to solve the problem. Check your Interrupt Requests (IRQs) which are hardware connections. If two devices are using the same IRQ, they can conflict with each other. Fourth, back up your data before you get too far down the road trying options to solve an unknown problem. Fifth, update your system and make sure that you are using the latest drivers for your hardware and that you have installed all of the Windows updates. Sixth, roll back your system with WinXP/Me System Restore. Notwithstanding that you may have already updated your drivers, you may need now to roll them back using the Driver Rollback utility. Finally, when a crash occurs, an application called Dr. Watson saves information about your memory and configuration to a crash log file. In WinXP, the default location is C:\DocumentsandSettings\AllUsers\Application Data\Microsoft\DrWatson. The crash log is a text file called Drwtsn.32log, which can be read in Notepad or sent via e-mail to a technical support person. Here are some "free" support sites which may help solve your computer problem(s): Experts Exchange <www.experts-exchange.com>; Suggest A Fix <www.suggestafix.com>; Tech Support Guy <www.helponthe.net>; Annoyances.org <www.annoyances.org>; BlackViper.com <www.blackviper.com>; Doug's Windows Tweaks and Tips <www.dougknox.com>; JSI FAQ <www.jsilinc.com>; TweakXP.com <www.tweak.xp.com>; and Windows XP Expert Zone Community <www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/expertzone>. If you rather use "paid" support, then these sites might save you time: Ask Dr. Tech \$89.95/year <www.askdrtech.com>; 888 Geek help \$1.75/minute <www.888geekhelp.com>; PC Pinpoint.com \$49.95/year <www.pcpinpoint.com>; and SpeakWithAGee.com \$34.95/month <www.speakwithageek.com>. If you have trouble with Microsoft (MS) software, call it for tech support only if you purchased the software. If that software was preinstalled on your computer, then you should call the manufacturer of your machine if it is still covered by the vendor's warranty.

Disk Defragmenter

If you run Disk Defragmenter and it stalls from time to time and seemingly can't finish its cycle, then take note. Windows does its best to use your hard drive space efficiently. It tries to fill in small gaps left behind by deleted files. To do it, Windows may split some files into pieces. This happens again and again as you move, delete or save files. Eventually, all those split files affect your computer's speed. Your favorite game or shareware might be stored as dozens of fragments. Your computer has to find them all just to start it up. Your waiting time will eventually grow to test your patience. To keep your computer up to speed, you should defragment the hard drive. Windows includes a tool for the job called Disk Defragmenter. Disk Defragmenter will sort those scattered fragments back together. You can find it by clicking Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools. Unfortunately Disk Defragmenter can run into problems 1. The Defragmenter needs an error-free hard drive. Disk Defragmenter will stop if it discovers errors on your hard drive. This could cause the Defragmenter to stop consistently at the same place. It could also leave your hard drive only partially defragmented. Try checking your hard drive for errors. All versions of Windows include utilities to check the hard drive. In Win 98, click Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, ScanDisk. Select the hard drive from the list. It's usually drive C. Select the "Thorough test" option. It will check your hard drive for errors and physical imperfections. Check "Automatically fix errors," and then click Start. In WinXP, click Start, My Computer. In Win2000, just double-click the My Computer icon. In both systems, right-click the hard drive icon. It's usually drive C. Select Properties from the pop-up menu and select the Tools tab. Under Error-checking, click the Check Now button, select the two boxes, and click Start and reboot. 2. The Defragmenter needs lots of space. A near-full hard drive is the bane of the Defragmenter. Windows requires at least 15 percent of your hard drive free to complete defragmentation. According to Microsoft, less space will re-

sult in an incomplete defragmentation. If you don't have enough free space, that could cause Disk Defragmenter to stop in the same place every time. A nearly full hard drive is a likely culprit for older computers. Typical Win98/ME system hard drives are small by current standards. They can be quickly overwhelmed with videos and music. New software packages tend to take more space than older versions. Consider using Disk Cleanup to free some hard drive space. It's another good tool built into Windows. Click Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tools, Disk Cleanup, and select the Disk Cleanup tab. You'll see a list of files that Windows plans to delete for you. You can highlight a file from the list for its brief explanation. Beside each file is a checkbox. Windows will delete only files that are marked. It also shows the total space you'll get back from those files. After you choose which files to delete, click OK. 3. The Defragmenter must work alone. Disk Defragmenter does not play well with others. In fact, it often won't play at all if something else is running. Thus, it is necessary that all other programs be shut down while using Disk Defragmenter. If necessary, you can run Defragmenter in Safe Mode. To do that, reboot the computer and tap F8. That should get you into a menu of startup options, including Safe Mode. If it doesn't, reboot and try again. Once you get the menu, pick Safe Mode. You should be able to run Disk Defragmenter in Safe Mode, however you should first run ScanDisk before using Disk Defragmenter.

Network Status

When activated, the Network Status icon resides in your System Tray. You can right-click it to find your Internet Service provider (ISP) connection's speed, and to close the connection. It's easy enough to find in WinXP by clicking Start and selecting My Computer. In the Other Places menu, click My Network Places. In the Network Tasks menu, click View Network Connections, right-click the icon of the ISP connection or network, and select Properties. On the General tab, check the box for "Show icon in notification area when connected," and click

OK. Users of Win 98 can also activate the icon by opening Windows Explorer, clicking Dial Up Networking, right-clicking the connection in which you are interested, clicking Properties, selecting General, and clicking Configure in the Connect Using area. On the Options tab, click the box for "Display modem status," and then click OK. Now, whenever you connect to your ISP, the icon will appear in your System Tray.

PC Pitstop

From time to time your PC needs a tune-up, particularly if you notice that the hard drive has the knock-and-pings, and you're getting sluggish performance or frequent crashes. If that's the case go to PC Pitstop <<http://www.pcpitstop.com>>. It's a free web site that will run your computer through 13 tests, from the standard disk fragmentation analysis to spyware and in-memory virus checks. Like most of these sites, it attempts to sell you software.

PING Command

The Packet Internet Groper (PING) command is one of the most useful tools for troubleshooting network connectivity. To begin you will want to ping the loop back address 127.0.0.1 to ensure the local computer has Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) initialized. If you receive a successful response, then you will ping the IP address assigned to the local computer. Next, ping the IP address of the default gateway. If you receive a request timed out message, verify that the IP address of the default gateway is correct and that the gateway is operational. Finally, ping the IP address of a host on a remote network. If this action is unsuccessful, verify that the remote host is operational, verify the IP address of the remote host, and verify that all routers and gateways between local computer and remote computer are operational. A quick way to verify TCP/IP connectivity is to first ping the IP address of a host on a remote network. If you can successfully ping the IP address of a remote host, then you should be able to successfully ping the loop back address, the IP address of the local computer, and the IP address of the default gateway. The PING utility, which is included with Windows, will only send a series of four Internet Control Message Protocol (ICMP) messages to the specified host. However, if you are testing your Internet or network connection, you may want to send continuous pings for a period of time to see if you get disconnected. In order to do this action, you must use the PING command with the -t switch.

Printer Problem/Solution

By default, WinXP tries to disable Universal Serial Bus (USB) when the HP Deskjet printer is not used to save power. This simply does not work under many circumstances. The HP Deskjet printer fails to wake up when called. As a result your printer may initially work and then become inoperable. To fix this problem, click Star and right-click on My Computer. Next click Properties, Hardware tab, and the Device Manager button. Now double-click the USB controllers branch to expand it and then right-click USB Root Hub, and click Properties, Power Management tab. Finally remove the check mark from "Allow the computer to turn off this device to save power," click OK, and close Device Manager.

Random Access Memory (RAM)

If you don't know anything about your computer's RAM, check your computer's manual. It should have the specifications for memory. The type and speed of the memory depends on the motherboard in your machine. If you can't find the information there, check one of the memory sellers online. They have memory listings for virtually any computer. Three sites to try

are Crucial Technology, Kingston Technology and PNY Technologies at respectively <<http://www.crucial.com>>, <<http://www.kingston.com>>, and <<http://www.pny.com/configurator/>>.

Safe Mode

If you're having trouble with Windows and it won't start, sometimes you can get in there and fix the problem with Safe Mode. For example, if you cannot get ScanDisk to ever finish running its routine, run it in Safe Mode. When you see the "Starting Windows" message, here are the keys to press:

F5 -- Safe mode. This allows Windows to start with its most basic configuration, bypassing Autoexec.bat and Config.sys files and using the VGA driver for video and not loading networking software.

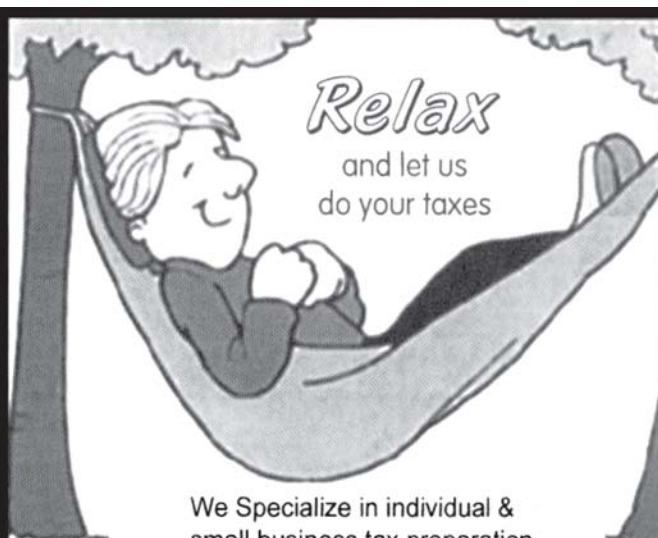
F6 -- Safe mode. This key is like F5 but with the addition of network support.

F8 -- This key gives you a menu of different options before Startup.

Scanner Problems

If you need help in using your scanner, check out Scan Tips at <www.scantips.com>. This site has more than 200 printed pages with information from the fundamental concepts of scanning to advanced tips for restoring old photos and faded slides.

Dell has unveiled a plan to educate its customers on how to protect their computers from spyware, adware, and viruses. It has set up a new PC security site <www.dell4me.com/security> to help customers ID online security threats and ways to handle them.



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23 years
in public
service

Enrolled to practice before the Internal Revenue



Windows Server Update Services

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

Last year I wrote an article on Microsoft's Software Update Services (SUS) which can be found on the Alamo PC web site at <http://training.alamopc.org/of/pca/archive/lentz02/nt0504.html>. Microsoft recently released version 2, now renamed Windows Server Update Services, WSUS. WSUS is currently available for free download from www.microsoft.com/wus. Yes, WUS. It was originally called Windows Update Services. I think you can tell why they renamed it just before release. Going to www.microsoft.com/wsus works a well.

WSUS is a big improvement over the original SUS. Mainly with SUS, you couldn't quite tell whether or not the computers in the network were actually getting updated by SUS or not. WSUS provides detailed information in its main (Home) screen.

Drilling down provides more detailed information. For instance, you can see how many computers have successfully installed the updates, and if there are any that have errors or still need a particular update. One can drill down further to find specifics on what problems may have occurred.

When you first install and configure WSUS, the computers on your network will be recognized and displayed in the 'Computers' page (more on how to make this happen later). Clicking on the Computers tab produces a screen that lists each computer. Computers can be assigned to groups to better manage them. I have created two groups for my network; W2k3 Servers, and XP Workstations.

Like SUS, WSUS is designed to periodically synchronize itself with the Microsoft update site. Typically you would configure WSUS to synchronize every evening. I have mine set to do so every night just before midnight. Once the updates have been synchronized, the system administrator may individually approve each before they are installed on the users' machines. This gives the administrator the opportunity to make sure the update won't break anything on their particular network before allowing it to be installed.

Installation is actually pretty straightforward for the most part. However, if one is installing it on a Small Business

Server, there are a few caveats. I have heard all kind of horror stories about it but have encountered none myself. I think the main thing to remember is that SBS sets up a number of web pages that are critical to its operation and functionality. Normally WSUS would attempt to install itself over some of these services by using the default web port, port 80. However, I've found that when installed on SBS, you aren't given a choice and the installation is instead put onto port 8530. Perhaps it was not sure in some of the beta versions. It is important to remember this port number when configuring the clients. WSUS uses Microsoft SQL to store its data. You can either use MSDE (the desktop edition) which WSUS will install, or if you have the 'real' SQL, as in SBS Premium Edition, you can install it using that for your database. I prefer using my real SQL.

Client configuration is accomplished using Group Policies. One must configure a Group Policy (GP) to apply certain settings and link it to either the domain or an organizational unit (OU). In an SBS network, I prefer to link the GP at the Computers

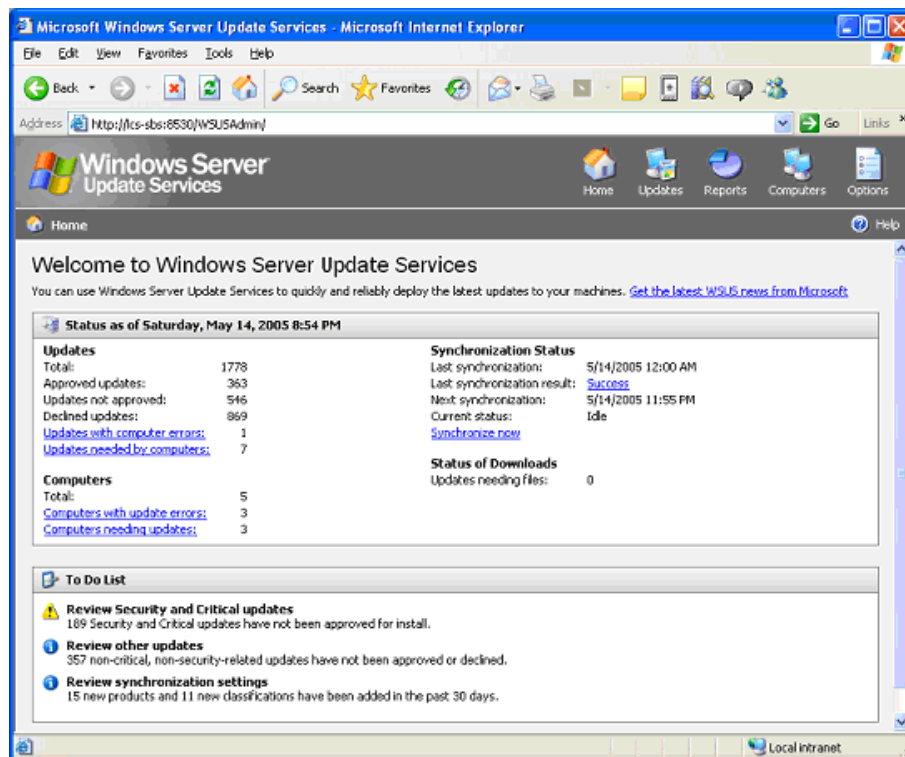


Figure 1 - WSUS Home Page

OU under the SBS created My Business OU. That's where all the workstations will be if you follow best practices and use the wizards to set up your workstations. The SBS server itself will not be there as it is under the Domain Controllers OU. I prefer not to have the server updated automatically by WSUS. I don't want my server suddenly rebooting when I'm not prepared for it. The Group Policy is configured under Computer Configuration, Administrative Templates, Windows Components, Windows Update. There are a number of settings available here but the ones you want to be sure to configure are: Configure Automatic Updates; Specify intranet Microsoft update service location; and Automatic Updates detection frequency.

The one that can cause some problems in SBS is the second. Here you specify the location on your network where the updates are located. This is generally the server running WSUS. In an SBS network, this likely will be the SBS server. Remember I said that on an SBS server, WSUS installs its web service on port 8530 instead of port 80. You need to specify the port number in the setting; i.e. <http://mySBSserver:8530>. If you do not use the port, then the WSUS Computers page will not recognize nor list the computers on your network.

The first time I installed WSUS, this somehow slipped by me and I spent hours trying to figure out why I couldn't get WSUS to list my workstations. WSUS's user interface is also web based. The address is typically <http://MyServer/WSUSAdmin>. But in an SBS environment, you have to use the port number so it would be <http://MySBSserver:8530/WSUSAdmin>.

WSUS was the topic of the August, 2005 meeting of the Alamo PC SBS SIG. The slides from that presentation are available at www.LentzComputer.net/SBS/Presentations. They contain detailed screen shots of the installation and configuration of WSUS.

Using WSUS on a network will greatly simplify updating user workstations. Instead of having to go to each workstation and manually download and apply the updates, good or bad, or relying on the user to install them, the administrator has full control from a centralized console. This is a great step forward in network administration.

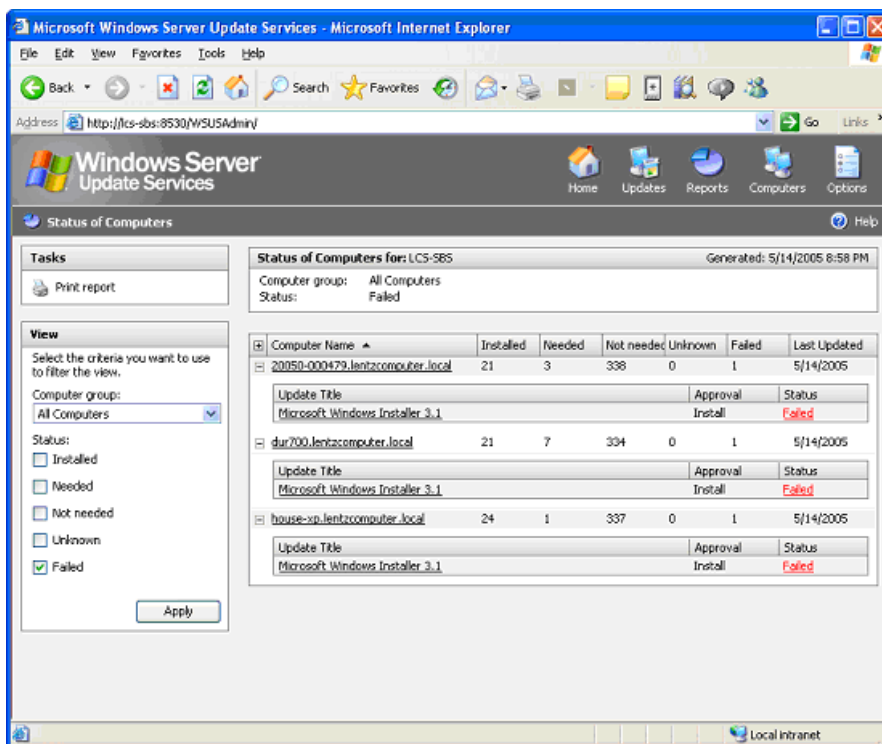


Figure 2 - Status of Computers

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No FREE Technical Support! (Part One)

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.>

It's the weekend. I'm relaxing in front of the television watching a movie with my wife. The phone rings. I answer. "This is So-and-So [name withheld to protect the guilty]. I've got a question for you." I already know where this is going, but I still reply, "Okay?" "I can't get to my company's website." For the next several minutes, I play twenty questions trying to determine where the problem is. Let's recap a bit of what I found. First, this person was accessing the Internet from a computer at his house. This computer was (a) a new machine NOT purchased from us and (b) setup and configured by another technician that doesn't charge as much per hour as we do for on-site support. I told him to call his other technician. He told me he couldn't reach him. He assured me he could fix the problem if I walked him step-by-step through the process. At this point, daggers are shooting from my wife's eyes. Still, I determined what the problem was. He told me I was incorrect. I wasn't. We got him to his website.

What's the problem here?

There are several problems with providing free technical support. As I researched this article, I found a list of reasons that support my statement.

First, providing technical support is a major time suck. From my example above, requests are not limited to normal business hours. They come from family, friends, and people you've hardly met that somehow think you're a 24-7 source of technical knowledge. Do any of you have friends that only seem to call when they need your technical expertise? If you're not careful, you could easily put in your 40-hour work week and then engage in another 40-hours of additional labor that you don't get anything for.

Second, a good friend of mine once told me, "No good deed goes unpunished." When you fix one problem, you potentially open up a whole mess of other problems. Guess who's to blame for those? You suddenly become "global support," for any number of incompatibilities and system instabilities that arise. Even if you provide the most general information, or claim to have no real knowledge of the problem, you can be held responsible for anything you say that proves to be wrong.

I recently worked a charity case for a church, putting together a system, using all my own parts, and some influence I had with Microsoft to get them the software they needed to set up a server. What I received for the effort didn't cover the cost of the hardware. I get a call from the minister a few days later. He wasn't happy because the software I got for them was Windows Server 2003 and "this IS 2005!"

Word of mouth is a blessing and a curse! If you provide support to one individual, they're likely to pass your name along to someone else. The minister mentioned above told another minister what I'd done for them. I got a call asking me to do the "same deal" for this second church.

Providing free support also devalues your pay services. How many times have you given someone a quote for services, only to hear them say, "Well, So-and-So only charges this much!" If you drop your price, or work for free, what do they expect from you the NEXT time they have a problem? There will also be a perceived value placed on your skills. If you don't put the proper emphasis on this value, others won't see it. If you intend to make a living by providing your technical services, it'll be tough when you work for free.

You may even find yourself on the end of a support chain. I've gotten calls from former students of mine who are WORKING in the industry. One such student called to ask step-by-step instructions on setting up and configuring an Exchange e-mail server. They wanted me to stay on the phone with them while they did it. When I asked if they were setting this up at home, they told me no. They were calling me from their new job, where they were getting paid to be the company's technical support and Exchange administrator.

There can even be hidden gotchas! I once agreed to look over a computer system for a friend of a friend, who bought a used computer from another friend. When the system didn't work, they brought it to me. I got it up and running after several hours fighting with cheap, non-standard parts. I told the owner about the sub-standard parts and was accused of switching the premium name-brand parts that he claimed were in the system with the non-standard parts that ACTUALLY came with the system.

Now you understand the problems associated with providing free technical support. But there's another dilemma. How do you turn down these requests for free support without coming across as a total jerk? Well, I'm out of space for this month—so we're ending with a cliffhanger. Tune in next month to read some common responses you can use to get yourself off the hook.

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

The Switcher



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

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

This month is going to be a series of things that I've encountered recently. I hope you find these items as useful as I have.

The first item is a new website I stumbled across when reading one of the Mac magazines. The site is called Hack A Day [<http://www.hackaday.com>](http://www.hackaday.com) and includes a lot of information. You'll find tips and tricks, projects that you can do yourself, and modifications that you can make to your systems. There is a section dedicated entirely to Macs. Enjoy!

With AirPort and AirPort Extreme built-in to so many Macs, maintaining wireless network security is a must. I recently opened my Mac at my new house and discovered that one of my neighbors is broadcasting their broadband connection to the neighborhood. This prompted me to do a little brushing up on securing my own wireless LAN within the house. One of the most important things you can do is encrypt the communications that are going across your network. On most new wireless routers, you have the choice between using WEP and WPA. On the Linksys router that I'm using, WPA with TKIP was the most secure choice. However, newer routers include WPA with AES—which is the most secure method to use. Once you've got the encryption going, you can further secure your network by turning OFF the routers broadcasting of your SSID, which is the feature that makes the name of your wireless network pop-up in someone else's computer when they are sniffing for available networks. And it's still common sense to rename your wireless network (once you've turned the broadcast off) to something that a would-be free loader won't be able to guess and logon to anyway.

Few may realize that there is a lot of information available on the Internet that isn't HTML-based. These resources include numerous databases, medical journals, back issues of publications, and other such resources. However, there are sites out there that allow you to search for these resources that you won't find using Google. The first site to try is [<http://www.profusion.com>](http://www.profusion.com), though this site is NOT good for general browsing purposes. Its results are typically narrowly focused on the topic you are searching for. You can also start searching for these hidden resources by going to [<http://websearch.about.com/od/invisibleweb/a/invisibleweb.htm>](http://websearch.about.com/od/invisibleweb/a/invisibleweb.htm), where you can find referrals and links to other specialized search engines. You can also find a wealth of information (especially government related) through the Library of Congress at [<http://www.loc.gov>](http://www.loc.gov). Happy hunting!

Many people have started carrying around the USB flash drives. These are used to transport files back and forth between computers. For instance, my wife owns a 1GB version where she stores all the installation files for the support applications she is responsible for maintaining at her job. It can be frightening if you accidentally delete files from your USB drive that you thought you had backed-up, only to discover that the USB copy was the only one you had. There's a solution! Files on a USB device are handled like files on a hard drive. The data is NOT

deleted immediately, just the references to the data are deleted. These files will actually remain on the drive until new data overwrites them. If you wish to recover your previous data, surf out to [<http://www.snapfiles.com/get/restoration.html>](http://www.snapfiles.com/get/restoration.html) and download their freeware utility. It will allow you to scan your USB device for recoverable files.

A cool piece of software I came across was MacTracker [<http://www.mactracker.ca>](http://www.mactracker.ca). This software provides detailed information on every Apple, Motorola, PowerComputing, and UMAX Mac OS computer ever made. It includes information on processor speeds, types and amount of memory supported, optical drives, graphic cards, supported Mac OS versions, and expansion options. It also includes information on Apple mice, keyboards, displays, printers, scanners, digital cameras, iPod, AirPort Base Stations, Newtons, and Mac OS versions. MacTracker 3.0 is available for Mac OS 8.5 - 9.2.2, Mac OS X v10.2 or later, Windows 2000 or XP, and iPods with dock connectors (including iPod mini and iPod photo). Information that you add such as notes or internet links are transferable across platforms. I find this product useful for answering Macintosh questions for clients who have systems that I'm not already familiar with.

Another useful piece of software is MacTheRipper [<http://www.ripdifferent.com/~mtr>](http://www.ripdifferent.com/~mtr), which is a freeware DVD ripper (extractor) that you can use to make backups of DVDs you've legally purchased for personal use. MacTheRipper removes CSS encryption, Macrovision protection, sets the disc's region code to '0' for region-free by default, and is capable of removing RCE region protection as well, making an unrestricted copy of any DVD movie you own. It doesn't rely on the DVD drive to get the CSS decryption keys, so that means that you do not need to play the DVD with DVD Player in order to rip it to your hard drive unprotected. MacTheRipper is also capable of removing UOPs, or User Operation Prohibitions, which are the settings that prevent you from skipping or fast-forwarding certain parts of DVDs, such as FBI warnings, previews, logos, intros, etc. MacTheRipper is also able to extract discs with the new ARccOS protection, as well as most DVDs that have been damaged or improperly mastered.

STUDY GROUPS

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schedule information 736-0700 or
see page 60-63.



CSS#3: Classes, Pseudo Classes, Span

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!

Last month we created a simple style sheet and applied it to a Web page. The rules we created used TAG selectors: they applied to HTML tags. For example:

P { font-family: Verdana, sans-serif; font-size: 10px; color: black; text-indent: 15% }

applies to any and all text that falls within a paragraph, or <P> tag.

So what do you do if you want some of your paragraphs to be different? Perhaps you have a “warning” paragraph that you want to be in bold, slanted to the right, white text with a red background. Not every paragraph – just a few.

One way to do this is to create a class: in this case, a paragraph with a twist. Here’s what it would look like in the style sheet:

.warning { color: white; background: font-family: Verdana, sans-serif; red; font-size: medium; font-weight: bold; font-style: oblique }

Here’s the HTML you type into the actual Web page:

<P CLASS=“warning”> your text here</P>

If that seems like too much trouble, here’s what it would look like in HTML if you didn’t have a style sheet:

<TABLE><TR><td bgcolor=“#FF0000”> your text here </TD></TR></TABLE>

Using the style sheet, it’s 33 characters. Without the style sheet, it’s 139 characters, and I had to put it in a table to get the red background. Plus, I’d have to type those 139 characters every time I wanted to make a warning paragraph and remember the tags and attributes for 10 different things.

The other advantage to using a class – even if the formatting doesn’t occur often – is that it ensures consistency.

Any class can be used with any HTML element, but two HTML tags were specifically created to use with style sheets: and <DIV>.

SPAN is a character-level element. It applies only to the characters it encompasses. Sometimes you will hear it referred to as an inline container. Using our “warning” class, we can use SPAN to apply it to just one letter, one word or one phrase within another HTML Tag. For example:

<P>ipsum dolor sit amet

In this example, all of the normal paragraph formatting will apply to everything not embraced by the tag. Only the word “sit” will have the “warning” class applied. SPAN interrupts the paragraph formatting; it does not stop it.

DIV is a block-level element. Sometimes you will hear it referred to as a block container. It stops the paragraph formatting and starts a new DIV formatting. What would happen if we did this?

<P>ipsum dolor <DIV CLASS=“warning”> sit </DIV>amet

In this example, ipsum dolor is in regular paragraph text as specified by the style sheet. Then, DIV intervenes. In addition to all the stuff specified in the warning class, DIV inserts a virtual
 and applies the special formatting to the entire line, followed by another virtual
. Since DIV stopped the paragraph formatting, “amet (and everything that follows) is in the default unformatted text.

Now that was confusing! Figure 1 illustrates the difference more concisely.

One thing you will see in figure 1 is that the red background exactly fits the word: it needs some breathing room. I can fix that by adding 2 pixels of padding in my warning class:

.warning { padding-right: 2px; padding-left: 2px; color: white; background: red; font-weight: bold; font-style: oblique }

If I felt I needed more top and bottom padding, I could specify that as well as padding-top and padding-bottom.

One of the defining characteristics of CLASS is that it has to be used with an HTML Tag. There are a few CSS styles that can be used without the corresponding HTML; these are called PSEUDO-CLASSES.

The most commonly used pseudo-class affects the appearance of links. Here are some examples:

a:link {color: #FF0000}

a:visited {color: #00FF00}

a:hover {color: #FF00FF}

a:active {color: #0000FF}

This example changes the color of links. They must be listed in this order. Note that there is an option not available in HTML: hover changes the style of the link when the mouse pointer hovers over it.

a:hover {font-size: 150%}

This is also an option not available in HTML: when the pointer hovers over a link it grows in size.

a:hover {background: #66ff66}

In this example, the background color of a link changes when the mouse hovers.

a:link {color: #ff0000; text-decoration: none}

ipsum dolor **sit** amet

```
<P>ipsum dolor <SPAN CLASS="warning">sit</SPAN> amet
```

ipsum dolor

sit

amet

```
<P>ipsum dolor <DIV CLASS="warning">sit</DIV> amet
```

a: hover {text-decoration: underline}

In this example, text-decoration: none removes the underline from a link but puts it back when the cursor hovers over the link.

Be careful when messing about with the appearance of links. Visitors to your site will expect a link to be blue and underlined. If you do something different, people will have to learn how to use your site and it may confuse them.

There are also PSEUDO-ELEMENTS. Here are two you might find useful:

P: first-letter { font-size: 200%; font-weight: bold; color: red; float: left }

This will make the first letter of every paragraph a red drop cap.

I find that having every paragraph start with a drop cap is over whelming. Rather than apply it to a paragraph, it might make more sense in your layout to apply it to a DIV. Another alternative would be to create a class of drop cap, like so:

.dropcap { font-size: 300%; font-family: Times; font-weight: bold; color: #FFFFFF; float: left; background: #000000 }

You would implement it in your HTML like this:

```
<SPAN CLASS="dropcap">I</SPAN>n a nutshell
```

Another pseudo-element is FIRST-LINE, which applies formatting to the first line of every block level element. To apply it to a paragraph,

P: first-line { text-transform: uppercase }

This would have the effect of making the first line of every paragraph upper case.

Next month we'll start using CSS for layout by learning how to combine everything we've learned to create column formats without using tables.

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Adobe Photoshop CS2

Paul Vaughn, Alamo PC

Paul Vaughn is a freelance graphic artist, writer and web designer who has yet to object to anything smart. If you would like to see the Graphics Guy address a specific topic, email Paul Vaughn at <paulv@mac.com>.

Pinch me. No on second thought don't...if it's a dream I don't wanna wake up. Adobe has a new version of Photoshop, their mammoth flagship image editing application and this one is choke full of new features that I don't know how I ever lived without. Let's take a closer look at the latest version of my favorite program.

Now, before I get too far ahead of myself swimming the pool of new features, here's the basic scoop for those new to Photoshop or who have been using Photoshop Elements. Adobe Photoshop CS2 is the ninth version of Adobe's principle application. Photoshop derives the appellation 'CS2' from its inclusion in Adobe's Creative Suite, which includes Illustrator (for vector illustration) and InDesign (for page layout) in the Standard Edition and adds GoLive (web page authoring) and Acrobat 7 Professional (PDF creation) in the Premium Edition. Photoshop is also available as a standalone application and this review focuses on it primarily.

Photoshop is used for working with photographs and other images whether they come from digital cameras, scanners or are generated directly in the program. At its core, Photoshop is a 'paint' program, but the depth of the tools is such that there are almost infinite possibilities, multiple ways to achieve specific tasks and people use it in vastly different ways.

The biggest change in CS2 is the removal of one of the previous version's best features. Photoshop CS added the very useful File Browser, but it has now been replaced by a separate application called Adobe Bridge. I was pretty skeptical of the need for this at first; I like to avoid unnecessary complication whenever possible, but Bridge adds a level of functionality worthy of its bulk.

Bridge works as a file browser, letting you see thumbnails of images, illustrations or page layouts (Fig. 1); even letting you save related files together as a file group. But that's not all it does. Like the Photoshop CS File Browser,



Figure 1



Figure 2

you can run batch operations — automated multi-step repetitive tasks — like creating multipage PDFs or web photo galleries images selected in Bridge. You can also run some such operations on Illustrator or InDesign files. But with Bridge you can now run batch operation while continuing to work in Photoshop, previously you would have had to take a coffee break waiting for batch completion. This is a great feature for processing loads of Camera Raw images while still getting some work done. You can display images, including multipage PDF documents, in a full-screen slide show as well as editing a file's metadata such as copyright notice, title or location.

But Bridge is more than a pumped-up File Browser; it's more of a resource center. From Bridge you can browse and purchase stock photography from a variety of providers working under the umbrella of Adobe Stock Photos. Type in a few keywords to see scores of images related to the subject. A single button gets you price information or lets you search for similar images. Bridge also includes a RSS (Really Simple Syndication) reader. You can add any RSS feed that you wish, but Adobe has already set up several that will give you Photoshop tips, notices of program updates and add-ons and announcements of upcoming Photoshop-related events. Need more? Bridge gives you a steady supply of tips and tricks for Adobe programs and you can edit the color setting affecting all of the

Creative Suite applications. Obviously, Bridge is a major addition to the Photoshop toolbox, but since it is a separate application, you do not have to use it at all.

Now on to the new stuff in Photoshop proper. By far, my favorite new feature is the Smart Objects. You can make a Smart Object by importing a vector graphic (like those created in Adobe Illustrator) or by selecting one or more layers and choosing Group Into New Smart Object from the Layer palette menu (Fig. 2) or under Layer menu (Layer > Smart Objects > Group into New Smart Object). With Smart Objects, you can scale, rotate and reposition the object with no loss of image quality. Photoshop continues to go back to the source information giving the user an amazing new flexibility in creating a layout. Smart Objects made from Illustrator graphics maintain their link to the original; make a change in Illustrator and the graphic is automatically updated in Photoshop.

The Layers palette now works a little differently than it has in previous versions of Photoshop. You can now select multiple layers at once by Command-clicking (Mac) or Control-clicking (Windows) each layer.

Another spectacular feature in the new Vanishing Point tool, with it you can define planes in your image and then clone objects in perspective (Fig. 3). You can also place a Smart



Figure 3



Figure 4

Object onto a plane, great for Photoshopping a logo onto the side of a building.

A related tool is the Image Warp; you can apply a warp grid to an object to make a layer or Smart Object appear to conform to the contours of an image. This feature works well for making something look like it is printed on a mug or other curved surface (Fig. 4).

Smart Guides are another useful addition in CS2. When moving a layer, you will see guideline appear making it easy to align objects in your Photoshop composition. You can also check the box that says Show Transform Commands to see the edges of a layer along with its transform handles whenever the layer is selected.

The Red-Eye Removal tool finally makes its way from Photoshop Elements to the professional package. One click does a very serviceable job, in most cases, of removing those demonic red eyes produced by flash photography.

Another one-click tool is the Spot Healing Brush. This works similarly to the Cloning tool, except you do not have to define an origin point. Photoshop analyzes the area around where you have clicked and does a great job of cleaning up the image. It works best on isolated flaws, dust or scratches; it does not replace the Cloning tool completely, but it certainly speeds up general image cleanup.

The Smart Sharpen filter (Fig. 5) gives you new options for sharpening an image. It will remove common types of blurring from an image like Gaussian, motion and lens blurs. The Reduce Noise filter helps to take out unwanted color noise found in some images as well as removing some JPEG compression artifacts. The Lens Correction filter (Fig. 6) gives you tools to straighten out the perspective of an image, useful when you have to shoot a scene or building from an unflattering angle.

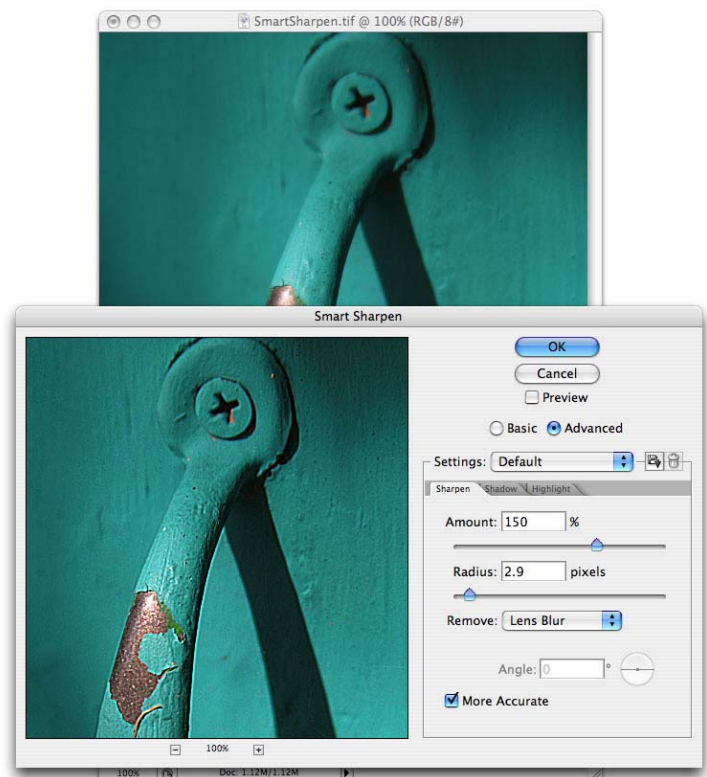


Figure 5

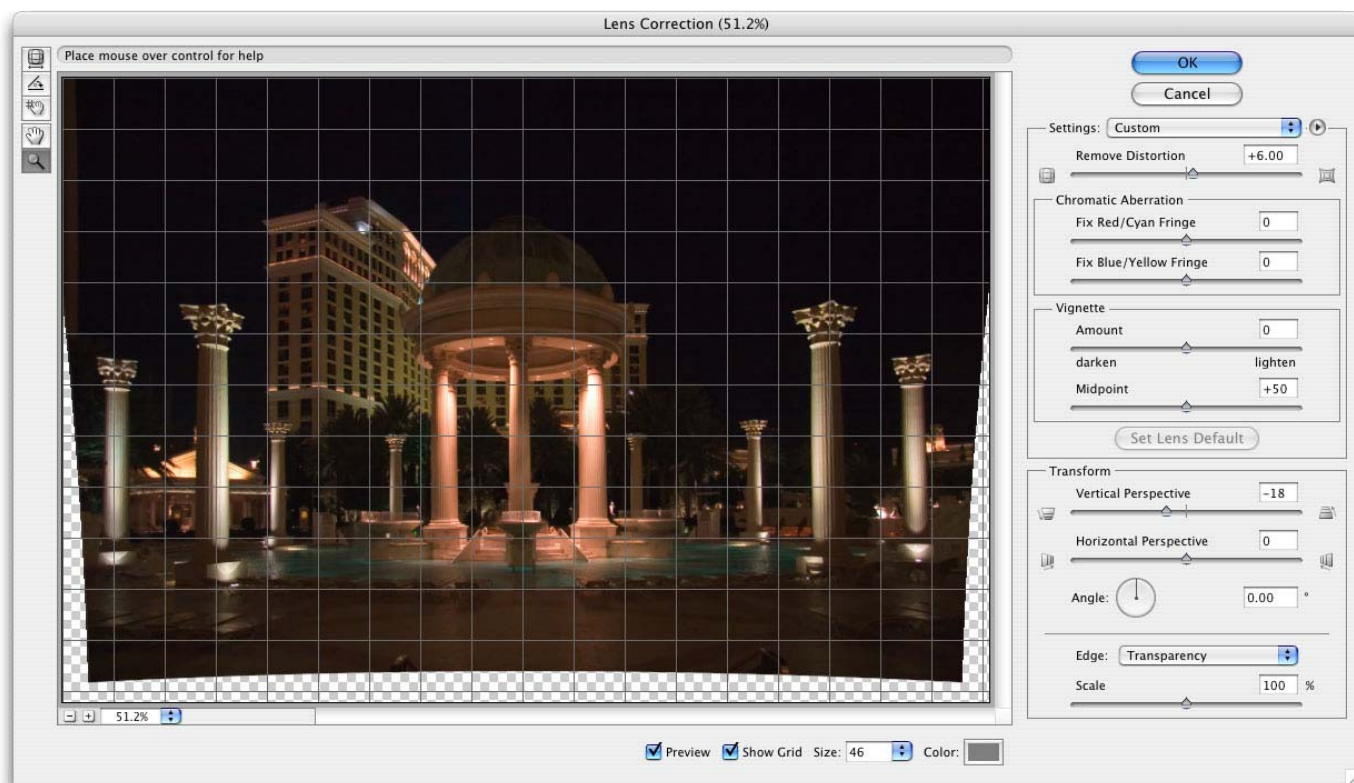


Figure 6

Many more of Photoshop CS2's features will work with 16-bit and CMYK images than ever before. You can use tools like Liquify, Lens Blur and Adjust Shadows/Highlights.

There are so many new things in Photoshop CS2 that it is hard to list them all. How about: Support for more than 2GB of RAM on 64-bit systems, a new Animation palette for creating animated GIF files directly in Photoshop, video previews of broadcast graphics, WYSIWYG previews in the Font menu, expanded printing options, enhanced PDF support, menu customization. The list is pretty long; I suspect that every Photoshop user will find something of interest.

Adobe Photoshop CS2 is a potent upgrade to the best image-editing program on the market today, but it does require some processing horsepower behind it. You will need a computer running Mac OS X (10.2.8 or higher) or Windows 2000 or XP with some Service Packs; G3 or better (Mac) or Pentium III or better (Windows) processor, 320MB RAM, 750MB hard drive space and a 1024x768 display with at least a 16-bit video card. Adobe now requires activation of Photoshop so you will also need an Internet connection.

Adobe Photoshop CS2 retails for \$599 with upgrades starting at \$149. It is available now and you can find out more information at Adobe's web site (www.adobe.com).



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Another Silent Attack on Our Computers

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, Texas' Radio Show Host; Police Officer

At the recent computer security symposium in Corpus Christi, one of the speakers mentioned something that I was vaguely aware of as a threat. The threat is considered as a silent attempt to invade our computers for the purposes of installing viruses, Trojans, worms, or other malware devices. This silent threat may be used by terrorists to launch a coordinated attack on our infrastructure, steal our personal information, or otherwise wreak havoc. So insidious is this threat that it would sound like the content of an urban legend, yet it is documented as real. Imagine a threat that would be undetected by the current antivirus, firewall, and anti-spyware software, yet be so powerful as to effectively take over our computers, without our knowledge. This threat, formerly considered solely as an unproven concept, is now known to be real. This threat is also now implicated in taking over countless computers. This contemporary threat is known by the innocuous term "Rootkit".

A rootkit is defined on the Sysinternals website as, "... the mechanisms and techniques whereby malware, including viruses, spyware, and trojans, attempt to hide their presence from spyware blockers, antivirus, and system management utilities. There are several rootkit classifications depending on whether the malware survives reboot and whether it executes in user mode or kernel mode." The security software company F-Secure expands the definition with, "Rootkits for Windows work in a different way and are typically used to hide malicious software from for example an antivirus scanner. Rootkits are typically not malicious by themselves but are used for malicious purposes by viruses, worms, backdoors and spyware. A virus combined with a rootkit produces what was known as full stealth viruses in the MS-DOS environment."

Because rootkits are currently very effective at hiding malware from our antivirus and anti-spyware scanners, it is quite possible or even probable that our computers are infected, despite repeated scans with properly updated software.

Microsoft, and other vendors, have acknowledged the threat and are now beginning to produce software that can detect and destroy the rootkits on our computers. The software is still in its infancy, and lacks the ease of use, automation, and attractive graphical interfaces that we are used to with our antivirus software. It is inevitable that as word of the rootkit threat spreads, and more computers are identified as having stealthy rootkits hiding viruses and other threats, that the small current crop of rootkit detecting software will improve, and other competitors, probably the major antivirus vendors, will join the fight. If rootkit technology continues to spread, the current crop of generally excellent computer security suites from the likes of Symantec (Norton), McAfee, Panda, TrendMicro, and others will be forced to add rootkit protection to their respective suites, or face competitive obsolescence.

Fortunately for us, there are a few rootkit detectors already available, mostly for free! This first generation of products still needs much refining to enable the average person to scan for rootkits with ease, but they are still a very good first step. There are a few rootkit detectors available which are currently free. One "RootkitRevealer" is from a company known for its excellent and often free software, Sysinternals. This software uses a patent-pending technology to detect rootkits, and is currently available for download at www.sysinternals.com/ntw2k/freeware/rootkitreveal.shtml. RootkitRevealer will run on almost any Microsoft operating system, NT4 and later, which includes Windows 2000, and XP.

Another rootkit detector is from F-Secure, a well-known computer security company headquartered in Finland, with offices in the US and elsewhere. F-Secure's product is "Blacklight", available as a free beta (pre-release) version until July 1. Blacklight can be downloaded at www.f-secure.com/blacklight.

I have recently tried both products, and I personally found Blacklight the easier to use. It seemed effective at detecting and eliminating rootkits.

Microsoft will shortly be making available its rootkit detector, the "Strider GhostBuster", details at research.microsoft.com/rootkit.

Persons unknown who wish to do us harm, either at a personal level such as stealing our account information and committing the crime of identity theft, or the impersonal level, such as cyber terrorists intent on shutting down our critical infrastructure, may use the rootkit technology to bypass our otherwise necessary defenses.

Until such time as the integrated computer security suites catch up with this threat, I will now have to add a rootkit detector to my recommended list of essential computer security utilities, alongside antivirus software, a good firewall, and a spyware detector. It is also imperative that all four of these utilities be frequently updated to ensure a reasonable degree of personal security. We will also have to add rootkits to our vernacular of cyber threats, along with the now ubiquitous terms "virus", "spyware", and "hacker".

I shudder to wonder what may be coming down the pike next.

WEBSITES:

<<http://research.microsoft.com/rootkit>>

<<http://www.sysinternals.com/ntw2k/freeware/rootkitreveal.shtml>>

<<http://www.f-secure.com/blacklight>>

<<http://www.f-secure.com/blacklight/rootkit.shtml>>

Beware of File Sharing

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, Texas' Radio Show Host; Police Officer

GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

Most of us have heard about the popular "Peer to Peer" or "P2P" file sharing networks. Countless millions of computer users around the world routinely download copyrighted music, software, videos, and games on these computer networks, as well as from "alt.binaries" newsgroups where users upload complete commercial computer programs, and other intellectual property. Ethicists have long bemoaned such behavior, and representatives of intellectual property right owners have long tried to shut down such activities with lawsuits and other forms of pressure. Such pirates are alleged to have deprived the rightful owners of billions of dollars of revenue. Legal challenges to such practices have met with some success, but the recent US Supreme Court ruling of *MGM vs. Grockster* has now opened up another avenue. In a statement by US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, "... that those who actively induce or encourage the theft of copyrighted works may be held liable for their actions. ... Our objective in this operation was to find and dismantle large-scale criminal enterprises that illegally obtain, copy, distribute, and trade in copyrighted software, music, movies, and video games."

Recently, Attorney General Gonzales announced "Operation Site Down", a coordinated international legal and criminal attack on cyber pirates, with law enforcement agencies from the US (the FBI), Canada, France, Belgium, Israel, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Denmark, the Netherlands, Australia, and Germany participating in raids on computer file sharing networks, and arresting individuals allegedly engaging in such intellectual property theft. It is noteworthy that two countries, reportedly the major centers of piracy, Russia and China, were not participating in the crackdown.

Operation Site Down, in its first series of internationally coordinated raids, shutdown or crippled several of the popular file sharing networks, and websites offering pirated materials referred to in cyber circles as "warez" (pronounced "wares"). Among the networks and sites raided were RiSCISO, Myth, TDA, LND, Goodfellaz, Hoodlum, Vengeance, Centropy, Wasted Time, Paranoid, Corrupt, Gamerz, AdmitONE, Hellbound, KGS, BBX, KHG, NOX, NFR, CDZ, TUN, and BHP. Over 70 search warrants were executed in the US, with several arrests reported, while additional raids and arrests were reported in the other cooperating nations. These services were alleged to have been "first providers" who posted the first copies of pirated works, often cracking any copy protection or registration schemes integral with such products. Once these services made material available, it tended to show up on warez sites around the world, where millions could then download the material using P2P networks, websites, FTP sites, and other online resources. It is hoped that by raiding these primary sources of illicit intellectual property, that much of the supply of pirated content will be reduced. Attorney General Gonzales stated, "By dismantling these networks, the Department is striking at the top of the copyright piracy supply chain - a distribution chain that provides the vast majority of the illegal digital content now available online."

A variety of online resources have stated that the principles of many of the sites raided were directly behind the cracking and distribution of popular and expensive software such as products from Adobe, AutoCAD, Microsoft and other software publishers, as well as the distribution of recent movies, including "Mr. and Mrs. Smith", and "Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith".

"And by penetrating this illegal world of high-technology and intellectual property theft, we have shown that law enforce-

ment can and will find -- and we will prosecute -- those who try to use the Internet to create piracy networks beyond the reach of law enforcement.", so said Attorney General Gonzales.

There is more to file sharing than just the legal, moral, and ethical considerations; P2P file sharing has also been a major source of computer problems, as they also often install spyware, viruses, and Trojans on unsuspecting computers. KaZaA, Morpheus, and Grockster, three of the major P2P file sharing networks (there are actually thousands of such pirate networks), have frequently been cited as the vector utilized to infect computers, both with their requisite software, and by the content downloaded from third party participants. Warez sites are also notorious for installing spyware that includes pop-ups with pornographic content, key loggers that can steal identities, dialers that connect to outrageously expensive international locations, and other forms of threatening malware. Websites offering such content are often loaded with active-x based, Java enabled, or other content capable of installing unwanted software on the victim computer, hijacking browsers, redirecting searches and purchases, and other nasty processes.

Operation Site Down, and the *MGM vs. Grockster* case should put all of us on notice that behaviors that may have been common place in the past should now be halted, lest "we" become civilly and criminally liable for our online actions. I know that many computer users rationalize such actions with excuses such as "(big name software publisher) is rich and won't miss it", or "(big name software publisher) has been ripping us off for so long that it is time for some payback." Just because a file is available in a newsgroup or a website to download does not mean that it is a legitimate "shareware" or "freeware" copy. Most downloaders of such software, music, games, and videos are all too aware that the content is pirated, yet they participate in great numbers.

To the pirates reading this column, or to the parents of children illicitly downloading copyrighted music and other intellectual property, you have been warned. The feds may be looking over your shoulder, and may not like what they can see. All internet users leave an electronic trail that is easy to track; please, do not become a target of a federal investigation and prosecution.

Alamo PC Board of Directors

Election

To the members of the Alamo PC Organization,

As I mentioned in my "President's Message" last month, August is normally the time each year when the members vote. Usually the voting is only to select new directors. This year, however, separate votes are required for Bylaws and directors.

The first vote involved accepting or rejecting the proposed changes to the Bylaws, which were posted to the Alamo PC web site on August 1st. Members had the opportunity to read the proposed Bylaws and vote during the August 1st-14th. The members voting almost unanimously supported accepting the proposed changes.

The second vote involves electing 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 was that annual meeting. It was also the time when Article 5.4 of the Bylaws was 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." Individuals nominated by a member and those proposed by the Nominating Committee constitute the list of individuals vying for the seven director positions authorized by the amended Bylaws.

The biographies of nominees are posted on the web site and should also appear in the September issue of the PC Alamode. Voting for directors begins today and conclude at midnight on September 12th (the night of the Sep monthly meeting).

If there are any questions, or more information is desired, please feel free to contact me by E-Mail or call me at (210) 532-9122 (answer machine after 4th ring).

As a final request, please consider being present at the September 12th General meeting of members (at Crossroads Mall). You will receive a report on the amended Bylaws, election of directors and be able to further your computer related knowledge through the scheduled program.

William L. Klutz, Jr.

President of Alamo PC Organization



Bill Eastridge

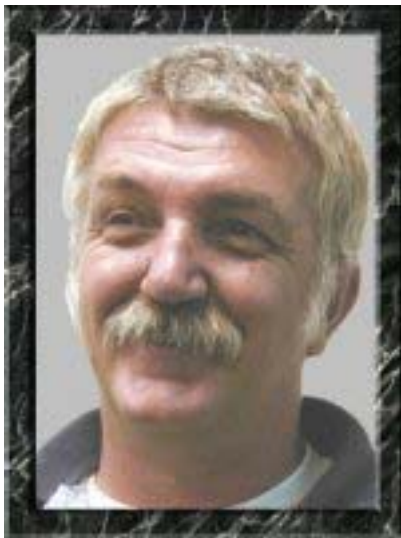
Bill started his computing career with the First National Bank of Boston in 1968 as a programmer while working toward his bachelors degree in mathematics at Boston University. Subsequent job changes took him and his wife, Marjorie, to Washington, D.C., St. Louis and finally, to Seattle where he worked for the Boeing Company. Boeing's size allowed Bill to continue changing assignments without changing companies, and he stayed with Boeing for a little over 20 years. During that time, he moved from technical jobs into project management and then into executive positions.

Bill retired from Boeing in July, 2000 when he accepted a position with USAA. The job lasted less than one year, but, in that time, the Eastridges had discovered they loved San Antonio and decided to enjoy retirement right here.

Bill found Alamo PC in late 2002 through an article in the San Antonio Business Journal. Shortly after joining Alamo PC and receiving outstanding assistance at a Doctor-Is-In session, Bill decided to volunteer some time. He started by working at the desk of the Computer Learning Center helping to sign up new members and providing support to existing members. Last year, he took over teaching the Microsoft Excel class, joined the

Alamo PC Board of Directors, and took over the position of VP Member Records. He regularly supports The Doctor-Is-In clinic. He also helped in constructing our new classroom facility in Crossroads Mall.

Bill purchased his first PC in 1981 and currently owns four. He has been the treasurer of several condominium associations and has used Lotus 1-2-3 and Excel to keep the books and formulate budgets for those organizations. He enjoys technical work as well as business planning and implementation and would like to use his experience to help Alamo PC in any way possible.



Steve Tech

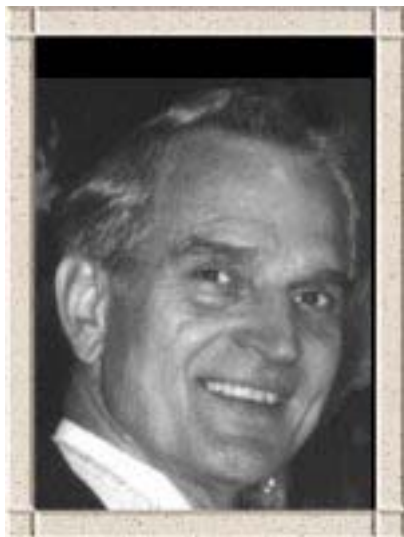
Steve first heard about Alamo PC when he received a card from Delphi inviting him to a monthly General Meeting where they were making a presentation. Steve continued to attend three or four more General Meetings, (won a free copy of Quicken 2000!), and decided to join the organization.

Steve has spent many hours volunteering around Alamo PC, helping with the move to Crossroads Mall, constructing the walls for the classrooms and helping with the wiring for the two labs (he is a career Electrician) and the cabling for the computers. In addition, he have helped with various Study Groups including Quicken, Access and CorelDraw. He is the instructor for the basic CorelDraw class and Co-lead the advanced CorelDRAW class. He also serves on the Board of Directors.

Steve spent 20 years in the Air Force, with 17.3 of those years spent overseas. He has lived in Panama, Okinawa, and Japan. He worked in the career field of Precision Measurement Equipment Laboratory where he calibrated and repaired many types of equipment. After retiring, the family moved to San Antonio in August 1993 to become a "Texas Tech" family (excuse my play on words).

He became interested in computers when a friends built a TRS 80 ("Trash 80") from scratch, so he decided to buy a 386 during one of my trips to Singapore. He then bought WordStar 7.0, QuatroPro, and Paradox to learn to use some programs. His method for learning new software is somewhat pragmatic but effective: He creates and works on a project in order to learn the software. For example, one project was placing all San Antonio streets into a database (Paradox) and then accessing them for pinpointing locations. He calls projects like these, a labor of love.

Steve considers Alamo PC to be a great opportunity for learning about computers and even a greater opportunity for meeting others with similar interests.



William L. Klutz, Jr

Bill said he prefer privacy over notoriety, so he will just cover the basics, and hopes that will be sufficient.

Bill grew up a little southwest of San Antonio; graduated from a local High School (which no longer exists); obtained a college degree and university advanced degree; served in a branch of the US armed forces; worked for several local companies; currently serves in an advisory capacity to several for-profit and non-profit organizations; and has been a member of Alamo PC since 5/9/91.

Bill has volunteered to help Alamo PC in various ways and at various events (board member since Oct '02 - President Elect '03-'04, President '04-'05) He has been around computers since about 1978 (knowledgeable, still learning, and far from being an expert). Bill is married with two grown and married children (both of whom have spouses that are exceptional), plus one granddaughter and three grandsons; enjoys learning new things; and is willing to work.

If that biography isn't satisfactory, then there are others deemed more qualified to serve the organization. Hopefully, those individuals will be elected to serve this organization well, and will receive my full support.



Cary Hall

Cary majored in Industrial Education planning on teaching Shop classes at East Texas State University, Commerce, TX. He met Jean during their junior year, were attracted to each other from the first, and have remained so through the years. Upon graduation in 1958, they were married, and moved to San Antonio where Cary had a teaching job in the San Antonio ISD, later switching to work in the industrial field.

After six years employed in industry, he returned to teaching at MacArthur High School, teaching woodworking. Seven years later Cary opened a computer lab at Mac, where he taught until retirement. In addition to teaching he also managed the school computer network utilized by 2500+ students and 250 teachers during his last year. Jean taught for 32 years and Cary for 38.

After retiring they walked for exercise everyday at Crossroads Mall. Passing the APCO facilities, they would pick up free magazines, and became interested in the organization. Cliff and Emma Overfelt persuaded them to join. When the Manager position became available, Joe Brazell persuaded them to manage the Computer Learning Center.

Cary is a member of the Board of Directors, a computer "Doc" for the "Dr. is In" Clinic, assists the Lab Techs, fills in at the counter, and is Co-Manager of the Computer Learning Center.

Election Bios



David Steward

David has been a member of Alamo PC since 1991 and was a member of the Alamo Area Compatible User Group prior to that. Both are located in San Antonio, Texas. He has served in various positions with in the Alamo PC Board of Directors for a total of 14 years, including President, APCUG Representative, Director of Programs, Secretary and Director at Large. Presently, he is serving as Immediate Past President, Director of Programs and Secretary. He is and has been directly involved in the day-to-day running of the organization and in obtaining review software for members.

David is a very avid enthusiast of the User Group Community, and has dedicated a great portion of his life in furthering the idea of the user group in general. He has participated in many outside activities including the APCUG National Events, for many years.

He was appointed to the APCUG Board of Advisors in 2001, and went on to hold the positions of Vice-Chair for 1 year and Chair of the Board of Advisors for 2 years. He is presently serving as the Advisor to Region 9. In addition, he has served as Chair of the Membership Committee, Chair of the APCUG Mentorship Committee and is presently serving as a member of the Alliances Committee.

He is also a member of the Intel User Group Advisory Board. David is a full time MIS manager at Alamo Transformer in addition to being a design engineer for the utilities industry. His hobbies include computers, digital animation, multimedia, fishing and communication.



Linda Bianchi

Linda joined Alamo PC in September, 1993. She attended her first Alamo PC meeting at the invitation of a friend, volunteered to work at an upcoming trade show, and has been an active member since.

Linda holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Texas A&M University and has completed Computer Information Systems training through the Computer Technologies for the Physically Disabled, Office Computers Training Course. She is a member of a variety of professional and scholastic organizations including Epsilon Delta Pi Honors Society in the Computer Sciences, Rho Iota Delta Home Economics Association, and The Far West Trail Cooks Association. Linda has been employed as a Medical Administrative Assistant, Budget Analyst, and Marketing Consultant. She is medically retired and devotes a lot of time to volunteer organizations.

Linda is an active Alamo PC volunteer. She currently holds the position of Registrar for the organization, is on the Computer Learning Center desk staff, is an assistant webmaster and Chairs the Volunteer Recognition Committee. Previous service in the Alamo PC Organization has included; eight years as the Vice President of Member

Records, five years as the Resource Center (now the Computer Learning Center) Manager, worked for the organization at local trade shows, served on the BBS Liaison Committee and the Computer Lab Committee among others, as the Membership SysOp for the Alamo PC BBS, and as a member of the Board of Directors.

Linda met Mike while in school, were married in 1978 and have been together since. Mike is also a member of Alamo PC.



Blogging

Sharing Your World

By **Vinny Labash** <vlabash@comcast.net>, Sarasota PCUG, Florida <www.spcug.org>

If the thought of overcoming technical hurdles has deterred you from creating your own web-based journal, stop fretting. Modern web tools make creating your own blog easier than it's ever been. The term blog is nothing more than a shortened version of weblog. The term "weblog" was created by Jorn Barger in December 1997, and Peter Merholz introduced the short version "blog" in 1999. Blog came to be interpreted also as a verb, to blog, meaning "to edit or post to one's weblog."

Electronic communities existed long before people discovered the internet. The AP wire was similar to a large chat room where there were electronic discussions. Another pre-web electronic community, ham radio, allowed individuals who set up their own broadcast equipment to communicate with others directly. Ham radio also had logs called "glogs" that were personal diaries. The concept is hardly new.

Most individuals who use the internet have been like audiences watching TV, passive consumers of content, not active creators. Those who wanted to become content authors either hired someone to do it for them or went the professional design route, involving applications such as Dreamweaver and FrontPage. Those with little technical background also had to cope with the complexities of File Transfer Protocol. These proved to be formidable barriers. Not only did this remove web publishing from most of the people, it created a high priesthood of webmasters and web designers. Even those with strong technical abilities were faced with content management headaches as their sites grew larger.

The only tool an ordinary person had to communicate with others on the web was email. Since web browsers are totally unsuitable for content creation, alternate tools such as Outlook and Eudora were fashioned. Email was the force that made the web the playground of the common folk. Its very success may be the cause of its undoing because email is in danger of being strangled by spam.

The world's most gigantic digital conversation was born six years ago when blogger.com was started. At first, hardly anyone noticed. Thousands of web sites come and go all the time, but blogger.com offered something unique. Anyone

who wanted one could have a free blog. There was no charge to access the blog creation tools, and the site provided free space to anyone who wanted to host a blog. Once discovered, millions logged on and created their own web logs.

Blogs have changed the way educational institutions do research. Traditional journalists have been blasted out of their comfort zones, being continually challenged to defend their printed statements. They are now being held to the same standards of accountability they have long demanded from others. Families are using blogs to keep in touch in ways that were never before possible. Politicians and political organizations are using blog sites to raise funds.

Corporate entities are using blogs to find out what excites customers, and to track what they really think about the company and why. Wisely used, blogs could become the ultimate marketing tool, free of all the negativity associated with spam.

Starting your own blog is no longer a formidable task. If you are simply curious and want to see what it's like to have your own blog, the only investment you need to make is your time. If you have an irrepressible urge to share your ideas, philosophy, comments or conclusions with everyone else on the planet, you are merely a few short easy steps away.

Pay homage to the original by visiting <<http://www.blogger.com>> and follow directions. Another direction is to go to Google and search on "starting a blog". Your only difficulty will be deciding when, not how, to start.

Everyone's a Publisher, and Blogs are Our Printing Presses

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

Just when we think we understand technology and its buzzwords, it all changes. E-mail, chat rooms, Web boards, instant messaging, and cell phone cameras -- haven't they been around forever? But one of this year's hot words is still a bit mysterious: blog. It's neither the villain in a Star Wars movie nor a weather phenomenon: it's simply an abbreviation for "Web log". A blog is an online diary or journal, usually casual and open for all to read.

Blog topics vary as widely as the people who create them. They can be personal how-was-my-day recordkeeping; focus on topics such as politics, technology, religion, etc.; and include pointers to other online resources -- such as other blogs!

To be interesting and effective, blogs need constant care and feeding. Blogs attract visitors, links, and buzz by being timely, so people are unlikely to visit blogs that don't frequently show new and interesting content.

But before you learn to read blogs -- and it's often as simple as visiting Web sites! -- you'll need a reason to do so. Searching Google for "blog" and "senior citizen" yields almost 30,000 hits. That's too many to explore but shows that blogging offers something for all ages. So I'll explore a few interesting blogs, then describe ways to explore the "blogosphere" (the world-wide and ever-growing collection of blogs).

Hosted on a colleague's Web site, Dr. John Huth's blog <jimbuie.blogs.com/john_huth/> highlights his personal crusade to reduce senior citizens' isolation through computers. Recent posts include "Video-Conferencing: the Killer Application to Reduce Isolation and Depression Among the Elderly" and "Bedside Computers in Hospitals".

TravelPod <www.travelpod.com/>, an elaborate and polished Web site, describes itself as the Web's "original travel blog". The assortment of travel journals, travelogues, travelers, and destinations inspires me to hit the road! You can browse highlighted stories or search on interests. For example, having enjoyed a trip to Denmark about 15 years ago, I found dozens of bloggers discussing the country.

Web site Moreover collects news and information from thousands of editorial sites and more than a million blogs. Its "Consumer: Senior News" page <p.moreover.com/cgi-local/page?index_seniors> includes varied material such as travel, insurance, retirement, and crime.

John Woolington hosts a simple but deep technology blog well worth visiting <maturetechnology.blogspot.com/>. Titled "Technology Is Not The Simple Life", it includes observations and opinions about coping with change.

For anything-goes fun, visit Wil Mosher's blog <dailysnooze.blogspot.com/>. He's a curmudgeon and proud of it, noting that he "hides in his hole by day, emerging at night to frolic and fornicate in the moonlight... When he gets off the couch!"

Ken's Weblog <kengory.blogspot.com/> proudly shows a fellow's family, friends, politics, humor, and favorite Web links. It's clear that having a blog is like having your personal TV station or magazine!

Gossip Cooler <www.seniorcitizens.com/weblog/gossipcooler.html> is a daily blog about growing older. The site it's on has useful info and links interleaved with many advertisements; since there's no hint who writes or runs the site, be careful.

A woman artist/activist/writer's blog <windchimewalker.blogspot.com/> offers her responses to world events, disability, and life. Describing herself as a "raging granny", she leaves no doubt where she stands on issues. Blogs like this show the Internet's power to share ideas and create communities by allowing readers to comment on what Patricia says.

A simple blog <www.lazydazers.com> lets you read about and see pictures of a couple's RV travels and adventures.

Finally, the Ageless Project <jenett.org/ageless/> is a fascinating compilation of Web sites (not all are blogs) illustrating that "the personal, creative side of the web is diverse and ageless".

Blogs and RSS are becoming increasingly popular and are getting good press coverage <techweb.com/article/showArticle.jhtml?articleId=57700173>.

You can visit the blogs I've referenced as simple Web pages with normal hyperlinks. Many blogs are also readable via RSS (Rich Site Summary), an Internet technology which can bring material from multiple publishers/blogs to you as it's published, without your having to visit multiple Web sites. I read RSS "feeds" via my email software, Mozilla Thunderbird, and through a Web site which collects RSS feeds <www.bloglines.com/myblogs>.

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Add a New Dimension To Your Browsing

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor; Columnist, AARP Computers and Technology Web site

It's hard to imagine a different world. A great early science fiction book Flatland <www.eldritchpress.org/ea/FL.HTM> describes life in a two-dimensional world, with creatures unable to imagine the third dimension we take for granted. And modern physics' "string theory" <www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/elegant/> speculates that our world really has eleven dimensions.

While I can't imagine those extra dimensions, we spend time in a two-dimensional world every day -- it's how most people browse the Web. But even that has changed, as browsers have evolved from displaying one site per window to more flexible tabbed browsing, displaying many Web pages in a single window.

So now it's interesting and fun to take three-dimensional browsing out for a cruise, surfing the Internet, courtesy of Browse3D. This visual-browsing style lets you see forward and backward, where you've been and where you're going. It's great for browsing that involves a lot of forward-and-backward navigation, or that requires following many Web links.

When first started, Browse3D offers abundant helpful tips for use. These can be scrolled all at once or browsed each time the program runs. And built-in Help provides a comprehensive tutorial highlighting features and capabilities.

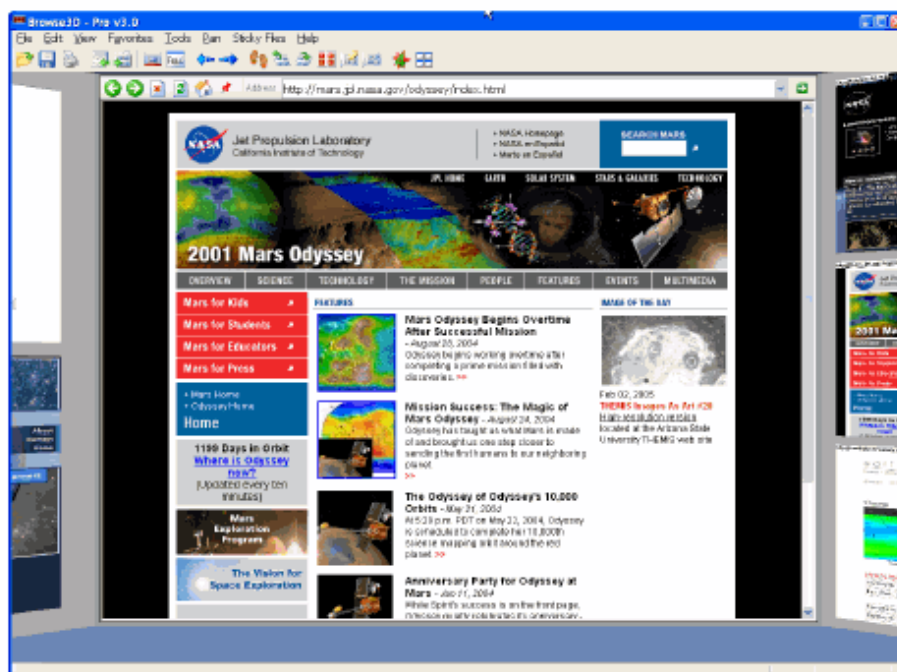
This tool wraps around Internet Explorer -- the vendor calls it a "reverse plug-in" -- to display Web pages on multiple walls, shown three dimensionally on our two-dimensional monitors.

The main straight-ahead wall is the home view, a browser window controlled by a tool bar. It can be zoomed to occupy the full screen, momentarily hiding the side walls. The left wall shows your browsing history, pages you've visited. It's much easier navigating to these pages visually vs. the usual cryptic

browser back button: simply right click a page to bring it back to the home view.

The right wall is a multi-talented workhorse. It can be automatically filled with pages linked from the current home view, avoiding interrupting current attention while allowing instant

The Browse3D Center Wall acts as the main browser or the current Web page.



jumps to linked pages. A handy use for this is pre-loading top entries in search engine results lists. The right wall can also be used like a corkboard, loaded with pages to be kept handy for quick reference; this is called making it "sticky". And it can be put in "4-live" mode which displays four active browser windows with clickable pages. This allows quick site viewing and comparing, or monitoring multiple auto-updating pages

simultaneously, such as saving/tracking multiple auction items though the sale process. Right-wall pages can be rearranged, scrolled, flipped between Auto Crawl and sticky. And right-wall and sticky contents are separately cleared.

Pop-up window behavior -- normally an annoyance -- is customizable: ignore, open in new window, open on right wall, open in current browser, or ask for instructions.

An elegant "rooms" feature extends browser bookmarks/favorites, allowing saving and sharing collections of Web pages as single files. Any selected pages can be grouped; you might gather family, recipe, financial, or technical pages. Rooms can hold static pages (content when pages were collected) or dynamic pages (links to pages as they are when the room is viewed). Opening a room displays pages as they were positioned when the room was saved.

Browse3D is easily purchased online and downloaded/installed/registered; a free version lacking a few features is also available. The software requires a relatively powerful PC; it checks operation when installing. But most relatively current PCs should be adequate. Because of how it uses screen space, Browse3D is most impressive on larger monitors.

Company: Browse3D Corporation
Product: Browse3D
Price: Free or \$29.95
URL: <www.browse3d.com>
Telephone: (888) 444-3200

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The Left Wall is where you've been on the Web - a complete visual back history. The pages on the left wall can be scrolled left or right and returned to immediately by clicking on the page or right clicking it to move it back to the center wall.



The Right Wall holds additional web pages much like a tabbed browser but each page can be more easily referenced by its image. Click on any page and zoom it to a live web page.

Browser Doohickeys, Doodads & Gizmos

by **Vinny La Bash**, <vlabash@home.com> Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL <www.spcug.org>

Most people change their surrounding to suit themselves. Your desk probably has some pictures that trigger pleasant memories. You may have added some new plants to your garden. Whether you have engaged in something as monumental as redecorating your house or as trivial as changing the default ring on your cell phone, your general point is to make your surroundings look and act they way you want them to, not the way someone else thinks they should.

Tweaking your Internet browser isn't any different. Due to the number of software add-ons available, you can change or add many different features. Some allow you to change the appearance of the interface; others help you to retrieve information more quickly. Several of them may even make using the internet easier. Despite their sophistication, most install quickly, and the majority of them are free.

Almost everyone who searches the Web uses Google, Yahoo or both. There are many other search engines, but these two dominate the bulk of the traffic. Switching between the two sites gets old quickly, so why not try Google's tool bar? It maintains a link to Google's web site, allowing instant access to many of Google's features no matter where else you may be on the Web. You can search, spell-check, block pop-ups, even turn UPS tracking numbers into web links.

Yahoo's tool bar has similar features, and it lets you search on-line yellow pages. You can check local movie and TV schedules. Yahoo has a nice email element, and it's very strong in financial features. You also get an anti-spyware tool.

Yahoo's tool bar is easy to find. Go to <<http://www.yahoo.com>>. Look toward the upper right hand corner of your browser window, click on the link, and follow directions.

For Google's entire bag of goodies, direct your browser to <http://www.google.com>, and then click on the more button. You may need to scroll down the list of other tools to get to it. When you're finished make a trip to <http://labs.google.com> and enjoy the feast. This is Google's technology sandbox. These are prototype projects Google is currently working on, meaning they are not quite finished yet. Even if you're not particularly adventurous, try the new Map feature. You may be so impressed you'll never use Mapquest again.

I do a lot of research online, and I have become a fan of Net Snippets because I can straightforwardly save a snapshot of a web page or any part of the page. The utility lets me save

these "snippets" to organize for offline viewing. This eliminates the need to search for the same page multiple times, and is a godsend if the site ever goes offline. Net Snippets is the kind of tool you never knew you needed, but now you can't live without it. There is no one thing that grabs you, but a host of little things like the ability to highlight and annotate that make Net Snippets a "must have" tool. Get it at <<http://www.netsnippets.com>>.

RSS readers are rapidly emerging from obscurity to necessity. Depending on whom you ask, RSS stands for "Rich Site Summary", "RDF Site Summary", or "Really Simple Syndication". RSS is a dialect of XML and its "geek-speak" nature has probably contributed to its slow acceptance, but its benefits are undeniable. The technology notifies you whenever something on your favorite web sites changes.

The original RSS was designed by Netscape as a format for building portals of headlines to mainstream news sites. It has rapidly evolved into something far different and much more useful. Get news headlines, stock quotes or alerts when an item you've been waiting for is available. You can save yourself a lot of time because you don't have to visit individual web sites to see what's new. A large bonus is that RSS feeds can't be tampered with. What that means is they are immune from attacks by spyware, viruses, Trojans, and other assorted evil-intentioned software.

In Windows, Pluck is the most popular RSS add-on. It's easily downloaded from <<http://www.pluck.com>>. If you're still using the basic plain vanilla browser, try at least one of these tools to boost your web experiences.

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RSS Feeds

By Greg Lenihan, Editor, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO <<http://ppcompas.apcug.org/>>

I believe I am an information junkie. I get more e-mail and subscribe to more newsletters than I can read. And yet I'm still searching for more. A few months ago, around the time of the presidential election, I discovered the world of Blogs (or Weblogs). These are online journals where authors post opinions and commentary and often link to the articles they are discussing. These often track back to more Blogs, and more authors worth reading, and before you know it, you can spend a good deal more time than you can afford searching for obscure opinions and facts.

After collecting a number of these sites as favorites in my browser, it became difficult to keep up with them every day. There are all kinds of subjects to choose from, but my favorites are news sites, political sites, and especially--technology sites. Most of these sites had or icons, which I knew had something to do with "feeds," so I decided to find out how to obtain the reader software necessary to subscribe to these feeds (or "channels").

RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary. RSS is a text-based format (XML, actually) that contains various tagged items like a title, summary, and a link to a URL. Instead of you having to continually go from site to site to see if there have been updates posted, these sites are able to "feed" their updates to you. All you need is a news reader or what is called an RSS "aggregator." This is a program that collects and organizes these feeds periodically so you can read them when you want. Then you can subscribe to these sites and automatically get these new postings. It's like creating favorites or bookmarks, except you don't have to continually go there. They come to you.

I started by going to <http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-10088_7-5143460.html> to read reviews and to gather recommendations. I found more options and more reviews of readers at <http://email.about.com/cs/rssfeedreaders/tp/top_rss_windows.htm>. There are many different readers; some free, some not, with different goals. Some are standalone, others work with Internet Explorer, and one worked with Outlook. But the one that caught my eye was free and did not require a software installation. Bloglines <<http://www.bloglines.com>> is Web-based, which means I can access it from any computer with an Internet connection. I could be at home, at work, on the road, and I could still get my info fix.

The signup was quick at the Bloglines.com site. I was just asked for a username (e-mail address), password, time zone, and language. A confirmation message is then sent to your e-mail account. You simply click on a link they provide, and you're confirmed. In addition, the site posts the top Blogs people enjoy, and with the click of a button you can subscribe. Of course, you are not limited to their selections. Any Blog or site with an RSS feed can be added to your aggregator. That is how you can use those XLM icons. If you click on one you'll see a lot of tagged text, much like HTML. But it supplies the link that enables you to subscribe by pasting this link into your aggregator.

Once you have your aggregator and get it running, all that is left is to find sites or Blogs whose content you are interested in. The site where you obtain your aggregator will probably offer you a number to choose from. To get an idea of what is out there, go to <<http://www.blogstreet.com/search.html>> and see the number of topics to pick from. I frequently subscribe to something that looks interesting and if it is not what I expected, it only takes a matter of seconds to unsubscribe. But actually right now, I have more feeds than I have time to read.



Paying too much for healthcare?

discounted fees on:

- ♦ doctors
- ♦ dentists
- ♦ prescription drugs
- ♦ vision care
- ♦ chiropractors
- ♦ alternative health care
- ♦ and more

visit online:

<http://ushealthadvisors.net/davebobst>

USHA
United Service Association
For Health Care

STUDY GROUPS

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

First Phishing, Now Pharming

By John Pearce, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, Colorado Springs, CO

First, there was phishing trying to collect personal information. A newer attack called pharming is trying to do the same thing in a more technologically sophisticated way. You need to be on guard but neither phishing nor pharming should keep you away from the Internet. Let's take a quick overview of both.

Phishing starts with an e-mail, typically from a financial institution, with a message that some dire consequences will happen if you don't immediately verify your account information. A web site link is conveniently provided for you in the e-mail. The provided link is to a web page that looks like the real web site but is actually a web site controlled by the bad guys. The fraudulent web page asks you to enter credit card and billing information or possibly user name and password information. You can imagine what the bad guys are going to do with the information they collect.

Pharming is a way for the bad guys to redirect your web browsing to a site which they control. Pharming is also known as DNS (Domain Name System) cache poisoning. DNS is what converts human friendly names like webboard.apcug.org to numerical addresses like 192.160.122.122. The bad guys want to impact the largest number of Internet users possible so ISP's and large corporations are the most likely targets of pharming attacks. One goal is to download spyware or adware to your PC.

Protecting yourself from phishing attacks is as simple as ignoring the e-mail. All but one of the dozen or so phishing e-mails I have received have been from banks where I don't have an account. In that case, delete the e-mail and go on with your life. If you have an account with the financial institution and are concerned, use the telephone and ask to speak with their Internet security department. If you go to the web site to login, type the web site URL into the browser – do not use the link provided in the e-mail.

Protecting yourself from pharming attacks takes a little effort. Start by keeping your browser updated with all the security patches. Next, you should be sure the padlock icon is displayed on any page where you enter personal information such as username, account number, or password. The padlock icon indicates you are connected to the legitimate owner of the URL and the data you enter is protected by SSL encryption during transmission. The bad guys would have to know the private key of the site in order to make the padlock appear. You can view the security information by double clicking the padlock icon on your browser. You can also use a tool like SpoofStick to confirm the URL of the web page you're viewing.

Two other exploits are worth a quick mention. The first is an instant messaging worm that changes the content of the hosts file on your PC. This is effectively the same as DNS cache poisoning. The other exploit is domain hijacking which is done by manipulating the domain name registrars. Domain hijacking is what happened to Panix, a New York ISP, in January.

Being aware of phishing and pharming along with a little care and caution will keep your web browsing safe from the bad guys.



Don't Fall for "Human Engineering"

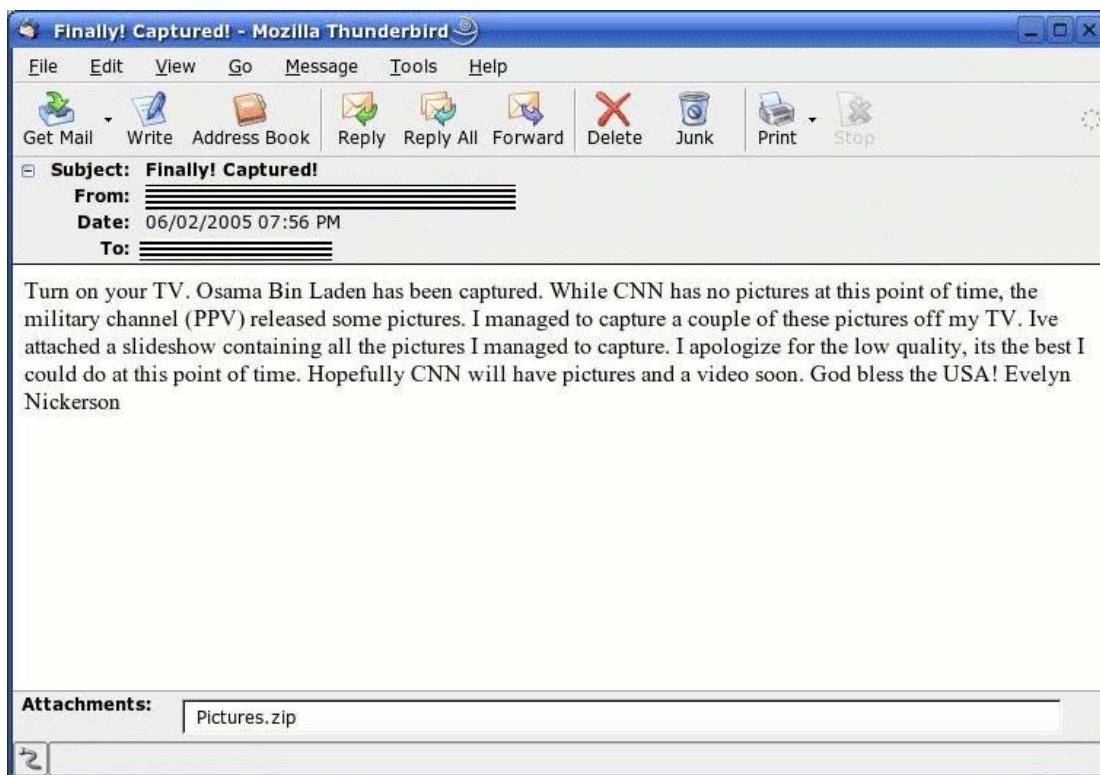
By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, Texas' Radio Show Host; Police Officer <iwilsker@apcug.net>

You receive the following urgent email from someone you will likely know with the subject line "Finally Captured! You open this intriguing email and see the message: "Turn on your TV. Osama Bin Laden has been captured. While CNN has no pictures at this point of time, the military channel (PPV) released some pictures. I managed to capture a couple of these pictures off my TV. Ive (sic) attached a slideshow containing all the pictures I managed to capture." Attached to the email is a file "Pictures.zip". Eager to see the proof that the number one most wanted person in the world has been captured finally, you click on the attachment. No photos appear, so maybe you click on it again. It is now too late, because that first click on the attachment rather than opening a zip file and displaying the photos, planted a nasty backdoor Trojan on your computer, Nibu.D. Through a process known in the industry as "Human Engineering", an innocent victim was tricked into installing unwanted software onto his computer. In this particular case, the Nibu.D backdoor just installed a "keylogger" intended to capture usernames, passwords, account numbers, and other sensitive information.

Nibu.D is also listed by Norton as a "bank info scarfer", a type of malware that explicitly looks for banking information when entered, and sends that information to parties unknown. If you were one of the countless victims of this trick, and have since opened the attachment and unknowingly installed Nibu.D, you have done online banking, checked your credit card accounts, logged onto eBay or other shopping sites, your personal information may have been compromised, and you may become a victim of identity theft.

Every day for the past several weeks I have received some apparently urgent emails seemingly from my internet service provider (ISP). They come addressed from "administrator", "support", "customer service", or some similar official sounding

individual at the ISP. They carry dire warnings in the subject line that my email account will be or has been suspended for a variety of infractions, ranging from failure to follow an unspecified rule, sending excessive spam, or some other major infraction. The poorly worded message is "Once you have completed the form in the attached file, your account records will not be interrupted and will continue as normal" and has a 65k attachment "document.zip". Another slight variation refers to following directions in a file ranging from 43k to 65k in size with the file name "instructions.zip." I depend on my email, reading and sending dozens per day. Email is important to me, and since it is from my ISP, I go ahead and click on the attachment. Bad choice; one or more of the dozens of variants of the Mytob worm is now infesting my



computer, possibly killing or deactivating my antivirus and firewall software, preventing access to antivirus and other helpful websites, and creating a multitude of new threats to my cyber safety. Once the computer is infected, Mytob searches the hard drive for address books, and sends infecting emails to addresses found, geometrically increasing its distribution and degree of damage.

Recently, variations of Mytob in aggregate have made it to the top of the threat lists compiled by antivirus companies. In one recent day, antivirus company Sophos reported that over half of all new virus infestations detected were variants of Mytob. Mytob is a product of a group of miscreants going by the name "HellBot", who have allegedly stated that they are trying to develop some type of "SuperBug", according to a recent article in Computerworld. On some days, several versions of Mytob have appeared; in recent months, slight variations have appeared so rapidly, that Mytob has spread more quickly than antivirus companies' ability to protect against it, leaving even recently updated antivirus software vulnerable to attack.

Mytob, first discovered in February, and its many variants, are especially nasty based on what they do. One factor in common is the ability, as mentioned above, to deactivate or destroy the antivirus software and firewall installed on the infected computers. It also blocks access to security websites that may pro-

vide information and utilities to kill Mytob. This malware may also prevent the running of the free online antivirus scans, which could (if allowed to run), detect and remove Mytob, making it a self-protective piece of malware. Some versions also lower or remove other security settings on the computer, making it even more vulnerable to attack. Some versions also may install spyware, adware, zombies, or other undesirable software, as well as broadcast over the internet that the infected computer is vulnerable to further attacks. Trend Micro, the provider of the online free antivirus scan Housecall (housecall.antivirus.com), and PC-Cillin antivirus software, has stated that some variants of Mytob use the infected computers as a source of revenue for HellBot by placing adware and spyware on the infected computer.

Nibu and Mybot are just two of the thousands of currently circulating viruses, worms, and Trojans. Netsky, Bagel, Sober, and their many variations are a major threat to our computing security. As the virus writers continue to make more productive (for them) and destructive malware, it is now more imperative than ever that we all keep our antivirus software updated constantly. Be suspicious about emails even from known sources, and check out any suspicious email from possibly known sources by checking directly with that source prior to opening the email or any attachments.

As I have pleaded in the past, we must be responsible for our own cybersecurity.

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An Examination of Google's Gmail

By Richard Johnson, Member of TUGNET, CA <www.tugnet.org>

The two most useful features of Gmail are (1) its huge storage capacity, which essentially eliminates the need to delete messages, and (2) a lightning-quick search facility, allowing the user to retrieve any message almost instantly. Gmail also touts its unique labeling system, that replaces other email services' folders (for filing incoming messages), its "conversation" grouping of messages, and its lack of banner ads or pop-ups. In this writer's opinion, the value of the labels is overblown. To label incoming messages is time-consuming and on the whole not particularly helpful. Unlabeled messages may be retrieved easily either from the main window (with the "Search Mail" button) or with Gmail's advanced search (accessible via "Show search options" on the main window). This writer uses the advanced search routinely, for finding messages.

It should be noted that Gmail is not ad-free. It's just that the ads are text ads (similar to the ads on Google's search pages).

At this time a Gmail user can receive HTML mail but send in plain text only. For security purposes, graphics are excluded by default from incoming messages, and you can vary this instruction on a message-by-message basis only.

Spam control. Gmail features its own rudimentary spam filtering system, discussed in greater detail below. While imprecise, this system cannot be turned off. Although you can create your own additional filters, the only way to stop Gmail from diverting legitimate mail to its spam folder is to add the sender to your contact list. (You can do so either directly or by marking a "Spam" message "Not spam.") At this writing Gmail still follows a quirky protocol under which bounce messages are diverted to the spam folder.

Should You Switch?

Gmail is not for everyone. You should not switch to Gmail:

- if you find Web-based email just too slow,
- if you want pictures on your incoming messages, and don't want to have to bother with Gmail's one-click instruction (to include graphics) for each such message,
- if you need to be able to compose messages in HTML,
- if you don't want to have to periodically check the spam folder for legitimate mail or bounced messages,
- if you prefer to read in your inbox all incoming mail, even mail that might be spam, or
- if you're happy with what you have, and feel it's not worth the trouble to notify folks of your new address.

You should consider switching to Gmail

- if you'd rather not fuss with setting up folders for messages that you've read and want to keep, but still want to be able to retrieve such messages speedily,

- if you like Web-based email such as Yahoo Mail or Hotmail, but are fed up with the banner ads and popups you encounter,
- if you don't want to have to decide which incoming messages to keep and which to delete,
- if you've ever wanted to view an old incoming message only to realize that you'd permanently deleted it,
- if you presently use a disk-based system like Outlook or Outlook Express, and don't want the hassle of backing up your messages to protect against their loss in a disk crash,
- if you find your present email filtering scheme too complicated, or
- if you like the idea of grouping related messages in "conversations," for easier reference.

Gmail Compared to Outlook Express

Nearly all new Windows computers come bundled with Microsoft's Outlook Express. This fact may explain the overwhelming preponderance of that program among users. Both Gmail and Outlook express are free. But although price is not one of them, there are various reasons for choosing one over the other

Storage

There are pluses and minuses to using a Web-based email system like Gmail, with respect to storage. A plus is that since messages are stored on the Web, they'll always be accessible to the user, regardless of any hard disk catastrophes. Moreover, an accumulation of large numbers of stored messages will not affect either the available disk space or speed of access. (However, Internet access—especially dial-up—can be uncomfortably slow, compared to disk access.)

One minus with a Web-based system is that the provider's server will accommodate only a limited amount of storage—

typically much less than will easily fit on a user's hard drive. So the user may find older messages simply gone. This distinction is turned around by Gmail—which allows a gigabyte of storage, and in fact discourages the user from deleting any messages.

Filing

With any email system, sent messages may be retained in their own mailbox. The conventional way of filing an incoming message for later reference is to move it from the inbox to another mailbox of the user's choice. This is the filing system used by Outlook Express. The user may need to create anywhere from a few new mailboxes to dozens, with names like "Purchases," "Events," "Subscriptions," "Bills," "Software reference," "Confirmations," etc. A simpler choice might be to send all such saved messages to a "Hold" mailbox.

Gmail has revolutionized email filing. (In its terminology, it doesn't even offer filing!) Rather than send it to a particular mailbox, the user simply "archives" the message. Archived messages in Gmail go to "All Mail," which is just like the "Hold" mailbox referenced above, except that it includes outgoing as well as incoming messages. A Gmail quirk is that while a user's draft will be found in All Mail, messages that Gmail considers spam will not.

Gmail's "labels" or keywords, can at least in theory facilitate a message search, in addition to the usual search criteria (sender, subject, date range, etc.). Multiple labels may be assigned to one message.

As would be expected with a system created by Google, searching for messages is lightning-fast. This rapid retrieval of messages actually renders Gmail's labeling system largely unnecessary, in this writer's view.

Spam Diversion

Gmail has been criticized for having an insufficiently sophisticated spam blocking system. It's actually miles ahead of that of Outlook Express—but OE users often can use spam controls supplied by the Internet Service Provider. For this writer, Gmail's system is more than adequate.

Gmail controls spam by means of (1) message filtering—similar to that of Outlook Express, and (2) spam blocking.

With either Gmail or Outlook Express, the user can set up filters to bypass the inbox and send the subject messages directly to "Trash" [Gmail] or "Deleted Items" [Outlook Express]. Outlook Express also has a "Block sender" option to keep those senders' messages from reaching any mailbox.

Using its own criteria, Gmail will divert incoming messages to its "Spam" folder. This criteria can be overridden by the user's action either manually to add messages to the spam folder or to remove them. This action by the user will continue to affect all messages from the same sender.

Further Considerations

Any retrieved Gmail message will be accompanied by other messages in the same "conversation." You can think of this as your girlfriend's bringing her female cousins along with her on every date. It may be convenient if you want to relate to a cousin, but you need to remember who is the girlfriend and who is the cousin. Whether Gmail's "conversation view" is a positive or a negative is a call you'll have to make.

Gmail out of the box will not notify you when you have a new message. Keeping your Gmail window open won't tell you anything unless you refresh the page. And even with a fast connection, refreshing can be tediously slow. You can download the Gmail Notifier, but only if you use Windows 2000 or XP (or a later Windows version).

Additional points will become apparent with use. For example, a minor annoyance is Gmail's closing your history/favorites/search sidebar whenever you click on a link in a message. The best way to make up your mind about Gmail is to try it.

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Figuring Out How Spammers Get E-Mail Addresses

By **Dave Gerber**, Dave's Bits & Bytes, A Periodic Newsletter for the Members of the Sarasota PC User Group and the World; Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida <www.spcug.org>

Spammers employ a variety of methods to acquire e-mail addresses. Some methods take advantage of the e-mail addresses readily available on the Internet, whereas others employ different levels of trickery, from harvesting to outright stealing.

Harvesting from the Internet

Spammers (and their assistants) utilize a technique called harvesting to acquire e-mail addresses. While harvesting requires a lot of bandwidth, it is ingeniously simple: Simply download the right pages from select Web sites and extract the e-mail addresses that are there for the picking. Some of the tools and sources employed in harvesting e-mail addresses from the Web include the following:

Web spiders: Spammers employ Web crawlers and spiders that harvest e-mail addresses from Web sites. It's common for Web sites to include mailto: URLs as well as unlinked user@domain addresses. Put your e-mail address on a Web site, and you're spam bait. These spiders are not unlike the spiders and Web crawlers used by Yahoo, Google, and others that scan the Internet's Web sites in order to keep Web search indexes fresh. Except that e-mail address harvesting spiders are up to no good. And where do these spiders get domain names? With over 90 million .com domains in existence, it's easy enough to just guess domain names in order to come up with quite a few.

Newsgroups: It's a straightforward task to harvest e-mail addresses from Usenet newsgroups: Just pull in a big news feed and extract the e-mail addresses with a simple shell or Perl script. Newsgroup volumes are still increasing exponentially — at a rate of at least several gigabytes per day. This means lots of e-mail addresses are there for the taking. Any spammer with enough bandwidth can slurp up all those bits and just sift out the e-mail addresses.

Groups, blogs, and discussion boards: Yahoo! and Google have their groups and mailing lists, many of which make their members' e-mail addresses available. There are thousands of blogs and discussion boards out there, too, that contain easily acquired e-mail addresses.

Test messages: In this method, spammers send test e-mails to recipients whose addresses they simply guess — so-called test e-mail messages sent to addresses like service@, info@, test@, marketing@, security@. Spammers at one time could reliably conclude that, if they receive no "bounce-o-gram" back from the domain, that the e-mail address must be legit.

This is because e-mail servers used to routinely send nondelivery receipts (NDRs) back to the sender of a message sent to a nonexistent address. But that ain't necessarily so any more: More servers are opting to stop sending NDRs.

Unsubscribe links: Many spam messages include an opt-out or unsubscribe link so that the recipient can request not to receive more spam. However, often the real purpose of unsubscribe links is to confirm a valid, active e-mail address.

Malware: Spammers sometimes use Trojan horses, viruses, and worms to extract e-mail addresses from individual users' computers. If mass-mailing worms can extract the contents of a user's e-mail address book for the purpose of propagating spam, then it's going to be easy to perform the same extraction and simply send the list back to the hacker's lair. This would probably be easier, in fact, because this activity is far less likely to be detected than a mass-mailing worm.

Unsubscribe requests: A good number of spam messages contain "unsubscribe me" links that a user clicks to opt out. However, many spam operators actually continue to send spam to e-mail addresses submitted to "unsubscribe me" links. When a user submits such a request, the spammer knows that the address being sent is a valid e-mail address. Do you think they'll actually stop sending spam to a known valid address? Not on your life!

Buying and stealing addresses

Among spammers and e-mail address brokers, e-mail addresses are a traded and sold commodity. If you know where to look, you can purchase CDs and downloads containing e-mail addresses by the hundreds of thousands or millions.

And of course, everyone has heard the stories of Web sites that collect your e-mail address and promise not to sell it (ha!). But they sell, trade, or give away e-mail addresses anyway, even when their privacy policy says they won't. A few high-profile companies have been prosecuted and/or fined for this practice.

Business and service provider e-mail lists are also stolen and sold to spammers. In mid-2004, a former AOL employee was charged with stealing 90 million screen names and 30 million e-mail addresses from AOL and selling them to a spammer for \$100,000. This is not an isolated case, but it is a noteworthy one because of the size of the heist. So much for privacy, eh?

Listen to Dave's Bits & Bytes radio show archives at <www.davebytes.com>; subscribe to his newsletter by sending an e-mail to <dave_bytes@comcast.net>.

Search Engine Tips and Tricks



By Richard Johnson, TUGNET, Granada Hills CA <www.tugnet.org>

I don't have to tell you about Google, which has for many years been the search leader. Aside from the quality of its searches, a big plus is that all Google's paid listings are clearly distinguished, and do not even appear in the same part of the page. This is unfortunately not the case with other search services such as Yahoo, which intersperses undifferentiated paid and unpaid listings.

Newbies will want to know they can initiate a Google search at <www.google.com>. All the services I'm recommending here, most of them from Google but a few from other sources, are entirely free.

Google Toolbar

If you don't already use the Google Toolbar, you're missing a terrific navigational aid. Its features are really too numerous to detail here, but I find especially useful its ability to readily:

- bring up a parent Web page,
- search within a website,
- find pages similar to what you're looking at,
- find sites linking to that page,
- translate a page into English,
- browse by name (if you don't know the URL),
- highlight search terms on the page,
- find on the page your search terms or any other terms (more handily than with your browser's "Find" function),
- fill forms, and
- block pop-ups.

(There are better pop-up blockers and form fillers, but Google's may suit you fine.)

The toolbar enables most of the standard Google tasks, including some described in the next section. Not only are all these tasks easily accessible, but also you won't have to re-type your search terms (for example, when you search for an image after a standard search).

I strongly recommend version 3, which adds many useful tools, the best of which will allow you to spell-check what you've typed on a Web form by clicking a toolbar button,

bring up a map page (using the impressive new Google Maps-see below) just by clicking on an address, and track a delivery by clicking on its tracking number.

Since it's still in beta, version 3 is not publicized, and won't automatically replace your present Google Toolbar. To get it, go to <www.toolbar.google.com/T3>.

Other Google Goodies

Google Maps and Google Local

Google has recently introduced its own map system, that's head and shoulders above the competition. It's available as a stand-alone service at <http://maps.google.com> and as an adjunct to the more established Google Local, at <<http://local.google.com>>.

Compared to other online maps, the area of a Google map is huge, taking up more than half the screen, and expanding to fill any additional space (for example, if you move to a full-screen view). Zooming (in or out) is very quick, and re-centering is instantaneous. A new feature brings up a birds-eye view if you click on "Satellite."

Google Maps and Google Local are now pretty much the same service: A page brought up by Google Maps has a link to "Local Search," which provides the local data on the same page; and a page brought up by Google Local includes the map (which, although smaller, can be expanded with one click). The local data includes the names, addresses, phone numbers, and websites of businesses, and, often, third-party reviews (like restaurant reviews).

You can now get to Google Maps by typing a location in the standard Google search bar. And you'll find a link to Google Local at the top of every page of Google search results.

The best of the rest

The following are, in my experience, the most useful (or most interesting) of Google's non-standard services. You do not need the Google Toolbar to employ them:

Google's image search at www.google.com/imghp, touted as the Web's most comprehensive, indexes (according to Google) over 880 million images.

Google will give you a business address and phone number. The easiest way is through the ResearchBuzz! form at <www.researchbuzz.org/archives/001408.shtml>.

Google will bring up one or more definitions for nearly any word. In the Google search box just type "define:" (without the quotes), followed by the word of interest. This service is now multi-lingual.

Reverse phone directory. In the search box type the area code and phone number (with a space between them), and there's a

good chance you'll bring up at the top of the results page not only the person or company name for that number, but also the address.

Google offers special searches, limited (for example) to U.S. government or to Microsoft. Go to <www.google.com/options/specialsearches.html>.

For those who like to purchase through the use of catalogs, Google's catalog search is at <<http://catalogs.google.com>>.

Google will enable you to view a page that's been removed from the Web. Look for the "Cached" link after the description of the page in a search result. (Or click the Page Info button on the Google Toolbar.) This function will give you access to many closed-down sites not yet available via the Internet Archive. (The Internet Archive -- not a Google service -- is at <www.archive.org>.)

The Google Directory at <<http://directory.google.com>> combines the Open Directory Project (the Web's largest human-edited directory) with Google's proprietary ranking system. Use of the directory is helpful to narrow down what might otherwise be an overly broad search. (This tool is also available from the Google Toolbar.)

Google Answers at <http://answers.google.com/answers> is a paid research service--but users are free to browse previous answers, which can be quite helpful.

Weather forecasts are easily obtained by typing in the Google search bar the word "weather" followed by the city of choice (for example, "weather canoga park.") The forecast will speedily appear at the top of a page of search results.

Froogle, a comparison service for online shopping whose listed vendors pay neither for inclusion nor placement, is at <<http://froogle.google.com/froogle>>.

Google Print gives you access to books' contents and lets you search within those books. Look for the "book results" entry in standard search results, accompanied by the Google Print logo.

Google Suggest, at <www.google.com/webhp?complete=1&hl=en>, appears and acts like the standard Google search, except that as you start typing your search request, Google types its own suggestions. These could save you time and also point you to related searches.

Google Desktop, to search files on your own computer, can be downloaded from <<http://desktop.google.com>>. Unfortunately, it's available only for users of Windows 2000 and Windows XP.

Gmail, which on March 31 started offering rich text formatting, has as of April 1 doubled its storage capacity to a whopping 2 gigabytes. Gmail is not yet open to the public, but invitations can be obtained from various sources, including this writer.



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Note that without re-typing you can extend your standard Web search not only to Google Local but also to Google Images and Froogle (as well as to Google Groups and Google News), by clicking on links at the top of every results page. Or you can skip the Google entry page and go to Xtra Google at <www.xtragoogle.com> for a selection of twenty Google tools, all tied to one search box.

Google Tips

Toolbar tips

Use Alt-G to enter search terms in the search box.

For your news search, don't enable the separate news button, but instead use the Search News option in the drop-down Search the Web menu. That way you'll be able to use the Alt-G shortcut to enter your news search query, and to use the same query for news and general Web searching, without re-typing.

When using the word-find function, hold down the control key to find the exact whole word, and similarly use the shift key to move backwards.

Other Google tips

For academically oriented results (often the most useful), try typing site:edu either before or after your search terms. This will eliminate commercial sites, and limit results to those from educational institutions.

Although Google now implements "stemming" (automatically searches for variants of words as well as the words themselves), you can cover still more bases by using the tilde [~] symbol right before a search term (leaving no space). This will tell Google to use synonyms as search queries. For example, a search for ~food ~facts will turn up cooking information.

Don't worry too much about misspelled words. With any search engine, a search query with a misspelling might get you some good results that you wouldn't see otherwise! Google will suggest a corrected spelling along with its search results, but if the initial search comes up empty will correct the spelling on its own and re-run the search.

Google will ignore some common short words (like a, on, and by) in your queries. The best way around these so-called stop words in most cases is simply to enclose the phrase in quotes, which will force Google to search only for the phrase as given. (A phrase search will of course come in handy on other occasions as well.) Otherwise, you can precede a suspected stop word with the plus sign (for example, +on).

Google recognizes the OR operator, or, in its stead, the vertical line. So if you're seeking search results concerning cats or dogs

(but not both), you could type "cats OR dogs" or "cats | dogs" [without the quotes]. Use the minus sign right before a search term for "not." ("Animals -dogs" [without the quotes] would ignore dogs in the search.) For complicated queries, you can if necessary group search words within parentheses.

Instead of clicking on the main link at the top of each Google search result, try clicking on the word Cached. The page that will come up will now have your search words highlighted. (Don't use this technique if you need to see the most recent page revisions.)

Google supports word wild cards. That is, you can in your query use the asterisk [*] as a stand-in to represent any word. (This won't work in Google for parts of words.)

Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and founder/administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization <<http://theskillspool.org>>. He is a volunteer with TUGNET HelpContact for assistance with Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, and Gmail. You may reach him at <rj@theskillspool.org>.



Search Engine Tips and Tricks, Beyond Google

By Richard Johnson, TUGNET, Granada Hills CA <www.tugnet.org>

As helpful as is Google, it's a mistake to overlook the other search services. There's nothing wrong with turning first to Google (or another search service of your choice). It's a good idea, however, to pick out and bookmark at least a few competitors, for special situations. A good place to start is the search comparison chart at <www.infopeople.org/search/chart.html>.

Both MSN Search and Yahoo! Search have undergone major recent changes, and both merit special attention. MSN Search (search.msn.com) now affords access to Encarta Encyclopedia, with a two-hour "free pass" that will be renewed with every new query. Check out also its Near Me option (akin to Google Local), that will point you to services and events in your area or another area you specify.

Yahoo! Search (search.yahoo.com) has brought out My Web to track past searches. My Web will save both the links and the actual pages (so you'll still have access should the page be removed from the Web). Yahoo will organize these saved pages as bookmarks. For details, go to <myweb.search.yahoo.com/myresults/benefits>.

Many of the following search tools are in beta, and so may become even more useful after further development. All are free to individuals.

Comparing and Augmenting Search Results

You might be surprised to learn that if you compare the top ten results from any two search engines, fewer than half of those results will likely be found at both. An excellent way to see what either Google, Yahoo, or Ask Jeeves comes up with (that your standby didn't!) is to use the Jux2 tool, at <www.jux2.com>.

Yagoohoo!gle <yagoohoogole.com> presents side-by-side Yahoo and Google results.

Another way to go is to type in your query at Topic Hunter <www.topichunter.com>, and then click on the names of any of the sixteen search engines Topic Hunter supports.

Copernic Meta is the free successor to what formerly was a fee-only download. A Windows Deskbar or browser toolbar will facilitate simultaneous searches on multiple search engines. <www.copernic.com/en/products/meta>

Special-Purpose Search Engines

Shopping

When it comes to shopping, the Web can do far more than take your money. To help you decide how to spend it, a new search engine still in beta, Become <www.become.com>, zeroes in on buying guides and product reviews (although you will find merchant links also, generally farther down).

Once you have a better idea of what to buy, you'll want to use one of the multitudinous price comparison sites. Pricing Central <pricingcentral.com>, acts like a clearing-house, utilizing the resources of many price search engines. For books, music CDs, and videos, AddALL <www.addall.com> and Books Price <www.booksprice.com> figure in shipping costs for your location. AddAll has a slightly larger bookstore database, but Books Price will calculate costs for multiple purchases.

If you like to shop by catalog, take a look at Catalog City <www.catalogcity.com>. For specials at local brick-and-mortar establishments, try Cairo <www.cairo.com> or ShopLocal <www.shoplocal.com>.

Other Special-Purpose Engines

For straightforward answers to simple questions, check out Brainboost, at www.brainboost.com. Promoted as an "answer engine," Brainboost asks you for plain-English questions (not search words), and its results are answers, not links. (A link will accompany each answer, for further research.) Another popular tool for factual information is Answers.com <www.answers.com>, which de-emphasizes links even further and gives more extensive answers. An optional free download lets you bring up Answers.com results by alt-clicking any word on your screen, on or off the Web.

For deciphering acronyms, you can't do better than Acronym Finder <www.acronymfinder.com>, with definitions for over 398,000 acronyms. Optional tools (for various browsers) will allow you to view a definition almost instantly.

To take advantage of Amazon's Search Inside the Book capability, you may want to use A9 Search, at <<http://a9.com>>. (A9 also features search history tracking.)

For news there are many good choices. BBC News at <news.bbc.co.uk> is excellent for international news, as is World Press at <www.worldpress.org>. For old news (as early as 1990) without the fee charged by other sources, try The Seattle Times, at <archives.seattletimes.nwsource.com/web/index.html>. For the most up-to-date news, AlltheWeb Advanced at <snipurl.com/eljf> is excellent, and will let you sort and filter results prior to your search. CNN.com <www.cnn.com> and the revamped Yahoo! News <news.yahoo.com> are good general-purpose news sources. Most or all of these allow you to set up news alerts to email you of new developments in issues of interest.

Toolbars

These days almost every search engine and its cousin have an associated toolbar for free download. In addition to the Copernic Meta toolbar (covered above), a few you might want to consider are:

Y!Q DemoBar. I really like this one, in part because it's small enough to fit easily on the same line as my Internet Explorer address bar. (To squeeze it onto that line you may want to "unlock" the IE toolbar, using the right-click menu, and shrink the address bar. You can adjust Y!Q's size, using its options menu.) The DemoBar's sole function is to enable context-based searching. Clicking it will yield results related to page text you've highlighted, optionally modified by text you've typed in its search box. <yq.search.yahoo.com/splash/demobar.html>

Earthlink Toolbar. This is available to anyone (not just Earthlink subscribers). Its major innovation is its Scamblocker option, to guard against phishing. It also offers a Google search box, a pop-up blocker, and clickable changing news headlines. Like Y!Q, it can be shrunk down to fit on the same line as your address bar. <www.earthlink.net/home/software/toolbar>

MSN Toolbar. Features pop-up blocking and search term highlighting. Can be expanded to implement desktop search and form filling/password management. <toolbar.msn.com/default.aspx>

A9 Toolbar. Gives you the ability to add notes to Web pages. Also includes pop-up blocking, search history tracking, online bookmark creation, search term highlighting, and site info. (Some have found it difficult to use.) <toolbar.a9.com>

Yahoo! Toolbar. The big brother of the Y!Q DemoBar. Includes the DemoBar's functionality, and in addition facilitates Yahoo's My Web (see above) and spyware protection. <beta.toolbar.yahoo.com>

Google Addenda

Overall, the best search engine is still Google. Here are nine more Google tips and tricks:

An adaptation of Google Maps will search for rental and for-sale housing around the country, in a price range you specify. For each result you'll be told whether a picture is available. Then if you choose you can link to the original listing (which is from Craigslist). Go to <www.paulrademacher.com/housing>.

Google's Search by Number feature will give you information about numbers you type in the search box. The most useful example of this was covered in last month's article--entering a phone number to use Google as a reverse directory. But other numbers can also yield valuable information. For instance, entering just the area code will bring up a link to a map of the area. You can also get information by entering UPS, USPS, and FedEx tracking numbers, Vehicle Identification Numbers (VINs), and even UPC codes.

The Google Calculator can do anything your stand-alone calculator can do, and a lot more. It's especially useful for conversions, by employing the operator "in." For example, to find the number of teaspoons in two cups, you'd type "teaspoons in 2 cups" [without the quotes] in the Google search box. For myriad other uses go to <www.google.com/help/calculator.html>.

The best way to use Google News is via its Advanced New Search, at <snipurl.com/elhs>. This allows you to sort by date, limit by news source or location, specify the date range, and easily modify your search in other ways.

When typing a phrase into the search box, as with other search engines, you enclose the phrase in quotation marks. To save yourself keystrokes when there's no text following the phrase, omit the ending quotation mark. (Google will fill that in for you.)

Google Maps can be re-centered by double-clicking, but more useful is the user's ability to drag the map area--thousands of miles if necessary!

In using Google Local, be sure to click on the links for the establishments of interest, to disclose useful data about them (which can vary considerably). Also: You can limit your Google Local searches as you please. For example, you might enter "restaurant inexpensive view," to find a low-cost restaurant with a good view.

Google's new My Search History will from any computer let you view by date or easily find anything you've ever searched for after signing up. Together with each of your past search queries you'll find the links you used from that search's results. (Cf. Yahoo's My Web, above.) For details, go to <www.google.com/searchhistory/help.html>.

Some of you who attempted to implement the minus sign as a stand-in for NOT, in accordance with the suggestion in Part 1, may have had a problem resulting from the line break in the printed article. This will be resolved if you make sure there's no space between the minus sign and the (following) search term to which it applies.

I've been asked why in Part 1 I described how to use Google to find a business but not a residence. The answer is that the syntax for locating a residence is rather complicated. You'll find it at <www.google.com/help/features.html#wp>. Three points, though: (1) The necessary elements must be typed in the order given. (2) Don't insert extra elements (like a street address, even if you know it). (3) In spite of what Google lays out, don't bother inserting commas between the elements. Note that both the business and residence search will include handy Google Maps links with your results.

Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and founder/administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organization <http://theskillspool.org>.



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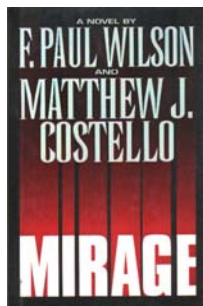
Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Mirage, by F. Paul Wilson and Matthew J. Costello

Hardback, Warner Books, 1996, \$23.00, 374 pages

Estranged twins Julie and Sammi Gordon couldn't be more different: Julie's a buttoned-down left-brained neurophysiologist; Sammi's an impulsive right-brained artist. When Sammi slips into an inexplicable coma-like state, Julie fled from her lab in Boston to be at her side in London, and quickly realizes that her memoryscapes project – a virtual reality program intended to revive the memories of Alzheimer's patients – could be the key to her sister's survival.

An intriguing medical thriller, bordering on the edge of science fiction. Costello is the game designer for "7th

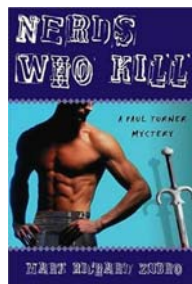


Guest" and his talent is apparent in the virtual reality scenes. Not too many technical details about the VR, but still an interesting concept. The mystery itself is a good – and horrifying one. Recommended.

Nerds Who Kill, by Mark Richard Zubro

Hardback, St. Martins Minotaur, 2005, \$23.95, 272 pages

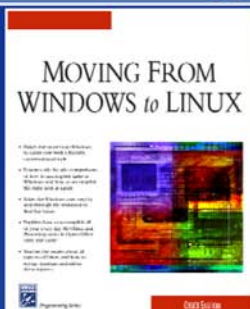
Chicago detective Paul Turner's sons are attending a Science Fiction Convention so he is conveniently on the scene when a supposedly beloved and undeniable popular writer is skewered with a broadsword.



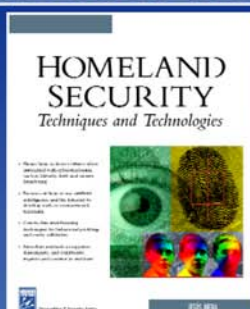
The most high-tech aspect of Nerds Who Kill is the title, which I adore. One of the characters has a hand-held gizmo, referred to as a computer, which is used to break into hotel rooms and one of the victims writes reviews of sci-fi books for a Web site (that's striking a little too close to home.) Not nearly as interesting as Sharon McCrumb's "Bimbos of the Death Sun," a better, funnier book which also takes place at a sci-fi convention.

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

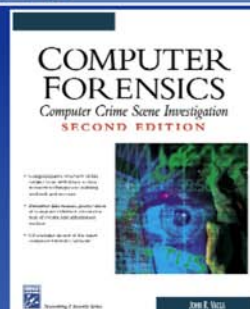
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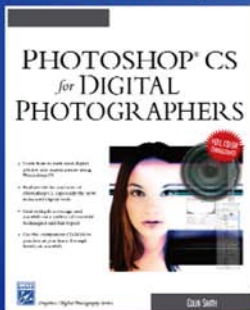
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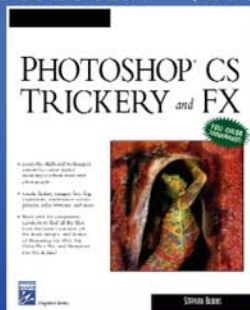
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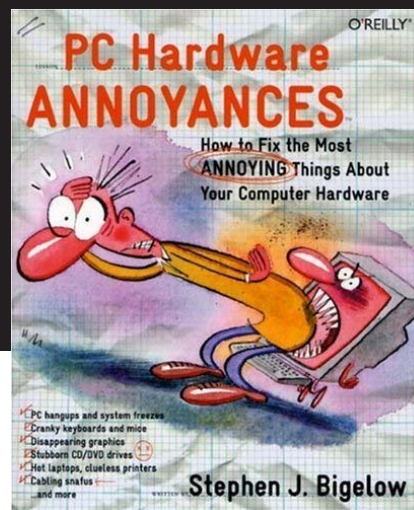
PC Hardware Annoyances

by Stephen J. Bigelow

\$24.95

Published by O'Reilly

Reviewed by Catherine Haenze, Alamo PC



Like the others in the series, this book is very reader friendly to even the newest of the newbies. The instructions are clear and easily followed. Also like the last one I reviewed, this one makes it plain that lots of things happen in our love/hate relationship with computers.

Quick checks: there's a mouse for lefties (one Christmas present coming up) Watch that clock. If it gets the slows, your internal battery may be headed for the battery graveyard. No wonder the mini vacuum cleaner I bought for my son-in law sits unloved. (pg. 41, pink box—danger, Will Robinson!). There is life after the dreaded CRASH, and how to gain it.

Laptops and PDAs: Laptops that won't hibernate; laptops stuck in hibernation. How can we win when the computers are so versatile? This book gives you one-upmanship on that problem. Also helps with keeping your neighbor out of your wireless connection; slow connections; to battery or not to battery; and PDAs. As to PDAs, mine was trashed after only two years.

Graphics: Don't quite know how the task bar fits in here, but am disappointed he didn't tell how to get it back for MSOffice 97. All this leads to a Haenze computer principle: "Simple, even unknown, mistakes are only fixed with complicated procedures." The item, "Traffic Affects Streaming Playback", pg 96, explains the RealPlayer color-coding and bandwidth. Watch out for that color orange! Traffic jam ahead! Also, a little red box on the page tell us "firewalls can cut off access to certain internet resources." Fix a problem, get a problem.

Sound: The nicest thing about this chapter is that I don't have even one of these problems! The pink box on page 101 gives you a nice, quick way to check on your sound. Learned what a "phantom power" is on page 108. Learned how to position the power cable and the audio cable when they cross, pg. 110.

Hard Drive: On page 126 he tells us how to speed up our computer and avoid fool's errors at the same time. Pages 128-129 teach us how to do a disk clean up. Pages 131-132 show us how to fix corrupted drives and what telltale signs point to total failure of the computer. When it comes to defragging, he points out a program, but doesn't tell us how much it costs. Major thing to remember before you start playing, back up those programs you don't want to lose.

CD&DVDs: I'd heard of Region Codes. Nice to know what to do about it. I appreciated the tip in the pink box on page 142 about locking your CDs/DVDs into a vertically mounted drive. This chapter includes how to get your computer to recognize the USB port, performance, playback, recording, rewriting, burning, and DVD player annoyances. The only thing I've tried that hasn't worked is the microphone configuration. I don't know where my Device

Manager button is. It isn't where he said it would be, and I still can't get the music through the earphones. Sigh.

Network: I enjoyed reading through this even though I don't have a network and don't expect I ever will. Anyway, that's why I have a son-in-law who solves these problems as his work. But even to someone who hasn't wrestled with modem, cable, DSL, wireless, or general networking annoyances, printer&file sharing, or firewall annoyances, it was readable and understandable. The one item that wasn't covered in firewalls was that outgoing items should also go through a firewall.

Printers and Scanners: In this last grouping, the author covers another of the most frustrating areas. Who hasn't wanted to take a ballpeen hammer to one or the other of these devices? These two devices can come up with the most intriguing, irritating errors and bugaboos. At last we know why men go bald and women get crows-feet!

Again, XP is often the culprit. And then people wonder why I'm hanging onto my 98. You can get patches for a multitude of problems on these two. Or you can wait a bit because each will soon be obsolete and you'll have a reason to buy a newer one with newer, different problems. Some things I found helpful: printer speed (pg. 218), print jobs Que. (pg. 218). (Though I still think Mother's problem is impatience. You cannot hit the print key six times in a row to make it speed up.) Then there are the scanners. That's why I downloaded the Irfan Program. Now I use the scanner so I can use the Irfan that lets me do more and do it more quickly. One complaint was the scanner taking over everything. Well, my scanner didn't, but the digital camera did. And just like he said, configure the offending program to not come on unless you turn it on.

A general overview would be: I liked the "Tools of the Trade" boxes in all the chapters. I really liked the little pink or red boxes for information. This guy is a nice Dr. Bombay. He helps us fix all the problems we've caused as well as the problems inherent with computers. This book can be bought at Borders as well as Barnes and Noble, priced about \$20.00. It is a good book to keep on the shelf. If you haven't had the problems yet...

Catherine Haenze has, like most moms, a checkered background, a Jill of all trades. Paid jobs have included part owner of an employment agency and substitute teacher. Computing has largely been learned by mega trials and lots of error. I've been a member of Alamo PC since October 04.

Book Review

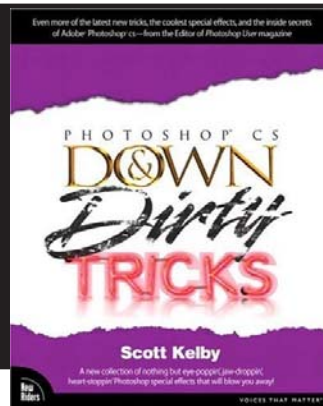
Photoshop CS Down & Dirty Tricks

by Scott Kelby

\$39.99

Published by New Riders

Reviewed By Jim Morrison, NOCCC



The CS edition, which follows Scott Kelby's previous Photoshop 7 Down and Dirty Tricks, is so completely new that even a fairly strict exam of the table of contents reveals almost no repetition. Actually, I found only one duplicated title.

Kelby is a class act with a sense of humor that shines through in every chapter without being in the least burdensome. His inclusion of the word "Dirty" in the title was recommended by his editor who said it would increase sales by 16%. (Kelby suggests 18% in some parts of New Jersey.) More, when he slipped in the word "Naughty" for a chapter title, sales purportedly went up 19% in spite of the chapter's being named somewhat awkwardly "Naughty CMYK Prepress Settings." For his next book, he wishes he could say he knows Britney Spears personally (he doesn't) for a whole new teen market. Tom Clancy on the front of the book would really make sales take off, and after that comes the next Harry Potter book. You just have to admire his business sense.

The heart of the book is that its non-sequential nature allows one to pick a suitable project without involving any preamble and requiring only the most rudimentary knowledge of Photoshop. In only four pages, Scott shows how even a neophyte can create a movie poster rivaling the efforts of a dedicated professional. A minor caveat in the poster project is that one of the fonts recommended, Compacta Bold, is a product of Bitstream and does not come with CS Photoshop. No big deal. Many, many fonts are available.

Speaking of preamble, Scott doesn't have an introduction. He says nobody reads them anyway, but he does have a preamble titled "This is Not the Introduction," which is definitely recommended reading. A cursory acquaintance with his delightfully airy mannerisms belies the concentrated utility in the meat of the book.

For the hardcore Photoshoppers, one of Scott's on-every-page- useful tips advises that the new Wacom tablet doesn't require the user to reset brush pressure or size sensitivity when you change brushes. He suggests that having to do so perhaps drove the users of the previous program suicidal. Wow.

Scott probably wouldn't mind a plug here for the Wacom pen since he is a co-author with Dave Cross of a FREE tutorial CD on the device advertised on page 3 of the June issue of Photoshop USA (<http://www.wacompowertips.com> or call toll free 1-800-922-1490).

As in Photoshop 7, the reader has access to the book's companion website <http://www.downanddirtytricks.com>, and also has permission from Digital Vision to use royalty-free images at <http://www.digitalvisiononline.com>.

The former has stunning images generously allowed by BrandX to be used only for practice purposes in the book. A downloaded lighthouse measures 2.4x1.6" at 300 ppi.

Before you get too excited about "royalty-free," from digitalvisiononline, a search for "tiger" showed initial purchase prices from \$149 for an 11x13 cm at 72 dpi to \$409 for 28x48 cm at 300 dpi.

This is truly a great, great book blemished by only one complaint. The accompanying DVD could not be read by either my computer or the player in the entertainment center. Gotta get back to the publisher on that, or maybe buy a new computer, right? In case you missed this Richard Freeman tip in my last review, a soft- back book used often on a desk just refuses to stay open. Take it to Kinko's for a \$5 conversion into a spiral binder. Author: Scott Kelby Publisher: New Riders Publishing 2004. MSRP: \$39.99 (less 10% for NOCCC members); Amazon.com: New \$27.19, Used from \$23.31. Average customer rating at Amazon: Four stars out of five.

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Software Review

CuteFTP Home

\$39.95

Published by GlobalScape

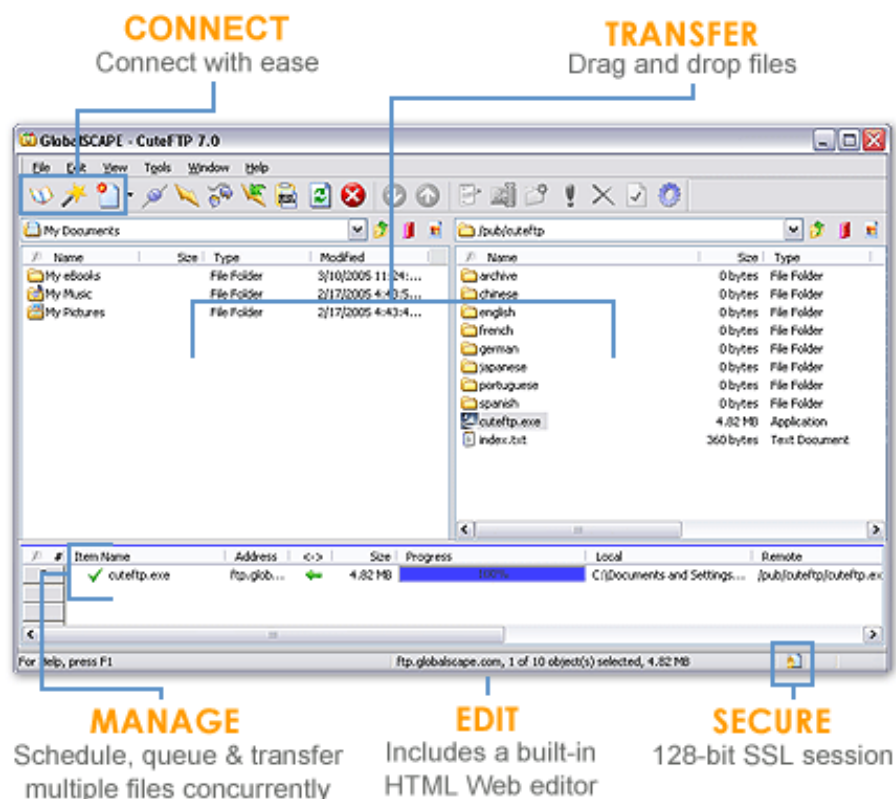
Review by: Bruce Cramer, Alamo PC

CuteFTP Home is used to transfer files of any size and/or type, including web pages, multi-media files, or other documents to and from a file transfer server over FTP (file transfer protocol), the standard for moving files across the Internet. Most people use FTP to upload webpage's they've edited to the web server that host their website. As mentioned you can also use CuteFTP to upload photos. Many people may find this handy to upload photos of items they want to put up for auction on eBay or other online auction sites. Another use could be to back up critical files to an online storage site.

What's in a name? While the program may be considered cute by some it definitely packs a lot of powerful features and its ease of use makes it something to consider when looking for an FTP program. I have used CuteFTP for about 6 years now. Since I use a web editing software program that automatically uploads my html or web files I rarely use FTP but when I need to upload some files manually I find that this program suites my needs perfectly.

Installation of CuteFTP is straight forward and posed no problems. The program has a nice connection wizard that walks you through setting up a connection to your server. If you know your servers address, your user id and password your set. After you have setup a connection it is stored in the site manager. When you open the site manager you will see all your connections in a nice orderly manner letting you view your site user id, password, which is masked for privacy purposes, and address. Once you've connected to you server you will be presented with a screen that looks much like the Windows Explorer interface. From here you can transfer files between your computer and the server by dragging and dropping them or simply by double clicking on them. You can also delete, rename files and create new folders on either your computer or the server. CuteFTP gives you a small window at the bottom of the screen to show you the status of your transfer. While it may not be as convenient as some of the more powerful website editors CuteFTP also gives you the opportunity to edit your html webpage's. Some sites, such as those you come across to download shareware files, let you login anonymously; CuteFTP will log you in automatically and handle the download for you without missing a beat.

Like most software vendors Globalscape also offers a professional version which obviously lets you do some things that the



home version does not. Some of the features are that you can synchronize the folders between your computer and the server and transfer files between different online servers. If these features are important to you, you might consider that version.

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If you are in need of a FTP program I know of none more friendly to use than CuteFTP.

While I have never had to use their technical support it is nice to know that Globalscape is located right here in San Antonio at 6000 Northwest Parkway, you can reach their sales department at 210- 308-8267. You can download a free 30 day trail from Globalscape's website at <<http://www.globalscape.com/cuteftp>>. CuteFTP is not available in stores but you can purchase it from their site for \$39.95

System requirements:

Windows 9x/NT/ME/2000/XP
3-5 MB available on hard drive
8 MB RAM
An Internet connection
Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 or higher,
5.5 recommended

Bruce is a regular volunteer at the Doctor Is In and provides on-site computer services to individuals and businesses (210)865-2933. See his ad for PC Pro on page 31.



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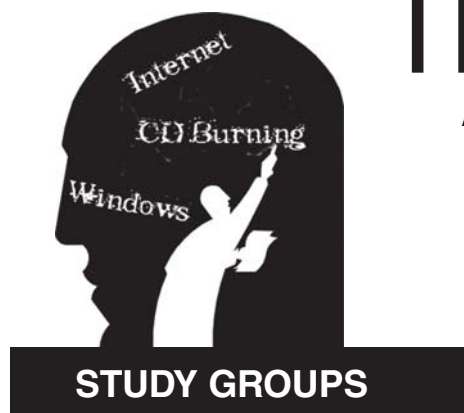
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M.	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 5 of 6) Intro to Windows 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. BOD 6:30 P.M. (p/r) Excel 2000 7 - 9 P.M.	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 3 of 6) Basic Intro to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Photoshop 7 (Workshop) 1 - 5 P.M.	(Sr. Comp. Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Photoshop 7 (Workshop) 1 - 5 P.M. (a/r) HGS1 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. Net 7 - 9 P.M.	(a/r) SES 2003 8 - 10 A.M. Dr. is in 8:00 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Photoshop 2 of 6) Intermediate MS Word 1 - 3 P.M. (p/r) class 1 of 5) Adobe Elements 2 Workshop 1 - 5 P.M. (p/r) PC Alamode Magazine Adobe PDF 7 - 9 P.M.	(p/r) Photo Editing 8 - 10 A.M. (a/r) MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Photo Editing 10 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Photo Editing 12:30 - 2:30 P.M. Commodore 1 - 4 P.M.	(p/r) class 1 of 6) HTML 4 - 8 P.M.
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
(p/r class 1 of 2) Windows XP 2 - 5 P.M.	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 1 of 6) Intro to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. General Meeting Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Convention Center Presenter Microsoft	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 1 of 6) Intro to Windows II 10A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 4 of 6) Intro to Windows 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. (p/r) Small Business Server Certification 6 - 9 P.M. (p/r) Excel 2000 7 - 9 P.M.	Power Users 10 A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 4 of 6) Basic Intro to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 4 of 6) The Print Shop Greeting Card 1 - 3 P.M. (Sr. Comp. p/r class 1 of 6) World Wide Web and E-Mail 1 - 3 P.M. Jumpstart Your Homepage 6:30 - 7 P.M. (No meeting) (p/r) Pinnacle Studio Plus Ver 9, 7 - 9 P.M. (Class 1 of 3)	Sr. Comp. Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Photoshop 7 (Workshop) 1 - 5 P.M. (p/r) Pinnacle Studio Plus Ver 9 7 - 9 P.M. (Class 2 of 3)	Dr. is in 9:00 A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 4 of 6) Intermediate MS Word 1 - 3 P.M. (p/r) class 3 of 5) Adobe Elements 2 Workshop 1 - 5 P.M. (p/r) Pinnacle Studio Plus Ver 9 7 - 9 P.M. (Class 3 of 3)	(a/r) MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Class 1 of 3) Computer Lit 1 P.M. - 3 P.M. C++ + 2:30 - 4:30 P.M. (p/r) class 2 of 6) HTML 4 - 8 P.M.
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 2 of 6) Intro to Windows 1 - 3 P.M.	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 2 of 6) Intro to Windows II 10A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 5 of 6) Intro to Windows 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. (p/r) Small Business Server Certification 6 - 9 P.M. (p/r) Excel 2000 7 - 9 P.M.	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 6 of 6) Basic Intro to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 6 of 6) The Print Shop Greeting Card 1 - 3 P.M. (Sr. Comp. p/r class 2 of 6) World Wide Web and E-Mail 1 - 3 P.M. (p/r) Pinnacle Studio Plus Ver 9, 7 - 9 P.M. (Class 1 of 3)	Sr. Comp. Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Photoshop 7 (Workshop) 1 - 5 P.M. Advanced Access 7 - 9 P.M. (p/r) Pinnacle Studio Plus Ver 9, 7 - 9 P.M. (Class 2 of 3)	Dr. is in 9:00 A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 5 of 6) Intermediate MS Word 1 - 3 P.M. (p/r) class 4 of 5) Adobe Elements 2 Workshop 1 - 5 P.M. (p/r) Pinnacle Studio Plus Ver 9, 7 - 9 P.M. (Class 3 of 3)	(a/r) MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Class 2 of 3) Computer Lit 1 P.M. - 3 P.M. Sr. Comp. Staff Meeting 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. (p/r) class 3 of 6) HTML 4 - 8 P.M.
25	26	27	28	29	30	
(p/r class 2 of 2) Windows XP 2 - 5 P.M.	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 3 of 6) Intro to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. CorelDRAW 12 6 - 8 P.M.	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 2 of 6) Intro to Windows II 10A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 6 of 6) Intro to Windows 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. (p/r) Small Business Server Certification 6 - 9 P.M. (p/r) Excel 2000 7 - 9 P.M.	(Sr. Comp. p/r class 6 of 6) Basic Intro to Windows 10 A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 6 of 6) The Print Shop Greeting Card 1 - 3 P.M. (Sr. Comp. p/r class 3 of 6) World Wide Web and E-Mail 1 - 3 P.M. (a/r) WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M.	Sr. Comp. Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon (p/r) Photoshop 7 (Workshop) 1 - 5 P.M.	Dr. is in 9:00 A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. p/r class 6 of 6) Intermediate MS Word 1 - 3 P.M. (p/r) class 5 of 5) Adobe Elements 2 Workshop 1 - 5 P.M.	

ALAMOPC ORGANIZATION



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

This is a study group for those interested in developing Windows and Web applications using Microsoft's .NET technology. We will use development modules and applications for the DNN Portal using VB.NET and C# as a basis for demonstrating .Net development. Guest speakers occasionally present new technology and development tools available for .Net Developers. Door prizes (books, software, shirts, etc.) are distributed at most meetings.

Contact: Joe Brazell 345-2207

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

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.

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 an understanding of surfing the web and using email. The course prepares students to enroll in a variety of second-level courses.

Contact: Ruben Sanchez

When: Sat. Aug 20, 27, Sep 3 1-3 pm

Sat. Sep 17, 24, Oct 1 1-3 pm

Sat. Oct 15, 22, 29 1-3 pm

Where: Resource Center

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

DotNetNuke Portal Study Group

Learn DotNetNuke portal software for hosting your website. Focus on hands-on configuration and use of the DNN 3.x portal. The class will discuss the portal framework and configuration of a DNN site. Setup web pages, insert modules on the pages, modify and edit the look of the pages and data in the pages. Modules include Calendar, Announcements, Forums, Blogs, Contacts, Links, Surveys and HTML.

Contact: Joe Brazell 345-2207

When: 7PM - 9PM Sept. 29, Oct. 27 (no November or December meeting)

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating: ★

FREE CLASSES

CorelDRAW I Class

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

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

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★★

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

We're initially only going to meet online, through the mailing list I've established using Yahoo! Groups. Membership is limited to Alamo PC members, but anyone can join the list by sending a message to <apcoretro-subscribe@yahoo.com>." Or, if you're reading the electronic version of the PC Alamo where this text appears, you can join APCO Retro simply by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/apcoretro/join>

Contact: Shane Hicks

<shane@absolute-power-computing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

Pre-registration: Must sign-up on
<APCORETRO@yahoo.com>
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

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: ★ - ★★★

PINNACLE STUDIO PLUS

Learn how to edit your home videos on Pinnacle's Studio Plus Version 9 and make it look like it was done by a pro.

Contact: Learning Center
(210) 736-0080

When: 7 to 9 pm, September 14, 15, 16 or 7 to 9 pm, September 21, 22, 23

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: Yes

Technical Rating: ★

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.

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: Ruben Sanchez

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

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: Yes, call Learning Center at 736-0080

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★

FEE-BASED CLASSES

Photoshop Elements & Photoshop 7 Class - \$

2005 Schedule:

September - each Friday 1 - 5

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

October - each 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.

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: Saturdays, October 8, 15, 22, 29, 8:00 - Noon

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

Technical Content Ratings

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

Help Numbers

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

Step One

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

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

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

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

Step Two

Expertise	Name	Phone	Availability	E-mail
(2)	Tom Drawert	696-9601	M-F 6-9pm; S/S 9am-6pm	
(12,24)	Steve Northover	497-5750	M-F 7-9pm; S/S 12-3pm	
(6)	Bowen Moursund	736-1791	M-F 9am-4pm	
(7, 21)	Keith Marbach	(830)303-9344	M-F 9am-4pm	
(7, 21)	Ed Conner	696-0191	4-7pm	
(9, 10, 16, 23, 30, 32, 33, 35, 42)	John Bolton	658-3060	M-F 6-9pm;	
(0, 10, 11, 26, 29, 30, 35, 36, 42)	Jean Smith	822-1133	M-F 10am-8pm; Sun 12-8pm	
(11, 14)	Bob Harris	492-3683	M-F 7-9pm	
(14)	Bob Battaglia	651-5642	9am-7pm	
(18)	Lou Harris	492-3683	M-F 7-9pm	louharris@alumni.utexas.net
(18, 23, 31)	Herb Langthorp	651-6087	M-F 6-10pm; 6-9:30pm on S/S	pokeypub@satx.rr.com
(44, 45, 46, 47, 48)	Chris Montgomery	490-2415	M-F 7-9pm;S/S 12-6pm	
(21)	Paul Woods	653-8940	4-7pm	
(25)	Barry Woitena		M-F 9-5pm	dallasmx@swbell.net
(28)	Brian Collie	828-1505	M-Sat 10am-5pm	
(36)	Christel Villarreal			cvillarreal@stic.net
(37)	Cynthia Thompson	655-1058	9am-9pm	
(9,42, 43)	Frank Flores	344-2231	M-Sat 9am-1pm	frflores@grandecom.net
(10, 43)	Mario Flores	566-4048	10am-11pm. Leave name, number.	
(8, 13, 26)	Robert Carrasco			carrasco_r@yahoo.com
(1, 10, 25, 26, 36)	Joseph Kubon	828-6281 x 1554	12noon - 8pm M-F and S/S	
(1, 10, 36)	David de Leon	614-3100	1-4pm M/F 12noon-8pm Sat & Sun.	
(9, 14, 16, 32, 36, 40, 41,42, 43)	Bruce Cramer	865-2933	M-Sat 9am-3pm	service@pcpro4u.com
(40, 41, 50)	Ted Ressler			catechist@gmail.com


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Classified Ads

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

- For Sale** Scrapbook Tote Crop-in-Style XXL is new with pull up handle, fixed ball bearing wheels, removable pen caddy hold 75 pens, 18 scissors loops, punch storage. Holds multiple albums up to 12" x 15" and anything else you can think of for the growing scrapbooker. Store price is \$140.00 plus tax and I am asking \$95.00. Call David at 492-5153. <marjdave1@sbcglobal.net>
- Free** Free to anyone who needs them: FAX paper rolls, one new, one half used. Heat sensitive paper. (8 1/2 x 98 ft.) I got a new FAX machine that doesn't use them, so if someone wants them... E-mail for more info: <joeecool@satx.rr.com>
- For Sale** 100Gig hard drive, 512Mg RAM, Flat screen monitor, Speakers (with subwoofer), DVD drive, CD/DVD writer (separate drive) \$700, negotiable. <richardstrout@hotmail.com>
- For Sale** View Sonic Professional Series P75f+ Flat Screen CRT 17" monitor. Purchased June 1, 2004. Hot key to boost brightness levels for intense, vivid colors with video, DVD, graphics and gaming. Toggle back to normal brightness for text. Ultra-fine 0.25mm aperture grille pitch. \$99 call Sandy 372-9985 or <sknight@satx.rr.com>
- For Sale** Hewlett Packard Laser Jet 1100se black and white printer with extra unopened Laser Jet Toner Cartridge. Used occasionally for 3 months. No problems. \$65 total. Contact Doris at 494-2402



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

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

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

Monthly Meetings

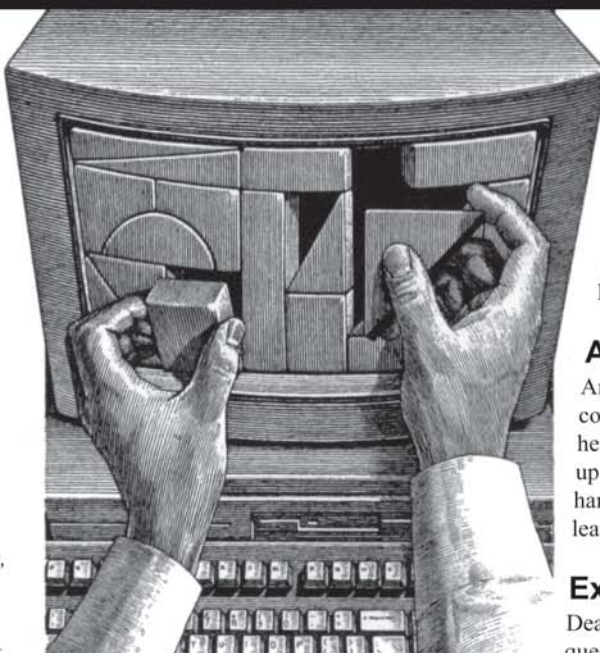
Every month you can attend a presentation meeting, which is open to our 2,500 members. Local and national companies provide the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

Award-Winning Magazine

When you join Alamo PC, you'll receive its award-winning magazine, *PC Alamode*, each month. You'll learn of group activities and you'll enjoy the reviews of new products from your fellow members. Regular columnists will give you insight to this fast-paced, dynamic industry. As a member, you can sell your outgrown stuff in our FREE Classified ads section.

Special Interest Groups and Classes

Alamo PC offers more than 30 Study Groups and classes on specific software programs for beginners to expert. These small groups typically meet once a month in one of our two hands-on computer labs or classrooms and provide an opportunity to get answers in an informal setting. There are groups for word processing, Web design, graphics and programming and even study groups to help you get Microsoft Certified. You can attend as many SIGs as you'd like and, as you become experienced, even lead one!



Internet (www.alamopc.org)

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

Alamo PC SeniorComp

Are you age 45 or older and not into computers or the Internet yet? Let us help. Contact Alamo PC today and sign up for the very next class. Classes are hands-on at a pace to match your learning style.

Expert Help

Deadlocked with a computer problem or question? Get access to personal help from expert Alamo PC members. Just call! If you need someone to diagnose hardware and software problems, try "THE DOCTOR IS IN," a free clinic where members bring in their computers and allow our experts to help diagnose and often fix many PC ailments.

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

To join, return the application below or sign up online at www.alamopc.org. Your \$45 dues covers your entire family!e. You may use your credit card or send your personal check. If you need more information, call (210) 736-0700. Shortly after joining, you'll receive a membership card entitling you to all rights and privileges and discounts. **JOIN TODAY!**

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



Membership Application -- Apply for your number today!

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

FIRST: _____ MI _____ LAST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____

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

EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please accept my membership for: ☐ 1 year - \$45 ☐ 2 Years - \$85 ☐ 3 Years - \$125 ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

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

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

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

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

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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.

