

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

MULTIMEDIA ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

November 2005

\$4.00

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page 37

**The Music
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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:

membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

Learning Center number **210.736.0700**

If you have comments about classes call

Linda Bianchi **210.226.2460**

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:

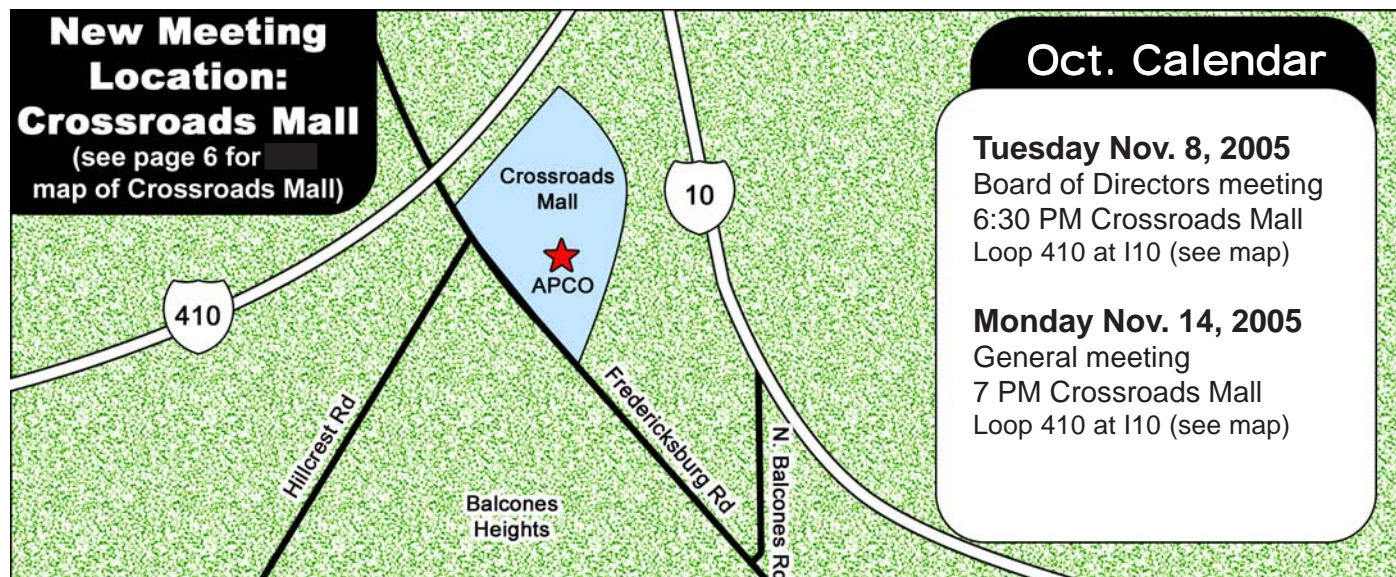
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

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)



Oct. Calendar

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

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



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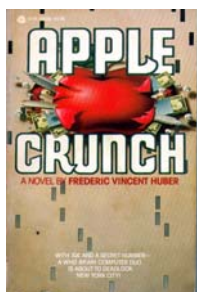
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PC Alamode

(501 (C) (3))

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

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| | | Per insertion | | |
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| Half pg. (7 ¹ / ₄ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h) | 144 | 138 | 130 | 121 |
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*Consecutive months

**To be paid in advance

Board of Directors

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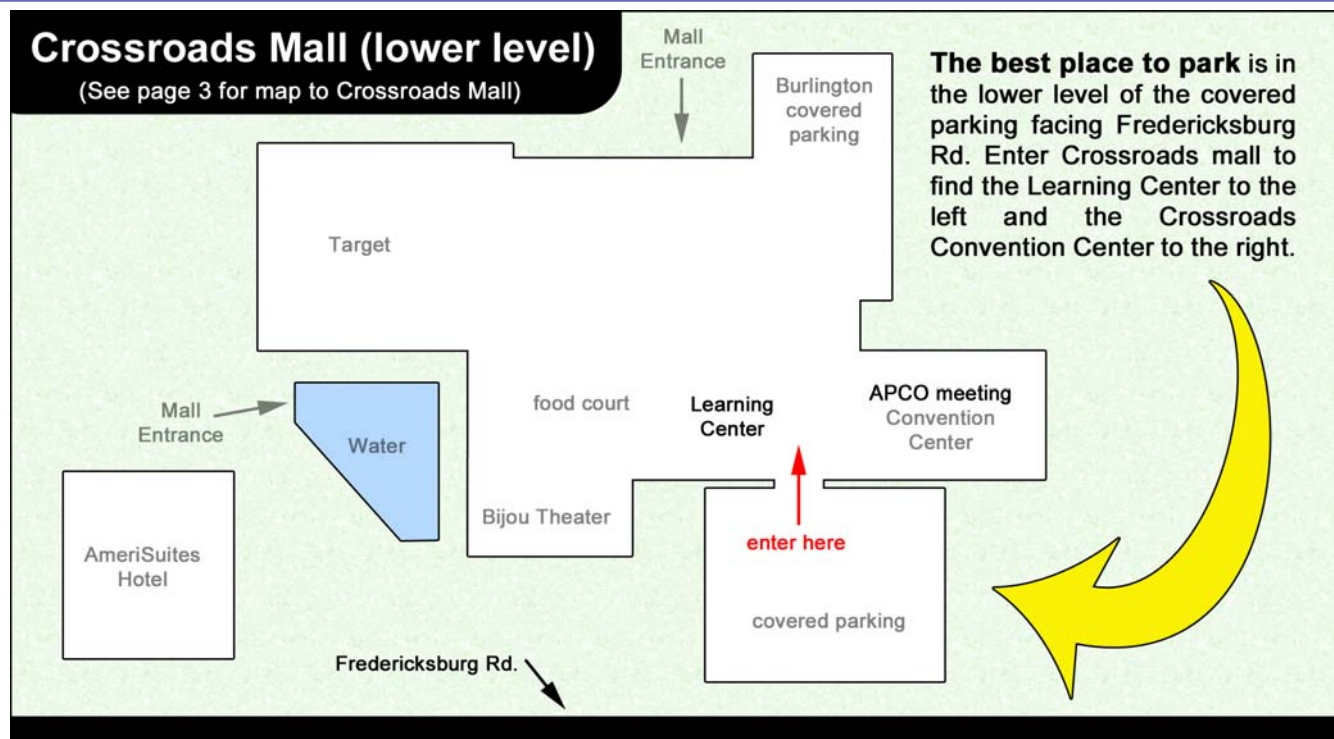
Learning Center, Crossroads Mall

736-0700

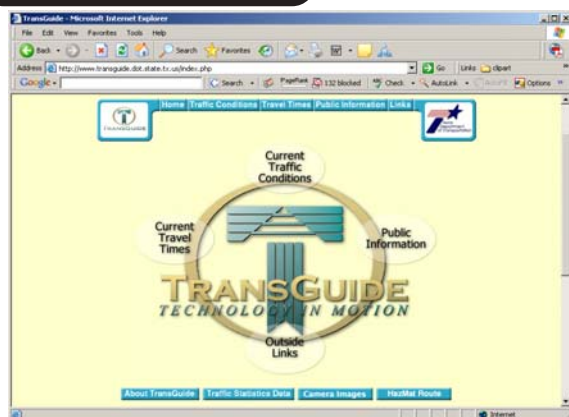
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| Editor, PC Alamo Magazine | Joseph de Leon | unlisted | editor@alamopc.org |

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



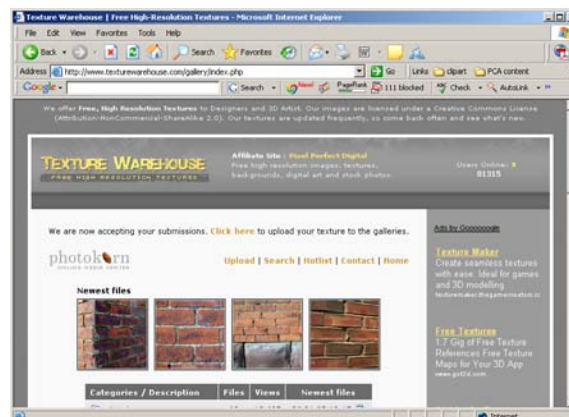
PC Alamode Links List



TransGuide

<<http://www.transguide.dot.state.tx.us/Traffic/equip.php>>

The current status of TransGuide equipment can be obtained here, such as messages being displayed on message signs around town and camera images.



AtomFilms

<<http://www.atomfilms.com>>

AtomFilms is where the Web goes to watch movies, providing on-demand viewing of over 1,500 world-class animations and short films. Collectively, more than 20 million loyal entertainment fans visit the AtomShockwave sites each month.

← enter

This is a time of transition at Alamo PC. There are new board members and leadership. New classes are starting. I urge you all to become active in Alamo PC. Our future is up to the will of the membership.

Read on page 10 John Gaddis' farewell message. He has been with Alamo PC for many years; spending more than a decade as a board member. John has decided to step down as education director. Please congratulate Linda Bianchi as his successor. Linda has served as registrar for years and is a special asset to Alamo PC.

Several exciting new classes have sprung up recently. Please have a look at pages 60-63, where class descriptions and requirements are listed. New groups include the Alamo PC Retro User Group, Digital Camera and Photography workshop and Surf and Search.

Another interesting change at Alamo PC is the merger with SeniorComp. In the past, SeniorComp was a separate group. Now the two have merged and classes are under the direction of Linda Bianchi.

A special congratulations to Larry Lentz for being selected by Microsoft to be San Antonio's first Small Business Server Specialist! Read the press release on page 47.

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. 3

President's Message

Bill Klutz

New FY, New BOD Structure, New Incomplete BOD!

In my last two messages, I indicated "We really 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.'"

Current BOD Structure

With the recent passing of the revised bylaws, there are now 7 BOD positions - President, Treasurer, Secretary, Education, Operations, Marketing, and Communications. The last four (4) will have the predominant substructure for ongoing activities and will need the most help to make sure things so smoothly.

Director Voting Process

In my opinion, the recent process to elect directors for the 2006 fiscal year (Oct 05-Sep 06) Board positions was not as encouraging for the well-being of the organization as I had hoped. Let's review.

First, we only had nine (9) nominations. Of these, (3) declined, and one then serving board member resigned, leaving only five (5) individuals to cover seven (7) board positions. (The math indicates double duty for some!) In the final analysis, only 93 members took the time to cast a vote. Not very encouraging! The Alamo PC Organization doesn't want to become a "Use to Be" statistic. However, it may if individuals are not any more interested than what has recently been shown in the voting and attendance at monthly meetings.

Current BOD Members

At the October board meeting, the five individuals recently elected to the BOD were approved by board members to fill the following positions (and tenure): President & Treasurer (until someone desires to be appointed) - Bill Klutz (1); Secretary - David Steward (3); Education - Linda Bianchi (3); Operations - Cary Hall (3); Marketing - Vacant; Communications - Vacant. Note: Steve Tech was not able to be present at the meeting. Subsequent discussions with him indicate he is willing to serve as follows: Marketing (1).

What can Members do?

Once again I ask each member to ask this question and consider committing 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. Attend some of the monthly general meetings where presenters provide information about current and future computer related issues. (This month representatives from Smart Computing magazine will be present to talk about the information in the monthly magazine and as a subscriber, the info at their web site. If you are not familiar with the magazine, talk to someone about it before the meeting and be present. I think it is a first rate publication, that presents info in an easy to understand format. If you review a copy I believe you will agree.)

Membership renewals continue to be a concern - 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!

A Snapshot Of Board Positions, etc.

PRESIDENT

President Elect
Past President
Recruit Volunteers

SECRETARY

Recording Board Minutes
Record Maintenance
Elections
Historian

Recruit Volunteers

TREASURER

Treasurer Reports
Budget
Liaison with Accountant
Leases & Contracts
Recruit Volunteers

EDUCATION

Recruit Instructors
Curriculum Development
-Study Groups
-Free/Paid Classes
-Clinics

Registrar

General Meeting Programs
Recruit Volunteers

OPERATIONS

Learning Center Manager
-Front Desk Staff
Library
Lab Administrator
-Support Techs
"Dr. Is In"
-"Doctors"
Special Technical Projects
-Programmers

Capital Purchases

Lab Scheduling
Volunteer Recruiting Coord
Recruit Volunteers

MARKETING

Membership
-Member Records
-Member Retention
-Member Recruiting
-New Members

Fund Raising
-Grants

-Corporate Sponsors

Sales Literature

Trade Shows & Booths

Direct Mail Marketing

-Postal Liaison

Special Events

Sales Promotion

Recruit Volunteers

COMMUNICATIONS

Media Relations

Magazine (PC Alamode)

-Editorial Committee

-Editor PC Alamode

-Magazine Advertising

-Product Review Coord

-Member Deals

-E-Mail Lists

Web Site(s)

-Webmaster

Community Relations

Volunteer Recognition

APCUG Representative

Recruit Volunteers

November Program

David Steward

SmartComputing explains computers in plain English

Computers can sometimes be a cruel game of hide and seek. Smart Computing knows how you feel so ready or not here they come! This November, Jen Clausen from Smart Computing is on her way to visit Alamo PC to guide you through Smart Computing and put an end to the nerve racking games of computer hide and seek.

In addition, everyone can expect to receive a goodie bag complete with Smart Computing, a guide to SmartComputing.com, Smart Computing pens & mouse pads, and more! Great door prizes to be given away at the meeting as well.

Smart Computing is a publication written in plain English. It is a magazine that provides a long list of services no other publication provides, including subscriber only web access, tech support, low advertisements and many more.

The program is a way to benefit Alamo PC with more exposure and special offers. The buy 5 get 1 free program is one benefit they offer to user groups. For every subscription purchased by a member or someone referring to the group, the account of the user group is credited. Once five credits are accumulated Alamo PC receives a free one-year subscription to use as we choose.



**Don't Miss
Smart Computing!**

Finally, the plain-English computing resource you've been looking for!



Alamo PC Organization
Monday, November 14th, 7:00 PM
**Crossroads Convention Center,
 Crossroads Mall**

**Goodie bags
for everyone!**

Door prizes!

Presentation Highlights

- Free Tech Support
- Q & A Board
- Searchable Article Archive
- My Personal Library
- 4 Magazines For The Price Of 1!
- Customer Service
- Online Tech Support Center





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.

STUDY GROUPS

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

Mark your calendar for the annual

Alamo PC Open House



November 20th, 1 to 5 p.m.
Alamo PC
Computer Learning Center
Crossroads Mall

Food! Fun! Friends!

And best of all, it's free!
If you haven't seen our facility yet,
Come on by to ooh and aah!
Help to recognize and thank our volunteers.

Feed the cookie monster!

If you can, bring a plate
of cookies to the Learning Center
by 4 p.m. November 19th
Alamo PC runs on mega-bites of cookies!

Volunteer of the Month

Don Robinson



Significant Happenings...

John Gaddis, Education VP

... Farewell and Thank You

In 1991 this writer accepted the nomination to the Alamo PC Board of Directors. During that time I have enjoyed working with our wonderful volunteers to bring you a variety of classes which you indicated an interest in. At that time, our general meetings were held in the cafeteria at San Antonio Savings, the pyramid building at the intersection of San Pedro and Loop 410 for those Apconians new to San Antonio. Alex Flores was president.

We held our SIG, Significant Interest Group, meetings in member's homes and businesses. This worked until we were offered space at the Petroleum Center. We met there for a couple of years in a vacant office space until a paying tenant appeared who wanted the space.

The next move was to the lower level at Central Park Mall. The management gave us the old Joseph's Mens Store space and all we had to do was pay the maintenance, a utilities and insurance. Our volunteers went to work and built out a very nice area with two spaces for classes and a reception area with a library. After a couple of years, the Mall management decided to close the mall and all tenants had to move out.

Crossroads Mall had a space which we could use so we moved in. The space was never what we really wanted and after a year or so we were asked to move to our present location or out of the mall. Our volunteers went to work again and built out the beautiful Learning Center which we not have.

It has been an interesting and educational experience to watch Alamo PC grow and change over the years, but the time has come to let someone else take over the position of Director of Education. I chose not to have my name on the last ballot for board members.

Linda Bianchi has been my main assistant for a long time and has accepted the position of Director of Education. She did an outstanding job for me and I know she will do an outstanding job as the new Director of Education.

My thanks to all Apconians for the support you have given me over these many years and my special thanks to the tireless instructors who make Alamo PC the great organization that it is.

My best wishes to all of you. I hope you will continue to volunteer your help in the future and attend the wonderful classes that our instructors bring to you.

I plan to stay active in Alamo PC and look forward to seeing all of you.

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:

Live Oak Convention Center
8101 Pat Booker Road
San Antonio, TX.

Show Dates and Times:

more info at <http://www.pcshows.com/>



Geeky Gourmet

As the holiday season is about to overpower us, we may need something simple and easy as a special treat. The Rompope can be prepared several days in advance of a special holiday meal. The Viennese Chocolate is a special addition to breakfast for overnight visitors or after trimming the tree. The Surprise Biscuits are quick and easy enough to prepare for the family but would be a delightful surprise for special overnight guests.

Take a deep breath, the holidays are almost here. Enjoy.

Rompope (Rum Eggnog)

3 cups milk

1-1/2 cups sugar

6 egg yolks

¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

6 oz. Rum

Combine milk and sugar in a large saucepan. Stir constantly over medium heat until mixture boils. Continue stirring until mixture is reduced to 2-1/2 cups, about 30 minutes. Remove from heat; cool. In a small bowl, beat egg yolks until light and lemon-colored. Beat into cooled milk mixture. Return to heat. Stirring constantly, bring to boiling point. Do not boil. Remove from heat; stir in vanilla. Cool about 10 minutes. Beat in rum. Pour into a 1-quart jar. Cover and chill before serving or store in refrigerator. Makes about 3-1/3 cups. Serve in liqueur glasses as an after-dinner drink.

Surprise Biscuits

2 cups self-rising flour

1-teaspoon sugar

1 cup whipping cream

2 tablespoons raspberry, strawberry, or apricot preserves

Combine first 3 ingredients; mix well. (Dough will be stiff.) Turn out onto a floured surface and knead 10 to 12 times.

Roll dough to ½ inch thickness; cut with a 2-1/2 inch biscuit cutter. Make 6 slits through dough around edge of each biscuit to within ¼ inch of center. Place on lightly greased baking sheets. Press down center of each biscuit, making a dent with thumb. Spoon ½ teaspoon preserves into each center.

Bake at 450 degrees for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Yield: about 1 dozen.



Viennese Chocolate

1 (6-ounce) package semisweet chocolate morsels

½ cup sugar

1 teaspoon grated orange rind

1/3 cup orange juice

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 cup whipping cream, whipped

Hot milk

Cointreau or other orange-flavored liqueur (optional)

Cinnamon sticks

Combine first 5 ingredients in a heavy saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until smooth. Remove from heat, and cool to lukewarm. Fold whipped cream into chocolate mixture, cover and refrigerate up to 1 week.

To serve, spoon 2 tablespoons chocolate mixture into each cup; add 2/3 cup hot milk and 1 ounce Cointreau, if desired, stirring until blended. Serve each with a cinnamon stick stirrer. Yield; enough to make about 20 cups hot chocolate.



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.

Once, during a McDonalds show I was a guard for the largest and most complete dinosaur skeleton ever found. It was discovered by Sue Henderson and McDonalds Corp. sponsored the recovery. I guess they knew better than to let me guard any of the food. I just worked the ASIS (American Society of Industrial Security) <<http://www.asisonline.org>> show. Colon Powell was one of the featured speakers. Exhibits occupied about 700,000 sq. ft. and attendance was 20,000, their best ever. I was assigned to the Videoprotein <<http://www.videoprotein.com>> booth whose owner and founder, Anthony Pugliese, is a collector of many unique items. In 1991 he bought the 38-caliber Colt Special that Jack Ruby used to shoot Lee Harvey Oswald on live TV. Mr. Pugliese purchased it at an auction from Jack Ruby's brother who had acquired it from the FBI 20 years after the shooting and needed money for legal fees. Mr. Pugliese paid \$250,000 and it is now valued at about \$7 million.

Being stationed there prevented me from browsing the show much, but I did check out some of the biometric lock products. Placing your finger on a pad or scanning your eye iris will open a lock, or initiate other functions if you like. There were also various security gates, special roll up doors and too many unique products to mention here. One company had a stranded steel cable to install around your property that, if breached, will tell you exactly where it happened and can even initiate camera action. Some cameras can detect motion and initiate a camera sequence to follow the action, also notifying the office of the activity. You could easily spend two days or more at that show. One evening the show rented Universal Studios for the attendees and my wife and I worked checking the attendees entering. Since there were drinks inside, we placed wristbands on people under the age of 21 identifying them as minors to bartenders who also checked people. Food and drinks of all kinds were all free inside the park, and attendees enjoyed all the rides free. Too bad you missed that show!

*Zio Corp. Is Acquired

I'm sorry that the PDF file with the rebate forms for the Zio Corp. products were not posted on my Web site. It turns out that Zio Corp. was acquired by SmartDisk and I have to assume that everybody was very busy with whatever changes would take place. However, Zio has some of the rebate forms posted on their own Web site and I hope what was there filled your needs.

*Punch Software

I hope some of you took advantage of the rebates for Punch! Software products that offer excellent tools for designing your home or for your remodeling project. Because of updates, I had to pull the ones planned for this month at the last minute, but hope to feature their products again soon.

*What's a Skin Clock? An Edited (To Shorten) Announcement Received in June Offering a Discount

"Our company has released the personal assistant for Windows – Skin Clock. It is a personal reminder integrated with a new trendy tray clock. We would like to inform all user group people about a 25% discount as a part of our launching campaign.

"Best regards,

Eugene Kryukov <eugene@alcyonesoft.com>"

Skin Clock Has Plenty of Functionality

June 23, 2005 - Alcyonesoft announces today the launch of its Windows integrated personal assistant. Skin Clock has become an advanced replacement for the standard Windows clock. Besides a choice of professionally designed skins for your new system tray clock, the program features personal notification service and time synchronizer. Just make your alarm centre know your appointment time or a report deadline and it will remind you what you have on the agenda. The only other thing your personal assistant needs to know is whether you prefer just a note, or a note and a pleasant chime, or should it launch an application for you.

"The idea of Skin Clock came from our customers," explains Eugene Kryukov, CEO of Alcyonsoft. Skin Clock is shipped with a portfolio of skins, ranging from neo-modern to futuristic to classic. By grading the hue of the clock panel you can easily integrate it into your desktop color scheme. You can synchronize your system clock with the Internet time server. Alternatively, you can rely on automatic synchronization. Unbounded range of ways to customize your Skin Clock can be found in the Options menu.

Skin Clock v.1.0 Features at a Glance

- Highly customizable intuitive interface;
- System tray integration;
- A portfolio of skins for the time panel;
- Alarm centre with a choice of reminder options;
- Automatic and manual time synchronization.

Pricing and Availability

Skin Clock 1.0 runs under Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003 server platforms and costs \$29.95 (USD) for a single-user license. Free technical support is extended to all registered users. A trial version is available as a free download at <<http://www.skin-clock.com/files/skinlock.zip>>. More information about Alcyonsoft can be found on the official website: <<http://www.alcyonesoft.com>>.



Trolling for Wi-Fi - Is It Legal?

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>

Local area networking has experienced a profound change in recent years. Wired networks are still the norm but wireless networking is popular at homes and businesses. There are several issues worthy of exploration regarding this topic and this column will explore these issues in some detail in this and future columns. One issue is the legality of accessing an "open" wireless network and the other issue is the necessity to protect a wireless network.

Wikipedia states that "wardriving" involves the use of an automobile and a Wi-Fi-equipped computer, such as a laptop or a PDA, to detect Wi-Fi wireless networks. It is also known as "WiLDing" (Wireless Lan Driving), originating in the U.S. with the Bay Area Wireless Users Group (BAWUG). It is similar to using a scanner for radio. Many wardrivers use GPS devices to measure the location of the network, find and log it on a website. For better range, antennas are built or bought, and vary from omnidirectional to highly directional. Software for wardriving is freely available on the Internet, notably, NetStumbler for Windows, KisMac for Macintosh, and Kismet for Linux.

Wardrivers make identification and access of wireless networks a sport, but is the sport legal? Is there a clear-cut answer or does it depend on the facts?

A recent Florida case provides some guidance. A Florida man, sitting in his SUV and using a laptop, was accessing wireless networks in a residential neighborhood. The St. Petersburg Times reported the matter and made the observation that "a drive through downtown St. Petersburg shows how porous networks can be. In less than five minutes, a Times reporter with a laptop found 14 wireless access points, six of which were wide open. I'll guarantee there are tons of people out there who have their wireless network being exploited but have no idea. And as we see more people utilizing wireless, we'll see more people being victimized." The Florida man was indicted and convicted.

"Wireless fidelity, or 'Wi-Fi,' has enjoyed prolific growth since catching on in 2000. More than 10-million U.S. homes are equipped with routers that transmit high-speed Internet to computers using radio signals. The signals can extend 200 feet or more, giving people the ability to use the Web in the back yard of his Crescent Heights home, but also reaching the house next door, or the street."

The expansion of Wi-Fi hot spots is part of this phenomenon. With a wireless-capable laptop, it is possible to access the Internet at places called "hot spots," and they are everywhere. Some charge for access but many provide free access. There is an inherent risk in this technology. The router that provides the wireless access point has an identifiable internet protocol (IP) address. Anyone accessing the Internet through that router will appear to be authorized to use that IP address. Someone with a nefarious intent can create a possible legal nightmare for the person responsible for that IP address. The ability to look through the IP address and identify the computer behind the DHCP server is more difficult.

A recent case in Michigan involved the unauthorized access of an unsecured Wi-Fi network at a Lowe's home improvement store to steal credit card numbers. A 20-year-old and a

friend stumbled across the network while cruising around in a car in search of wireless Internet connections – wardriving. He was convicted.

An emerging threat is the "evil twin" attack. A person with the proper equipment sets up a local hot spot and overpowers the Wi-Fi network. Any computer user who accesses the bogus Wi-Fi network is then at risk by the evil twin. The Wall Street Journal has reported an evil twin setup at a technology conference in London. Hackers set up evil twins that infected other computers with viruses and gathered information on the users.

It is apparent that security is an important issue in a wireless network. The original standard was called WEP (wired equivalent privacy). WEP is a form of encryption, but the level of encryption is relatively weak. An improved form of encryption for wireless networks uses AES (advanced encryption standard). AES is strong encryption.

There are ethical issues in accessing a wireless network unless one has specific authority. Is it similar to a form of electronic trespass? Does it constitute a form of theft from the internet service provider? One can argue both sides of these questions easily.

The next column will investigate the legal issues of these questions in more depth. In the interim, owners of wireless networks should consider the security of their networks. Improvements can be made to the wireless network fairly easily. A company by the name of Force Field Wireless has some excellent suggestions regarding wireless security. See www.forcefieldwireless.com. Some of the tips are:

Enable WEP. Make sure you use the largest WEP key size that the equipment supports.

Change the SSID (Service Set Identifier) to something non-descriptive. Do not give a name, address, or any other useful information to potential hackers. Do not use the default SSID.

Change the default password(s) on the access point. The default passwords of most network equipment are well known and could allow an intruder to gain access to the access point.

Disable Broadcast SSID. If the access point supports "closed system" or allows one to "disable broadcast SSID," use this feature. This will make the network essentially invisible to almost all scanning methods.

Update the firmware and drivers on access points and wireless cards. It is always wise to use the latest firmware and drivers on access points and wireless cards. Manufacturers commonly fix known issues, security holes, and enable new features with these updates.



Steps to a Safer System

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>

Much has been said about virus and malicious software prevention, but what if all of your precautions fail? So there you are, happily clicking along the Internet when suddenly a popup ad obstructs your view. You start to close it and then another and then another pops up so that in just a few seconds there are so many pop-up ads that you cannot possibly close them all as they just keep coming. So what do you? Delete them as fast as you can in hopes that they will stop? Turn off the computer? Suddenly a program appears from nowhere and informs you that you have been infected with a trojan virus and the program needs to scan your system so that the trojan can be removed. The problem is that you do not remember ever having installed this program. Do you trust it?

There are some industry-accepted procedures for dealing with this type of incident and any virus or trojan infection. Just follow these five simple steps in the following order to minimize damage:

1. Do not turn off your computer unless you are certain that your files are being actively deleted!
2. Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection.
3. Write down any error messages and the names of any programs or software that was running at the time the infection occurred.
4. Mark the computer "Do Not Use".
5. Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened identifying a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus, anti-trojan tools.

Step One:

Do not turn off your computer. Not every trojan and virus is the same so this rule will have exceptions, but generally you do not want to turn off the computer unless you can see that the virus is deleting your files. If you think that it can be stopped from deleting your files without turning off the computer, then this is a better option than turning off the computer. The reason is that while turning the computer off will temporarily stop the damage more harm can come when you turn the computer back on. System files can be infected when loading, boot sectors contaminated, hard drive partitions erased, registries corrupted. For example, on a Windows system every time you make a major system change one of the first things that it wants you to do is reboot, "To allow the changes to take affect". In the case of a virus or trojan, the last thing we want to do is to allow the changes to take affect.

Step Two:

Disconnect the network cable from your computer and/or turn off your wireless connection. Trojans are designed to open a door and let other trojans, spyware and viruses in. Physically disconnecting its link to the Internet stops this behavior, prevents your personnel information from going out and prevents other machines from being infected. Many checklists have this action rated number one and for good reasons. I rate it here as step two because step one is simply a quick decision that can have a significant impact on the recovery outcome.

Step Three:

Write down any error messages that appear and the names of any programs or software that was running at the time the infection occurred. This is important not only for repairing the system but also for identifying which alerts are real and which ones are bogus. Error messages that contain misspellings and poor grammar are likely bogus and generated by the virus.

Step Four:

Mark the computer "Do Not Use". This is in case you get called away and have to leave the system alone for any length of time.

Step Five:

Run any of your applications that you are certain are yours and that might have opened to identify a virus attack. Next, run your antivirus anti-trojan tools.

It's possible that your antivirus or anti-trojan software may have detected the attack and started running a system scan or is prompting you and waiting for instructions. If you are certain that it is your software then let it do what it wants to do and let it clean the system. If you have any doubts as to whether the program is in fact one of your programs then **DO NOT RUN THE SOFTWARE!**

Some trojans actually install and run a program pretending to be antivirus/anti-trojan software and scan your system all the while claiming to be cleaning your computer. In reality it is part of the trojan. Some of these programs look very commercial and very polished so be careful!

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Trends to make computing easier

K. Joyce McDonald, Alamo PC

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Have you been to Chipotle? Chipotle is a new franchise restaurant in Huebner Oaks shopping center that strikes me as hip (or as hip as a place can be and still attract a geezer like me.) More important, the food is good, and the restaurant is, well, usable. If you read WhatsUp.Doc regularly, you know that I'm constantly harping on usability related to technology, but a restaurant? Eating is a no-brainer, isn't it? But think about it. What's the first question that comes to mind when you see the name Chipotle? Probably, "How do you pronounce it?" At Chipotle, if you read the side of your soft drink cup, you not only get the answer, but a multitude of answers—a veritable treatise on pronunciations for "Chipotle." (The preferred pronunciation is Chi-POAT-le.)

When you order a burrito, another question comes to mind, "How do you eat this enormous thing?" The answer is printed in on the napkin using three icons to show how to peel back the foil wrapping and make it ready for the first bite. This is a rare instance of "geek creep" having a positive effect on another industry. The idea of documentation, necessary in the computer industry, can also be effective in other industries, even one as transparent as a restaurant. Some other high-tech trends may also help stem the tide of confusion that is associated with negative aspects of "geek creep." The first trend is convergence. The second is standardization.

The mother of invention, necessity, demonstrated to me first hand the power of convergence in the form of an SD (secure digital) card. SD cards look and act like tiny floppy disk drives although they are about the size of a thick postage stamp and can hold up to five hundred times the data (perhaps more.) I have several SD cards because I have several devices that use them. One is a Banzai USB drive that uses an SD card as its memory. If you were to liken the Banzai to a typical floppy drive, the Banzai drive with the SD card provides both the disk (the SD card) and the mechanism that accepts the disk (the tiny drive, which is so small it comes equipped lanyard so you can wear it around your neck). To get the Banzai drive to interact with a computer all you have to do is plug it into the USB port. I use SD cards on my Minolta Dimage digital camera and my Palm Tungsten T5 Personal Data Assistant, and those cards are identical to the one that works with my Banzai drive, demonstrating that SD cards have multiple uses.

The SD card memory in my digital camera holds video files that allow me to use my camera as a tiny TV set. I used the camera to make videos of a Tai Chi Grandmaster performing the Tai Chi Chen 36 and short fan forms and I use the camera's small screen to replay the videos to help me to learn proper sequence and execution. When I'm not using my camera as a TV set, I use it to take pictures of my grandchildren. I took a bunch of pictures when my third grandchild was born recently and asked my husband to offload the baby pictures from my digital camera to my laptop. He asked if I wanted him to delete the pictures from the camera, and I said to go ahead.

I forgot to tell him to leave the videos. When I discovered that the videos were missing from my camera I tried to find a way to return them to the camera, but the Minolta software doesn't have a feature to copy a picture or video file back to the camera (normal users would never want to.)

Since my Palm PDA also accommodates SD Cards, I put the card from my camera into my PDA. I used the file transfer software that came with my PDA to locate the movies on my laptop and copy them back to the SD card in my PDA. When I removed the

SD card from the PDA and inserted it back into my digital camera, the camera recognized and played the movies as if they had never been deleted, and I can go on watching my tiny TV.

Another example of convergence that I hanker for, but have not yet had a chance to sample is podcasting. If you have a favorite radio program, wouldn't it be nice to download the broadcast to your iPod and listen to it in the same way you listen to the songs? Radio has the same disadvantage as TV (without Tivo) in that it locks you into a time and place. To fight this trend, some broadcasters are now offering a chance to download their radio shows from a website in an iPod compatible format. With the program offloaded to your iPod, you can listen to your favorite radio shows when you want and where you want and never have to worry about static.

The other high-tech trend, standardization, has gradually made PC use easier by adding a certain familiarity to most of the programs we use. One aspect of standardization that you most often see is the menu structure displayed almost universally across the top of the screen. Menus usually display items such as "File" "Edit" "View" and other related items, the item on the far right usually being "Help". Although a great deal of variation takes place among programs as to what goes into those menus, the standardization gives you at least a hint as to where you might find a function you want to use.

Standardization in the real world can be excellent or nonexistent. Features on household appliances that now drive me nuts are the electronic buttons with variable functions. A button can be pressed once, twice in rapid succession, pressed and held for two seconds, or pressed in conjunction with another key, and each press activates a different activity. The trouble is, you never know which activity you have started because the machine has no indicator to tell you, and the process varies depending upon which appliance you're using. Standardization would be appreciated here.

The sewing machine falls at the other end of the spectrum, as a device that has been standardized for at least a hundred years. I bought a new digital sewing machine earlier this year. A little later, I inherited my husband's grandmother's treadle sewing machine. When I was de-rusting the older machine, I realized that except for the use of a treadle rather than electricity and the lack of a touch screen, the hundred-year-old machine has the same features in the same places, and operates in a very similar manner as the digital machine. Because of this standardization, once you learn to sew, you can sew on practically any machine because your knowledge transfers and very little variation in function or feature location takes place from one sewing machine to the next.

The PC industry is not at that point yet, but it has made a start. If the industry can strike the proper balance between standardization and innovation, we will see computers become increasingly easier, perhaps to the point that we don't call them computers any more.



Disaster Recovery Plan

Preventive Maintenance

Russell James, Alamo PC

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I have talked about computer disaster recover plans many times in the past but it seems that the word is just not getting out fast enough. This week we had one customer that lost everything without a plan and another that made it to us just in time to save most of his data. He got lucky. If you are one that has heeded my warnings and instituted a plan, then we will consider this a refresher course for you. For those of you who think that nothing bad will ever happen to you, this column is for you. It seems that the people who have a good plan are the least likely to have a problem. This could be for some other reason besides the planning, but it does seem to be a fact that holds true for the most part.

The first thing you need to know to come up with a backup plan is what you want to backup. Most of the machines on the market today come with some sort of recovery software that will reinstall all of the software that came with your system. This type of software is good because it will help you to recover from a disaster by giving you a known starting point in your plan. If you have the reconfigure software, I would recommend that you plan on using it in the case of a disaster and simply keep up with your data backups. This will make the recovery process a lot easier when the time comes. All you would need to do is run the recovery software and then restore your data and you would be back in business.

Now let's look at your data. How much room, in megabytes, would it take to store all of the data on your system? Since we are planning to use a recovery disk, we only need to look at items like e-mail, letters, spreadsheets, financial programs and the like. Anything that you have made changes to would be considered data. You need to make a point to find out where each of the programs that you use stores the data file that you are using. If you are going to backup only the data, then it would be easier for you if it was stored in one convenient place. You would think that all of the software companies could get together and agree on one central location but this does not seem to be the case.

Microsoft Money puts the file in the folder where the program is installed by default. Quicken and many other programs use the same process. Windows 2000 and XP default most of the programs file saving location to the My Documents folder. This folder is actually a folder under the Documents and Settings folder. This tends to confuse most of the users since they click on a shortcut to get to the My Document folder and the files show up. It really doesn't matter where the files are stored as long as you know where they are when you do your backup. You have the option to change the location by right clicking on the folder and then left clicking on properties. You can then click on Move and browse to a different location from the default. After you have chosen a new location you will be given the opportunity to move any existing files to the new location.

My users at the office have a folder on the network that stores all of their data files. They click on My Documents and most of them have no clue that they are pulling files from a network drive. This also allows me to backup their data files when the server is backed up every night. This helps me as well as them in case there is some sort of disaster or hardware failure.

Take a look at the programs that you use and find out where the files are located. Microsoft Money uses one file to store all of your entries. When you move the file, Money will ask you where it is the next time you open the program. Browse to the new location and you are back in business. The program will default to the last file that was opened so you will only have to look for it once. Quicken will also default to the last file that you had opened but you will need to use the file utilities within the program to move the files to your My Documents folder. This is because Quicken only shows you one file when you open the data file, but there are actually four files, all with the same name and different extensions. If any of the files are missing, you will not be able to open that particular data file.

E-mail is another type of program that likes to hide your data from you. Microsoft Outlook defaults to another folder within the user folders. Everything in Outlook is contained in a file with the extension pst. You can find the location of the file by searching your hard drive for a file with the pst extension or viewing the properties of the personal folder in the folder view of Outlook. Click on the Advanced button and the location will be shown under filename. If you move this file into your My Documents folder, the next time you open Outlook you will get an error message saying that the pst file cannot be found. Browse to the new location and choose the pst file that you moved to continue opening Outlook. There will be another message stating that the location that messages were delivered to has changed and would you like Outlook to recreate the shortcuts. Choose yes and you will be finished with the move. Outlook Express will need to be moved within the Options of the program. Click on the Maintenance tab and then the Store Folder button. Click on Change and browse to the My Documents folder. There are a number of files that contain all of your Outlook Express data so a separate folder to segregate them from the general population would not be a bad idea. Shut down and restart the program to finalize the move.

No matter what program you are using, it is always going to be easier to keep up with your files if you will have a central location. You will need to do a little work to get all of the programs set up to use the same location but I can assure you that it will be better for you in the long run this way. Make a point to look through your programs and find out where your data is. I have seen more than my share of people without a plan that have lost everything. You don't want to be the next one do you? Start with getting all your files in one place and then we can talk about how to get these files backed up on a regular basis.



Computer Defense Department Spyware Programs in Sheep's Clothing



Bruce Cramer, Alamo PC

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

With the proliferation of spyware, or malware as I like to call it because of its malicious intent and the various forms it takes, there has also been a proliferation of applications claiming to be your partner in fighting the problem. Read on and we will discuss ways to identify these rouge programs before they take you for a ride. We will also discuss some of the good guys.

I have seen many folks get into a jam worse than they were in before they started using what they thought was a legitimate antispyware program. These programs usually start out by alerting you in some unambiguous way, perhaps through a pop-up or unsolicited email (spam), that you have a spyware and or virus problem. They will urge you to buy or use their product. It may even tell you that you that it has already found (through osmosis I guess) a large amount of spyware and that by purchasing their product you will be free of the ugly vermin once and for all.

Not only are these programs digital snake oil serving no useful purpose and charging \$30 and up, but it is like having a mole or insider infiltrate your computer. Once the rouge program is in your system it opens the door for other malicious programs to come in and wreck havoc on your computer. Most of these programs go by heroic names such as Error Guard and WinFixer, or other names that sound very similar to reputable, well established antispyware programs. Don't be fooled by the name or its claim or you could be in for a long ride.

Once the seed is planted and the rouge program has opened the door for his partners in mischief the programs will work together try to ensure their survival so it is not as easy as terminating a single piece of spyware. Once you get rid of one another one will take his job sometimes even regenerating the one that was just terminated. Once these guys have enough for a full team it can be an uphill battle unless you have some experience in dealing with the tactics they employ.

What you can do to protect yourself: First of all, be weary of any antispyware application that does not offer a free, fully functional, trial of their product. If you can't drive it around, kick the tires and ask some questions through tech support, either by phone, email or website, it might not be the real deal. Like you would for an auto mechanic, painter or landscaper, ask people you know for recommendations. Don't buy from a pushy salesman, meaning don't buy from spam and pop-ups. You can also visit this informative site for a report - <http://www.spywarewarrior.com/rouge_antispyware.htm>

I came across the site a while back after being taken by a rouge program myself. The site is maintained by a group appropriately called Spyware Warrior. They don't sell anything but simply provide some very useful information in the war against malware. The site contains information about the latest spyware threats, antispyware program comparisons and even forums where individuals discuss the problem. You can also look at some reviews at the Consumer Search site -



<<http://www.consumersearch.com/www/software/anti-spyware-reviews/reviews.html>>

You can think of a program that you pay to protect your computer from spyware like a home security system. If you were to pay a company for a home security system you would obviously want a company you could trust your home and family with. With computers becoming more and more a necessity to conduct business, do financial transactions, go to school or obtain information, it is more important than ever that we take steps to secure our computers. Even with all the laws and Bills that the government is introducing I don't see a huge decrease in spam, spyware and other computer mischief. You are your own first line of defense.

I don't think this article would be complete without acknowledging some of the programs that do good work in keeping malware from computers.

1. CounterSpy, <<http://www.sunbelt-software.com/>>
2. SpySweeper, <<http://www.webroot.com/>>

Both of these programs offer real time protection meaning they are always running like an antivirus program checking for malware trying to insert itself into your startup menu, browser favorites or registry. They both automatically update themselves.

Don't be fooled by the fools. Stay safe and happy computing

eBay Rethinks Recycling

Faster, more advanced computers, cell phones and electronics offer endless possibilities for enrichment, learning and entertainment. But as consumers and businesses keep pace with the introduction of exciting new products, we are faced with a mounting challenge: what to do with the products we're upgrading from. The Rethink Initiative brings together industry, government and environmental organizations to offer a fresh perspective and new answers to the challenge of e-waste. On their website you can find information, tools and solutions that make it easy – and even profitable – to find new users for idle computers and electronics, and responsibly recycle unwanted products.

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Preventative Maintenance Part VI

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.

Tech support across the board is either on the way out or is rated so bad we'd do better without it. However, you do have viable options to access tech support. The first option to use is the F1 key on your keyboard. Pressing F1 is the fastest way to access an active program's integrated support resources. You can also access the support resources through the Help menu on the program's toolbar. Each Windows version is a second alternative which comes bundled with its own collection of support resources. To access these resources, open the Start menu and click Help (Win98/Me) or Help And Support (WinXP). A third place you can look for assistance when confronting a computer problem is the Microsoft Help And Support site <<http://support.microsoft.com>>. A final resource for technical assistance is a third-party support sites, such as Experts Exchange <<http://www.experts-exchange.com>>, Computing.Net <<http://www.computing.net>>, SmartComputing <<http://www.smartcomputing.com>>, <www.computing.net/forums>, <www.forums.techguy.org>, and <www.windowssecrets.com>, and <www.find.pcworld.com/46960>.

Shareware

There are many WinXP shareware enhancers which can keep your operating system running at optimal speeds. They include: Tweak-XP Pro offers several utilities that let you optimize and customize XP to run at top speed. This app lets you enhance XP by shortening start-up times, tweaking cache settings, and optimizing Random Access Memory (RAM) for better overall performance. RegVac works with most Windows systems, and not just XP, includes eight tools that deep-clean your Registry. Boost XP trims the excess processes that slow down your computer. It also lets you enable hidden performance settings.

Startup Application Database

Computer programs that automatically startup and run in the background can slow down your computer. You can remove them through MSCONFIG, but it's often difficult to know what is necessary and what's not. The Greatis Startup Application Database <<http://www.greatis.com/regrun3appdatabase.htm>> divides programs into four categories: essential programs for Windows, optional programs, useless programs and dangerous programs. You can search alphabetically or by category.

Startup Tools

There are several Startup Tools that lets you see and manage which programs are running when your computer is turned on. These tools are free. One is <<http://www.informationweek.com/story/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=17500569>>. Preventing needless startup items makes your PC start faster, and with fewer tasks bubbling in the background, saving memory and cpu cycles for your main tasks. Other Startup Tool programs are <<http://www.mlin.net/StartupMonitor.shtml>> and <www.startupmechanic.com>.

Step by Step Confirmation Boot up

In Win98, you can hit the F8 key as the system starts, and when you get the startup menu, choose "Step by step confirmation" which then lets you answer Yes or No to every startup item. This way, you can selectively bypass items in the Config.Sys, Autoexec.bat, and Win.ini that might be causing trouble. It's not quite as simple in XP because you have to use the MSCONFIG software built into XP. To run MSCONFIG,

go to Start, Run, type MSCONFIG and hit Enter. By selecting either the large-scale options on the General tab, or by stepping through item by item on the other tabs, you can choose exactly what will run at the next boot, and in some cases, even change the order in which different items load on your computer.

System Information Utility

Do you know exactly what is inside your computer? Your computer setup consists of various hardware components and software programs. If something goes wrong, it could be for a number of reasons. That's why you should know what is inside the computer's casing. The time to get a handle on this information is now, when everything is working properly on your personal computer. Win98/Me/XP include a tool called "System Information" made precisely for this job. This unique feature captures a wealth of diagnostic information about your entire system. From the Start menu, open Programs, Accessories, System Tools folder and then double-click System Information. Now choose Net Diagnostics from the Tools menu. The program will ping your Domain Name Server (DNS) servers, gateways, Simple Mail Transfer Protocol (SMTP) and Version 3 Post Office Protocol (POP3) mail servers, and proxies; test modem and network adapters; and supply detailed reports about settings and passed and failed tests. To get a printout of the details, select Print off the File menu.

System Restore/Virus

System Restore is a feature in Win XP/Me. If your computer gets fouled up, you can go back to a time when it worked correctly. But when you have a virus, System Restore is a problem. Once you clean the computer, you don't want to store old, infected versions of Windows. If you get a virus, disable System Restore after cleaning the computer by clicking Start, Control Panel and double-clicking System. Choose the System Restore tab and check the box next to "Turn off System Restore." Now click Apply, OK, reboot the computer, and re-enable System Restore. Disabling System Restore deletes all of your old restore points. You can create a new restore point manually by clicking Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, System Restore, and following the wizard.

System Resources Warning Message

If you receive the warning "Dangerously Low on System Resources" on your computer from time to time, it results because every time you open a program Windows loads all of the

program's "components" into memory. These components are System Resources such as menus, textboxes, buttons, etc. The fixed amount of space for System Resources is reduced somewhat every time you open a program. Not all the space is released when you close a program. Opening and closing a program repeatedly can eat up valuable space. Once resources reach a low level, your computer becomes unstable and may crash. Other than restarting your computer to flush the Resource space, you can avoid this warning by being more careful about closing old windows and opening new ones.

If you're going to use Internet Explorer all day, keep one or two browser windows open but minimized when not in use, instead of constantly closing and re-opening them. This procedure should also be used with Word or applications. It's also a good idea to make sure the System Resource area is as clear as possible which means not launching unnecessary programs when booting. To manage this launch, click Start, Run and then type "msconfig," "without the quotes," and click OK. This step launches the System Configuration Utility. Under the Startup tab, you can uncheck boxes for programs you don't need to have running, like RealTray, Winamp or other audio utilities. Note, you're not deleting the program, just preventing it from automatically launching every time you start the computer. Remember, though, that there are a few programs that should be running which includes SystemTray and antivirus software. You can also take a look at your System Resources by launching the Resource Meter by clicking Start, Programs, Accessories, System Tool, and Launch Resource Meter.

Security Check

There are three log files that can help you check for suspicious activity on your computer: an Application log, a Security log, and a System log. You can access the log files by clicking Start, Control Panel, Administrative Tools, Computer Management, and Event Viewer. Upon seeing a warning on any of the logs or what appears to be suspicious attempts to log on to your machine, such as the appearance of an unfamiliar Internet Protocol (IP) address in your security log, you can click the listing to research the problem.

System Monitors

If you use your computer in a hot environment, Hmonitor <www.hmonitor.com> and Motherboard Monitor <<http://mbm.livewiredev.com>> are programs that oversee your central processing unit's (CPU) temperature and cooling fan speeds at all times. They will alert you when conditions become hazardous to your computer. The first program costs \$24 for a one month evaluation period while the second one is free.

Task Manager

The Windows Task Manager keeps tabs on your system and how the efficiency of its performance. You can use the Task Manager to get an overview of what programs and processes are running on your computer. You can also use it to switch programs and to end programs that have stopped responding or frozen up on you. To open the Windows Task Manager, right-click the Taskbar at a place where there are no buttons and then click Task Manager on the shortcut menu. You can find the Windows Taskbar at the bottom of the screen. To switch to another program from the Windows Task Manager, click the program in the list box on the Applications tab and then click the Switch To button. Windows will then minimize the Task Manager and display the program window on the desktop. To end a program that has frozen up on you, click the program in the list box on the Applications tab and then click the End Task button. Note that you will probably get an alert dialog box in-

dicating that the program has stopped responding. Click the End button in this dialog box to get Windows to stop the program. When you click a program in the list on the Applications tab, the status bar of the Windows Task Manager shows you statistics on the number of processes running under the program, the percentage of the CPU (Central Processing Unit), and the memory usage of the program. If you like to look at schematics, click the Performance tab in this window to see a dynamic charting of the total CPU and memory usage on your computer and to discover information like the number of handles, threads, and processes that are being run on your unit.

It's unlikely that you'll ever need to use the Win2000 Task Manager to end a non-responding task. Because Win2000 monitors your programs far more closely than Win98, you are more likely to see a message from Win2000 telling you that a program is not responding and will be shut down. Although this may seem a little drastic, it makes it possible for you to continue working without restarting your computer. In fact, you will seldom need to restart your operating system simply because a program stopped working on your computer.

Troubleshoot Driver

In WinXP, Microsoft introduced improved "help" features, including "troubleshooting" wizards for specific devices. If you're having a problem with one of your drives (hard drive, floppy drive, CD/DVD drive), open Windows Explorer by right clicking the Start button and selecting Explore. Locate the specific drive, right-click it, and select Properties. Now select the Hardware tab, click the Troubleshoot button, and follow the on-screen instructions.

Unidentified Setup Objects

You may find that you downloaded and installed a lot of different programs in Win98 over time and now can not identify them. Most of these programs are probably descriptively named, but others may be called "Setup.exe" or something equally generic. To identify these programs without rerunning the them, right-click the program(s) and choose Properties. In many cases, the Version tab of the Properties dialog box contains some basic information next to "Description" or "Item Name."

WinXP is more stable than older versions of Windows. However, if you want to know how long your computer has been running without a crash, select Start, Run. In the Open box, type CMD and click OK. At the command prompt, type SYSTEMINFO and press Enter. You'll find the System Uptime towards the top of the report.



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Configuring Multiple Web Sites

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

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

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

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

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

local DNS pointing to 192.168.16.3 so I could access CRM from the local (internal) network. Worked great! But I also want to access it from the Internet. One caveat: SBS's CEICW doesn't like multiple IPs so you'll have to temporarily remove the second IP if you need to rerun the wizard.

Enter ISA Server, which comes with SBS 2003 Premium Edition. With ISA, I can 'publish' a web server and tell the world how to access it. I created a Destination Set for CRM and configured ISA to route any requests for CRM.LentzComputer.net to my web page at 192.168.16.3. Worked great. Only one more little hurdle to negotiate. CRM Mobile requires the web site to be secured using SSL.

This shouldn't be a problem. I create a certificate for CRM.LentzComputer.net and configure the web site to use it on port 443. Accessing it on the local network worked fine, however access from the Internet was another story. Any time I'd try I would get an error indicating the target principal name was incorrect, whatever the heck that means. I found that wall and started banging my head on it again. I did a Google search and found an article by my friend and ISA guru Dr. Tom Shinder. Tom's article goes into very fine detail explaining exactly what was happening and how to fix it. Basically what it boils down to is the address ISA Server uses to publish a secure web site must exactly match the name on the certificate. I was publishing to 192.168.16.3 using a certificate issued to CRM.LentzComputer.local. Changing ISA to publish to CRM.LentzComputer.local instead resolved the dreaded target principal name error. I can now access my CRM securely from anywhere using CRM.LentzComputer.net. Now if only I could get CRM Mobile to work. It's even got Microsoft's PSS Tech Support guys stumped and they're calling in the developers! But when they figure it out, my secure CRM web site will be ready.

STUDY GROUPS

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



Borman's Law

Collected by Pim Borman,

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

You may never have heard of it, but Borman's Law states "Analog is Forever, but Digital is Doomed to Obsolescence." Let me explain. I grew up in an analog world. Cameras varied according to their optical quality and capabilities, but once you had a camera, you liked you kept it indefinitely. Telephones were all the same, had a dial up front, and lasted a lifetime.

The only possible upgrade was from a party line to a private connection. For your high school graduation you got a nice wrist watch that you wore for years. If it stopped running you took it to a watch repairman to be cleaned. Have you seen any watch repairmen lately? Even new-fangled televisions at first used analog tube circuits and were repaired by a TV repairman if necessary. Remember having a new picture tube installed? I'll leave it to the reader to come up with additional examples. Now we have nine ten (at last count) telephones around the house, all touch tone (i.e. digital), some cordless, and one cellular (we don't have any teenage kids any more). The cellular phone is less than a year old and replaced an older, bulkier model that used an already obsolete communications protocol. Someday all our phones will be obsolete when Internet telephony becomes established, which can only be a matter of time. We are still hanging on to our TVs, but HDTV and digital broadcasting will soon make them obsolete. I have half a dozen digital watches lying around, cheap and unloved. Prestige watches hide the shameful fact that they have a digital heart running on batteries behind an analog dial. But I digress.

I've always been a point-and-shoot snapshot photographer. For years I had a square Zeiss box with excellent optics, a fixed (slow) shutter speed, and three f-stop settings. I upgraded once to a smaller pocket camera, easier to carry around, and capable of the much faster films that had become current, but with much poorer optics. Until the digital cameras appeared and became affordable.

Five years ago I bought my first Olympus digital camera, fewer than 2 Mega pixels, but with excellent optics, including a 3X zoom lens. I used it happily, and learned a few things about photography thanks to the instant feedback. But when Olympus came out with an improved model, 3.2 Mega pixels, a 10X zoom lens, and a larger selection of camera settings I fell for it, and the old Olympus was suddenly old Hat. Over time I found out that a 10X zoom lens without image stabilization needs a tripod if you want to get sharp pictures. Even at lower zoom levels I did not get the crisp images that others achieved with their cameras. And the Olympus was too big to slip into a shirt pocket. Obsolescence reared its ugly head again!

After studying the camera reviews in the PC magazines for some time I finally settled on a new Casio Exilim EX-Z750 ultra small camera. Back to a maximum of 3X optical zoom, but 7.2 Mega pixels make it feasible to crop a larger image severely and still end up with a decent shot without pixelation. The pictures I've taken so far are crisp and require little or no post-editing. The camera has a large 2.5" LCD but also an optical view finder for bright light conditions. If you want to go beyond point-and-shoot, the camera offers just about every control you might need. There are several dozen "best shot" pre-set conditions to choose from, or you can use the camera in full manual mode. One of the fascinating options is the "Past Movie" mode that can be used to catch split-second events,

such as a batter hitting a ball. You point the camera at the batter, and at the moment he hits the ball you press the shutter. The movie starts 5 seconds before you pressed the shutter, catching the exact instant when the ball hit the bat. This magic is possible because the camera has been registering the scene from the moment you set up the shot, keeping the last five seconds in a buffer.

By the way, if you are going to make a purchase of this type of equipment it pays to check prices on the Internet. There are several price comparison sites, such as Froogle (part of Google) and the Price Grabber, that not only show prices at a variety of vendors but also offer reliability and satisfaction ratings. I found several high-rated vendors of the \$450 (list) camera that offered significant discounts.

I chose Broadway Camera, nearly the lowest at \$330 + \$12 S/H, because I had bought from them before and they were highly rated. If you have ever shopped in one of the many discount camera and electronics stores in New York City, you know that it is hard to leave without buying something – hard sell is their specialty. So after I had ordered the camera Saturday evening, I was only mildly surprised to receive a call early Monday morning to offer me an additional spare battery for the camera at only half price. I told the salesman that its battery life was rated outstanding so I would hardly need a spare one. He replied that the battery that came with the camera was only a trial battery (blatant nonsense!) and wouldn't give up until I told him to "just ship the order already." He did, and the package arrived the next afternoon.

So, although the digital age has brought almost instant obsolescence, it also adds to our enjoyment whenever new gadgets make the scene. Fortunately, our bodies are analog and have an average life expectancy of seventysome years, thanks to medical advances. It is unlikely that digital androids will get anywhere close to that!



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Windows Vista

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.>

By now, I'm certain that everyone's heard of Microsoft's decision to name the next version of their operating system Windows Vista. So, now we're all worried about obsolescence. Will the hardware we buy today be capable of running the latest version of Microsoft's operating system? To answer this question, I jumped out to the Microsoft support site and pulled down the following information:

CPU: As a general guideline, purchase somewhere between the mid-range and the high-end of processors available from either Intel or AMD today. While the lower end processors will work, they won't provide the best experience. Forget it if you want to play any PC games or do video editing.

AMD and Intel are starting to ship dual-core processors. These processors provide the benefit of dual-processor systems on a single chip. These processors will be excellent choices for Windows Vista. You'll also need to decide if you're ready for the 64-bit plunge. While driver support is sparse right now, when Vista ships, I expect 64-bit drivers to be in full support. Since the 64-bit processors run 32-bit or 64-bit software equally well, they are a sure hedge against obsolescence.

Memory: Anything that you get today should have at least 512MB of RAM already installed. But let's face it, the more RAM you have the better you'll be. With prices as low as they are now, load your system with 1GB or more and have no fear of tackling the most arduous of tasks.

Graphics: Perhaps one of the biggest upgrades to Windows Vista will be the new and graphics-intensive look. Though it will be able to automatically adapt itself to the less graphical look of today's Windows—what's the point in going to Vista if you can't see how pretty it is?

The new graphics capabilities in Windows Vista will require a powerful graphics card if you want to take see all the bells and whistles, like Microsoft's new AERO Glass look. While more information on specific supported video cards isn't posted yet, here are some general rules to follow. First, avoid entry level cards. Make certain your card supports DirectX 9 and has at least 64MB of graphics memory. If you're building a PC, make sure it has a separate PCI Express or AGP expansion slot. This way, you can easily upgrade if the card you have now isn't compatible. AGP or PCI Express is necessary to provide the bandwidth needed to support the enhanced graphics of Windows Vista.

If your motherboard has on-board video, make sure it has a PCI Express or AGP slot that will let you add a graphics card later in case the onboard graphics chipset doesn't fully support Windows Vista.

Storage: Windows Vista will provide new enhancements for digital image processing, and you'll need lots of storage space to work with. When buying a PC, make sure you get a large hard drive (120GB or higher) and make sure you have the ability to add one or more additional hard disks later.

The hard disk is often a bottleneck of performance on your PC. To support Windows Vista, go with the latest technology in hard drive interfaces. The old parallel ATA at 7200RPM

with a 2MB cache isn't going to cut it. Go with one of the newer serial ATA drives with 8MB or more of cache, with Native Command Queuing (NCQ). This will give you a performance boost you'll appreciate.

A DVD burner will also be important to take full advantage of Windows Vista features. Make sure your drive can handle both -RW and +RW formats. You should also be looking for drives listed as dual-layer, as they double the amount of storage you have per disc.

Networking: Windows Vista is designed to take advantage of the wireless, as well as the wired, networking world. Systems can be built with 802.11g wireless capability (while we're all waiting for the finalization of the 802.11n standard) and network cards at 1000Mbps (Gigabit Ethernet) are also common place. Avoid purchasing the older technologies so that you can take full advantage of the upgraded infrastructures that will be popping up around you.

Well, I hope this article has given you some ideas on where you need to be in order to take full advantage of Windows Vista. Though it's still a long way off, we can build systems today to take advantage of the new technologies of tomorrow.

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The Switcher



...the ongoing tale of a Man and his Mac More Shorts

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

Are you jealous of those who bought new PowerBooks just to take advantage of the new features available through their native track pad drivers? Try the track pad scrolling utility, iScroll2 0.25e. Apple's latest PowerBooks let you scroll through windows by dragging two fingers across the track pad. iScroll2 brings similar functionality to iBooks and many older PowerBooks. With this replacement track pad driver, you can scroll by dragging two fingers up, down, left, right, or in a circular motion (as with an iPod Click Wheel). You can customize track pad sensitivity and scrolling speed, and you can assign different mouse-button behaviors to the track pad button and to finger taps. Download this FREE utility from MacWorld at <http://www.macworld.com/0632>.

Are you a hard core command-line user, but you aren't sure how to use all the commands? In Unix, you look to the MAN pages. They're also available on the Mac, but can be a pain to view in the Terminal windows. Now, try ManOpen 2.5. Most Terminal commands have corresponding manual (MAN) pages that explain how to use them. But Terminal's plain-text-only display doesn't make it easy to read. ManOpen lets you view them in a customizable, user-friendly window. A pop-up menu takes you directly to the various sections of each MAN page; refers to other commands (as live links) that you can click to view the MAN pages for other commands; and also allows you to do keyword searches. ManOpen even adds a Terminal command (openman) that opens MAN pages in ManOpen directly from Terminal. Download this FREE utility from <http://www.clindberg.org>.

Memtest 4.1 does exactly what its name suggests. One of the most difficult hardware issues to diagnose is defective RAM, which can result in symptoms ranging from random application crashes to system freezes. Even Apple's Hardware Test won't catch every memory problem. Memtest can be used as a command-line utility in Terminal, but is more effective in single-user mode (see the user guide on how to run the application). It checks your RAM, bit by bit, for problems, repeating the tests as many times as you specify. Download this FREE utility from <http://www.memtestosx.org>.

Do you find yourself having to use a PeeCee and missing your Mac keyboard? There are a couple of options for making your Mac keyboard work correctly with any PC. The first is RandyRants.com's FREE SharpKeys 1.1 (download this from MacWorld at <http://www.macworld.com/0667>), a Windows registry hack that makes certain keys on a keyboard act like other keys. The second is AppleK Pro's \$25 Apple Keyboard driver for Windows (download this from MacWorld at <http://www.macworld.com/0668>), a driver for Windows that supports Apple's USB keyboards (among others).

Is your Mac more secure than Windows?

The London-based mi2g Intelligence Unit (<http://www.mi2g.com/>) recently released a report that says Mac OS X is one of the "world's safest and most secure 24/7 online computing environments." Linux operating systems offer the worst track record, with Windows coming in second. "More and more smart individuals, government agencies, and corporations are shifting towards Apple...in 2004," said DK Matai, Executive Chairman, mi2g. Matai calls the adoption of Mac

OS X "an accelerating paradigm shift" thanks to professionals who "don't have the time to cope" with numerous Linux distributions or to wait for Microsoft's next operating system. "Windows XP has proved to be a stumbling block in some well chronicled instances."

The study analyzed 235,907 break-ins against permanently connected computers around the world, spanning a period from November 2003 to October 2004. The compromised systems include home and small office machines, as well as those in small, medium, and large corporations. Of the 235,907 successful break-ins researched as part of this study, 65.64% (154,846) were made against Linux-based systems. Microsoft Windows computers accounted for 25.19% of all break-ins recorded, while Mac OS X or BSD-based computers accounted for just 4.82% of all breaches recorded.

Mi2g's study reports that more than 32.7% of digital breaches occurred against "micro entities," home-based individuals or other very small-scale operations; 58.8% of all breaches were carried out against "small entities." Security is increased in larger companies, with only 6.1% of all such breaches against medium-sized businesses and 2.5% against large entities (i.e., big businesses, government agencies and non-government organizations).

Since Mac OS X's installed base is smaller than the rest, some security experts claim that Macintosh's environment is more "security through obscurity." Since there are fewer Macs, fewer hackers will try to exploit them, resulting in less incidents.

What about viruses and spyware?

Mi2g also concluded that environments running Mac OS X have not experienced "any significant economic damage" from virus and spyware attacks. "Windows has become the most breached computing environment in the world accounting for most of the productivity losses associated with malware...proliferation. This is directly the result of very insignificant quantities of highly damaging mass-spreading malware being written for other computing environments like Linux, BSD and Mac OS X," said the report. The company estimates that viruses and spyware will result in a cost of \$166 to \$202 billion, between support costs, loss of business, bandwidth clogging, and other costs.

Doesn't that make you feel better about your choice of operating platform?



Your site is alive with the sound of music

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!

I do not like sites that automatically play music. Most people don't. They blare with no warning, often in inappropriate situations like the office when the boss is within listening range. They often have no volume control, or worse, reset the user's volume. The quickest way to turn off the music is to exit the site, so it drives people away. Some people will get error messages when they don't have the proper sound configuration, or may get sinister warnings that they are about to download a program that could contain tainted code. When the user moves onto another page the music stops – probably just at the passage he or she likes best. I have been tempted to insert background music but I always come to my senses. The theory is sweet, the implementation goes sour.

But you want to try it anyway, don't you?

This is a code that will work in both Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator:

```
<embed src="sample.wav"
autostart="true"
hidden="false"
loop="false">
<noembed> <bgsound src="sample.wav" loop="1">
</noembed></embed>
```

It will work for a WAV or MIDI file, plus the less-common .au and .aiff. I find that MP3 files work as well. There are a few parameters. Where the code says sample.wav, replace this with your own sound file, and remember to upload the sound file to the server. "Hidden=false" displays small sound controls. It's kinder to give the user control over the volume. "true" would hide the sound controls. Both "loop=false" and "loop=1" mean that the file will play (loop) only once. On the Lazy Webmaster Website, I have an example of an embedded sound on this popup window.

If you are using Internet Explorer, you will have noticed that the lyrics to the song were scrolling above the graphic. I did this with the <MARQUEE> tag. The format for this is:

```
<marquee width=396>type your text here</A>.
```

The width is the width of the marquee; I made this one the width of the graphic. You can format the text (specify a font, bold, italic, etc.) and even include a hyperlink, although your users would have to have pretty fast fingers to click on it. The marquee tag does not work in Netscape Navigator so don't use it for crucial information.

One of the problems with embedded sound is that it stops when you go to another page. My friend Patrick Collier taught me a work-around for this. Design your site using frames, and have a tiny frame that carries over to every page. The code for the frameset page would look something like this:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<title>title</title>
</HEAD>
<FRAMESET COLS="*,1">
<FRAME SRC="maincontent.html" SCROLLING="AUTO"
NORESIZE
MARGINHEIGHT="0" MARGINWIDTH="0" NAME="main">
<FRAME SRC="midi.html" SCROLLING="NO" NORESIZE
MARGINHEIGHT="0"
MARGINWIDTH="0" NAME="midi">
</FRAMESET>
</HTML>
```

This will give you a big window/frame for your main content that takes up all but one pixel on the screen. At the bottom of the page you will have a 1 pixel-wide (almost invisible) blank space that holds the embedded sound file. Since the midi frame remains stable and only the main content frame changes, the sound file plays across multiple pages.

For aesthetic purposes I would not include the sound control panel if I was using this technique. Leaving room for the control panel can be tricky, as they are different sizes in Explorer and Netscape Navigator. Navigator's default control panel is 144wx60h. Explorer's is 200wx60h. The dimensions are in pixels.

A saner solution for your users is to have a link to sound, giving them the option to play it — or not. Just link the file as a regular link:

```
<A HREF="soundfile.mid">play music</A>.
```

I often include a little icon – a speaker, a note, an ear – to indicate that there is a sound file to play.

So where do you get sound files to embed? There are many places on the Internet: get a long list by searching on www.google.com for "free midi" or "free wav." For Midi, try www.mididb.com and for Wav look at www.mididb.com.

Midi is your best bet for embedded music. It's synthesized sound that uses the sound card as part of the encoding, so the files are small. The long midi sequence I used in the sample on the Web site is only about 12KB. Midi files can sound cheesy, so be discriminating. Popular songs will have many midi renditions, so listen to a few and select the best.

Wav files are much, much bigger - perhaps as much as 10MB for the same length clip. They can sound just like they are from the CD, but no one is going to wait for a 10MB file to download just to listen to background music. Wav files are more likely to be used for short sound files, like dialogue from films.

If there are problems, make sure that your server is configured with the correct MIME type. I can't imagine a public server not configured for Midi or Wav, but you never know.

There are, of course, other kinds of sound files that you can use. On the San Antonio Vocal Arts Ensemble site I used MP3

files. Los Nice Guys use shockwave files for their music and actually embed it using the format I've described here. Both of these use exceptionally high quality sound with a small file size.

Another option is RealAudio. This is a streaming media, which means that it trickles across the wires little by little, so the whole sound file doesn't have to load before it starts playing. There's a trick to linking to RealAudio files. The actual RealAudio sound file has a link of .ra. The link that shows up on your Web site should be to an .ram file that points to the .ra file. You create the .ram file in notepad; all it needs is the complete URL of the .ra file. Call it something like song1.ram.

If you want a Web site that will make your heart sing, by all means include links to music files but even though you now know how, think twice before you push a sound file onto your unwary users.



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Adobe Photoshop Blur

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>.

Two very flexible tools in **Adobe Photoshop**, **Photoshop Elements** and other image manipulation/paint programs are the sharpening and blur tools. These tools allow you to help imperfect images or create dramatic effects. This month, I'll look at each one.

You will find these tools in two places: under the *Filter* menu and in the *Tools* palette (Figure 1). The filter versions will apply the effect globally to the entire image or to the active selection area; the tool versions allow you to paint with a selective sharpening or blurring effect.

Photoshop sharpens an image by analyzing the relative darkness and lightness of neighboring image pixels. Most digital images, whether from a scanner or a digital camera will benefit from some degree of sharpening. **Photoshop's** sharpening tools will help enhance a good image, but will not work to sharpen up an overly blurred image. This example shows that even using very high setting with the *Unsharp Mask* filter will not significantly improve an out-of-focus image (Figure 2).

Rarely do I actually use the *Sharpen* or *Blur* tools from the *Tools* palette. These tools tend to provide results that look incongruous with the rest of the image. If I want to selectively sharpen or blur an image, I create a mask with the selection tools.

Let's now focus on the *Sharpening* tools available under the *Filter* menu: *Sharpen*, *Sharpen Edges*, *Sharpen More* and *Unsharp Mask* (Figure 3). All four of these are available in both **Photoshop** and **Photoshop Elements**. The first three options give you no actual control over the amount of sharpening of your image. Different images will require different amounts of sharpening. A high-resolution will need a higher level of sharpening to achieve the same effect that you would get with less sharpening on a Web-resolution image. You may also not want to sharpen an image that is exceptionally grainy as much as you would a smoother image. The sharpening would over-accentuate the grain of the image.

For all of these reasons, most professionals use the *Unsharp Mask* filter exclusively. This filter increases the perceived sharpness by increasing the contrast of the edges found in the image. It gets it rather unintuitive name from an old traditional darkroom technique that used a slightly out-of-focus negative sandwiched with a good negative to obtain better edge detail.

The *Unsharp Mask* filter has three settings. The first, *Amount*, controls how strongly the sharpening effect is applied. For print images an *Amount* between 150 and 200% is usually good, although you can go higher if you feel you need to. Sharpening is often a judgment call. Look at the image at the approximate size it will be used when previewing the results. The next slider controls the *Radius* of the effect. This is how many pixels out from an edge will be affected. Too large a *Radius* value will produce an obvious and unflattering halo



Figure 1

effect. The last setting is the *Threshold*. This is the tonal value difference of pixels that will be affected on a scale of 0 to 255. A *Threshold* of 0 will affect all pixels. A value of 4 will not affect adjacent pixels that have a value of, say, 199 and 201. should usually be set fairly low, between 2 and 10. More than that will diminish the effectiveness of the filter too much.

Now we will move to the *Blur* filters, of which there are more options: *Average*, *Blur*, *Blur More*, *Gaussian Blur*, *Lens Blur*, *Motion Blur*, *Radial Blur* and *Smart Blur* (Figure 4). *Average* and *Lens Blur* are new to **Photoshop CS**, the others are available in **Elements 2** as well

as **Photoshop 7**. Again, the pros have their favorites among the *Blur* tools. The *Blur* and *Blur More* filters give no controls over the amount of the effect, so I usually use the *Gaussian Blur* tool. This is a pretty easy one to comprehend since it has only one setting: *Radius*. This is



Figure 2

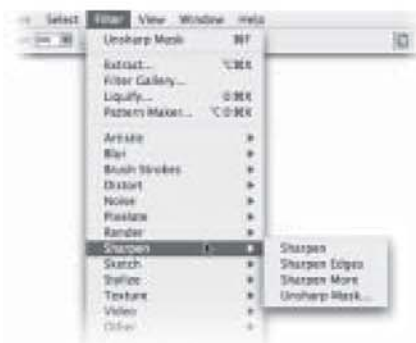


Figure 3

the amount, in pixels, that **Photoshop** averages together to make a soft focus look.

The other filters give some varied results. The *Average* filter will replace the image of active selection area with a flat color that is the average of all the selected pixels. Applied on a cloudy blue sky, you will get a flat field of light blue.

Lens Blur is a tool aimed at photographers to help simulate the selective focus you get with different camera lenses and varied depths-of-field. It tends to work best if you have a mask separating the parts of the image that are at different depths.

Motion Blur gives you the sort of effect you see when you photograph an object in motion. You can select both the distance and the angle of the effect.

Radial Blur allows you to simulate the blur effect you would get by rotating or zooming the camera while shooting your picture. Here you can pick not only an *Amount*, but also the *Blur Method* you want to use (*Spin* or *Zoom*) and the *Quality* of the rendering (*Draft*, *Good* or *Best*). This is one of the most intensive functions in **Photoshop**, if you select a high amount and the high quality rendering, be prepared to step away for some lunch if you don't have a very fast computer.

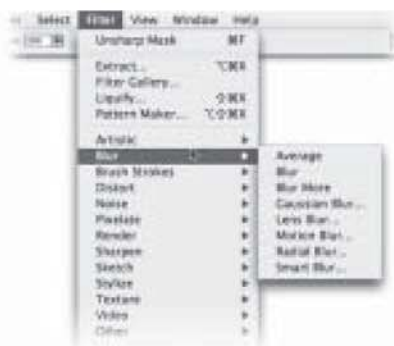


Figure 4



Figure 5

The *Smart Blur* filter attempts to give the same sort of control over blurring an image that *Unsharp Mask* does for sharpening. You can preserve the edges of the image while blurring the other areas. *Smart Blur* gives you sliders to control the *Radius* and *Threshold* of the effect as well as pop-up menus governing the *Quality* and *Mode* of the filter. The *Normal Mode* behaves as you would expect, *Edge Only* just shows the edges of the image and *Edge Overlay* draws the edge lines over the blurred image. Most **Photoshop** users will have little use for these last two modes.

Here is an example of a typical use of the *Gaussian Blur* filter. I have a charming photograph, but the background is a little busy. If I were a really good photographer with good equipment, I could

have made sure that the objects in the background were out of focus. First I duplicated the image as a new layer (*Layer > New > Layer from Background*) and made a *Layer Mask* isolating the subject. Then I duplicated the background layer again, added a graduated *Layer Mask* and ran the *Gaussian Blur* filter at a fairly high *Radius*. Since the *Layer Mask* was white at the bottom and black at the top, the blur effect shows more at the top of the image. The subject of the photo remains sharp since he is on a layer above everything else (Figure 5).

The *Blurring* and *Sharpening* tools are crucial components in the **Adobe Photoshop** toolbox. Learning how they work gives you new, creative ways to enhance your images.

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Internet Explorer - File Menus

Ron Ingraham, Space Coast PC User Group

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

In a rather obscure location last month, I said that I might expand on the use of Wordpad in this issue. However, as I reviewed what I had covered so far, it seemed to me that there really wasn't much I could add. There is one other Windows Accessory that I haven't covered - Synchronization. To be very honest, I have never seen a need to use this feature and really don't know how to set it up. I would refer you to the Microsoft Knowledge Base if you think you might have a use for it.

Since most of us have the need or desire to browse the Internet, I think it appropriate to move on to a discussion of Microsoft's browser, Internet Explorer. I should first emphasize that although Microsoft saw fit to confuse the issue by calling their file manager Windows Explorer, the two are separate and distinct entities. I should also mention that Microsoft also saw fit a few years back to embed Internet Explorer in the Windows program to the extent that it is now virtually impossible to separate the two. Contrary to what some people might lead you to believe, you are not limited to using this browser. Another very popular browser with many people is Netscape. Offered as a free alternative, it appeals to a large number of users. However, since the main purpose of PC 101 is to acquaint new users with the basics, I will limit my discussion to Internet Explorer which comes installed on new computers.

I should point out that no browser will be of any use until you secure a connection to the Internet via some Internet Service Provider (ISP) such as America Online, Microsoft.net (MSN) or others such as our WebSite host Atlantic.net, Juno or NetZero. Many new computers come with free trial periods for various of these ISPs. Take advantage of this and have a look at them. They all have features which appeal to different folks. I won't express any preference.

I will state that many of them include their own customized version of Internet Explorer. Although there are slight differences in appearance, they all function in about the same manner.

Most ISPs will work with you to insure that you can connect properly. They want your initial experience on the Internet to be as productive and worry-free as

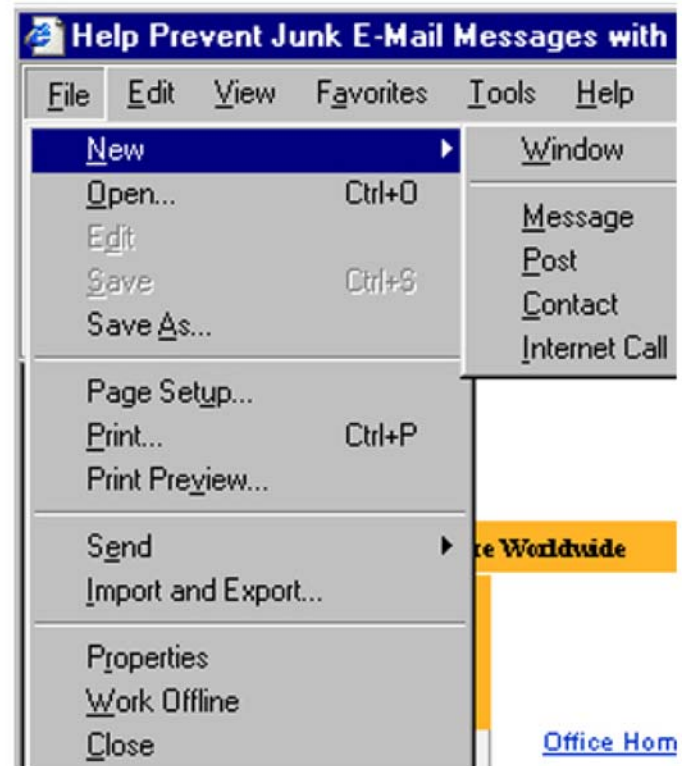
possible. That said, let's assume that you have secured an ISP and are ready to begin surfing the Internet.

In most cases, there will be an icon for Internet Explorer on your desktop, perhaps in the Quick Launch area of the Taskbar, or on your Start Menu. It looks like this, depending on version you have installed. If it, it will open the program a screen similar to that on the page. You'll notice that I opened to the Microsoft Home Page, which will most likely be the default setting until you elect to change it to something different.

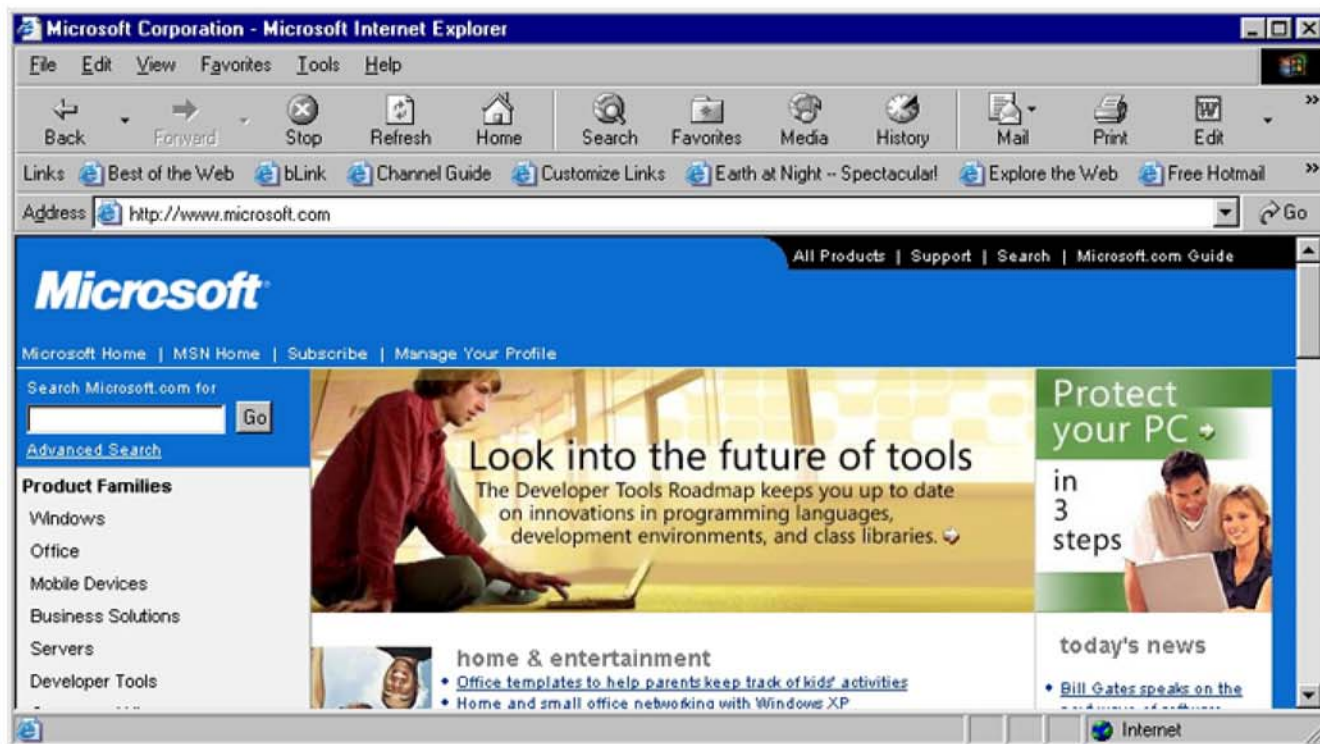


which you click on and produce opposite have it Home Page,

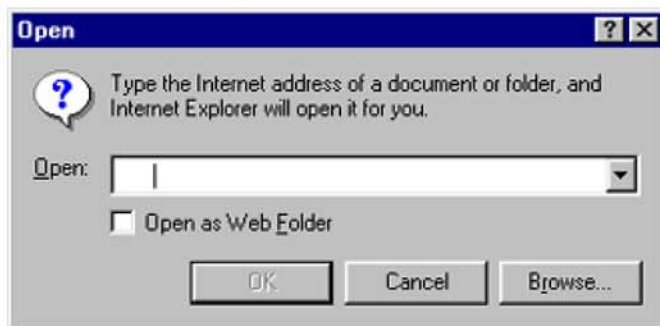
You'll notice that as with all Microsoft programs, there is the customary title bar at the top, then just below that the menu bar. The first item, File, produces the image below. Clicking New produces the drop



down on the right. Clicking on Window will open the same page in a new window. Message directly opens a blank eMail, in my case in Outlook express. Post



deals with an area we haven't touched on yet, NewsGroups. Briefly, this option opens the current NewsGroup to which you subscribe, set up to post a message to the group. Contact opens your address book, ready to list a new contact. Finally, Internet Call opens a wizard to allow you to adjust your audio settings, speaker and microphone volume, if you're using some sort of Internet calling service. All of these are simply quick shortcuts to functions you can achieve in other ways. These options obviate the need to leave Internet Explorer to accomplish them.



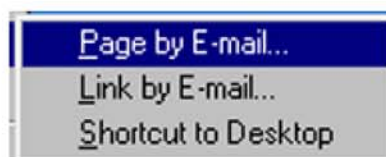
The Open command produces the window above. If you type in a URL, that will be opened directly. Clicking on the Down arrow at the end of the Open line will display the list of URLs from your Internet Explorer. The thing to remember here is that this action will close your current window. In order to avoid this, you may use the New/Window command to open a new window in which to open your new

selection.

Edit on my computer shows up as Edit with Microsoft Word for Windows. If I click on it, it opens a new window which allows editing in html. This function is beyond the scope of this article.

Save and Save As are the same as most other Microsoft programs, as are the next three, Page Setup, Print, and Print Preview.

Send offers these three options:



You may send the current page by E-mail. Clicking here will open an e-mail message, subject the current page (which is in the text area of the message), which you can then address to anyone you choose. Link will open a new message as above, which will contain a link to the current page. And finally, Shortcut will do just as it says and place a shortcut to the page on your desktop.

Import and Export opens a wizard which allows you to move Favorites or Cookies to or from a different browser. Properties describes the type and size of the file for the current page. Work Offline allows you to compose E-mail and other functions while not online. This is valuable if your ISP limits your hours. Next month we'll look at some more of the menus.

Penguin Day - Software for a Cause

Dean McCall, President/CEO Salsa.Net

Open Source Geeks and Nonprofits Gather at Texas Penguin Days to Make Better Software and the World a Better Place. Software developers, activists and nonprofits gather at Penguin Days (www.penguinday.org) in Austin and San Antonio to demystify open source software for social change. Penguin Days explore open source software for nonprofits and help socially-minded 'geeks' find ways to support public interest organizations.

According to Jon Lebkowsky of Polycot Consulting, a local organizer of Penguin Day Austin, "Texas nonprofit and Open Source communities are obvious partners, but they don't always make the connection. Penguin Day will demystify the technology for the nonprofit participants, and help bring those communities together."

The event is one of the really great hidden secrets of the Open Source and Non Profit communities...with the rising cost associated with running a nonprofit it will really be a welcome treat to the San Antonio community!

Katrin Verclas of Aspiration <www.aspirationtech.org>, co-organizers of the national movement of Penguin Days, said, "Non-profit organizations are in need of specific software to manage volunteers, raise funds, and mobilize their constituents. Open source software can be less costly for these groups. We convene Penguin Days to challenge software developers to provide flexible and useful open source software. Penguin Days also empower nonprofits to communicate their needs and be active partners in the use of open source technology."

Open source software can be freely shared, distributed, and modified so that organizations can adapt software programs to suit their very specific needs.

Since 2004, Penguin Days have been held in Philadelphia, Portland, Oregon; London, England; Toronto, Canada, Chicago, San Francisco, and New York. Hundreds of nonprofit staff, programmers, and activists have attended Penguin Days.

Penguin Days feature humorous "speed geeks" (modeled after speed-dating) to bring programmers and organizations together to change the world--one byte at a time. Organizers say that here is a growing group of programmers who are interested in making their skills and technical knowledge available for a cause.

The Penguin is the symbol adopted in the early days of Linux as the mascot of this growing software movement. Texas Penguin Days are scheduled in Austin on November 4 and San Antonio on November 5. Other upcoming Penguin Days are scheduled in Portland, Oregon on October 15 and in Montreal, Canada on November 20.

More information on Penguin Days is at <www.penguinday.org>.

Registration for the Austin or San Antonio events at:

Austin (Ventana del Soul, 1834 E. Oltorf): <https://secure.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizations/Aspiration/shop/custom.jsp?donate_page_KEY=979&t=penguin.dwt>

San Antonio (Urban 15, 2500 S. Presa): <https://secure.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizations/Aspiration/shop/custom.jsp?donate_page_KEY=981&t=penguin.dwt>

The Texas Penguin Days are sponsored by Polycot Consulting, the Austin Community College Center for Community-Based and NonProfit Organizations, EFF-Austin and SalsaNet, and supported with in-kind support from local nonprofits and many volunteers.

About Aspiration: Aspiration, www.aspirationtech.org, connects nonprofit organizations with software solutions that help them better carry out their work. We want nonprofit organizations to obtain and use the best software to maximize their effectiveness and impact so that they, in turn, can change the world. We identify what is available and what is missing in NGO software arena, and foster relationships, delivery systems, and sustainability strategies between NGOs around the world.

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HandiApped Independence: Part 1

by Frank Petrie, Freelance writer, Macsimum News contributor, Curmudgeon

I am a Mac user. I am a reviewer for Macsimum News and numerous newsletters. I also suffer from multiple sclerosis. Recently, I allowed my boneheaded pride to 'cometh before eight falls,' resulting in a four day stay at the Bland Food Hotel. When I returned, I viewed my environment with new eyes. I realized that I needed to pace myself in a more efficient manner. I was pushing too hard.

So, I started to monitor my daily activities and evaluate the layout of my house. First, I noticed that I used about 80% of my energy getting across the carpets. Wasted energy. I had set my drinking glasses out of reach, my food on pantry shelves that were too high. More wasted energy. And on and on. Clearly I had to completely rethink my procedures.

What did I do the most? Where did I create paths?

How can I create an environment to facilitate my independent lifestyle without unnecessarily wasting energy getting to things?

While thinking about this, something triggered a memory of a visit to the 1960's NYC World's Fair. At the GE Pavilion, they predicted that in the future (probably the late 80's) we would all have robotic servants to take care of our common household chores. Remember Rosie on The Jetsons (ask your Grandmother)? She looked somewhat human and wore a hat and apron. Aaaah - the future!

As fate would have it, this memory came flashing back as I was watching TV. The Honda commercial, where robotics arms were spot welding chassis on the line, came on. Wait a tick! At the GE Pavilion, function followed form. So our servants were

anthropomorphic. But the commercial proved that the exact opposite was true - form had followed function! The welding robots didn't look like my uncle in overalls, after all. They were big, hulking steel arms, working 24/7!

Quick - switch gears. Enter my daughter. She is an avid fan of those shows where friends exchange houses for a weekend to renovate one or two rooms. Once I told her about what I had been doing since my return from the hospital, she was all aglow. Here was her big chance to do like the TV shows without the fear of someone destroying her room.

Well, obviously, I use my computer the most, so this would have to be the focal point of my renovation. What I hadn't counted on (although I wasn't really surprised) was that most of my life, work and play involved my computer. Then it hit me! My computer was my robot! It helped me shop, pay bills, keep photo albums, and talk to people face to

face. It saved my failing legs a lot of mileage. My computer/robot is an important part of my independent lifestyle.

This will hopefully be a series that goes beyond the ergonomic charts that we have all seen, and instead focus on hardware and software (including OS X's Universal Access) that can benefit the handicapped (and the baby boomers who will soon slide into retirement; they'll be having bits fall off or stop working soon, as well). We'll revisit our workspaces, look at special mice and keyboards, the benefits of Bluetooth and dictation soft-

ware for those with arthritis or dexterity problems. In short, how to layout your office for maximum workflow and the least amount of physical discomfort.

So, here's your first assignment. For the next several weeks, keep a mental or physical diary of your habits and routines. Perhaps your computer and bills don't have to be in that spare bedroom way in the back of the house. Notice where you spend most of your time, where your paths intersect most and such.

Once we have our information at hand, we'll get to work. Good luck.

Oh and please post comments. Let's begin a dialogue and share ideas. Reach me at phranky@mac.com, Subject: HandiApped.

News Brief

Mouse Adaptor for Shaky Hands

IBM has developed an adjustable mouse adapter that compensates for the shakes of patients with hand tumors and other causes of uncontrollable shaking. According to the International Essential Tremor Foundation, in the US alone nearly 10 million people are affected by essential tremor, the most common form of hand tremors. This adapter will plug in between the mouse and computer and is compatible with existing mice.



Expect the Unexpected When Traveling Abroad

By Lynn L. Kauer, Editor <llkauer@chartermi.net>
Saginaw Valley Computer Association

My wife and I recently went on a river cruise from Vienna, Austria starting with the Danube River. As we continued our trip on the Danube through Germany, we connected with the Main River that allowed us to travel over the mountains and connect with the Rhine River. The trip ended in Amsterdam in the Netherlands (Holland). This trip was for a period of three weeks and was on a boat

that only held 150 persons, including the crew. We are more accustomed to the 'big' ships with upwards of 2,400 passengers plus crew containing all the amenities like an onboard shop to download the photos from the digital memory cards onto CD's. I knew that this service would not be available on the riverboat and became a bit concerned with respect to what I would do if I 'filled' all of my digital storage.

My camera is a Sony DSC-F717 and uses "Memory Sticks" for digital storage. (Other cameras may use Secure Digital, Compact Flash Cards or XD cards depending on the manufacturer.)

Although the camera is capable of taking photos at five mega pixels (2,560 x 1,020 JPEG image size), I adjust the settings downward to (2,048 x 1,536 JPEG image size). I also adjust the setting to 'fine' mode instead of 'standard' mode. This allows me to save approximately 80 photos on a 128MB stick instead of only 50 if I were to shoot at the five-mega pixel setting.

I own ten 128MB plus three 256MB memory sticks. Doing the simple math, they are capable of storing 1,280 photos. While it may seem like a lot, it really is not. I used almost all of their storage capacity on our last two-week trip to the Mediterranean while visiting Italy, Greece, Turkey and Croatia.



On that trip, we sailed miles off the coast and there was no opportunity to take photos until we landed ashore. On the river cruise we would be traveling through the scenic vistas of three countries plus having stops along the way. I was concerned with having enough storage because we would be traveling for three weeks.



After the first day I quickly learned that there are a lot more things that one should worry about than digital storage. Some of the things contained in this article will surprise you and hopefully give you some insight as to what you should think about when traveling abroad whether on ship, train, bus or car.

RESOLUTION

As stated above, I lower the resolution to approximately three mega pixels on my camera. One of the passengers had a camera like mine. As we chatted, he told me that he had recently purchased the camera for the trip and was finding it easy to use. He previously owned a 35-mm film camera. We somehow got on to the subject of storage and I asked him how many 'sticks' he had. His reply, "Just the one that came with the camera. I can get all of the photos on the stick that I expect to take while traveling. I can get almost 800 photos on the stick."

This is when I learned that the salesperson had changed the resolution on his camera to the lowest possible setting. In other words—Internet resolution. When I asked him if he intended to make prints he replied, "Oh yes. But none larger than 8 x 10." He was the type who knew everything about everything so I found a way to let him snap away and disappeared into the crowd.

I also bumped into another poor fellow who really had a problem. He bought his camera real cheap in a pawn shop a week before the trip. The camera stored everything on a permanent chip inside the camera. The salesperson had told him that all he had to do was to go into any photo store and they would be able to transfer his photos to a CD with no problem. At this point, only three days into a sixteen-day cruise, his camera was full. Worse, he could not find a store that could provide the service for him.

Onboard the 'big' ships the service is readily available for a fee. On the riverboat, they had no provisions for this service. The crew attempted to help him by downloading the photos onto their computer but they too bumped into a brick wall. He never received the instructions or the CD that contained the necessary software with which to unload the photos to a computer. His photo shooting days ended early.

POWER

As stated earlier, I was concerned with having enough storage space for photos. (Incidentally, I shot almost 1000 photos.) The first option I thought about was to get an adaptor that would allow me to download the photos onto a laptop computer. However, this idea was short lived because carry-on luggage space is limited. International flights limit the passenger to one piece of carry-on luggage and the size is restricted. Secondly, carrying laptops through airport security is a royal pain. Therefore, I decided that I would become a 'selective' photographer and not try to capture every photo opportunity I saw.

When traveling in Europe one must keep in mind that 110-volt power is not available. All of the electrical power in Europe is 240-volt and not all of the plugs are the same from country to country. My first purchase was to buy a transformer to adjust the voltage for a 110-volt external battery charger. It's about the size of a small flashlight, costs less than \$25 and allows me to use it in any country.

This is where I bumped into the first problem. I didn't read all of the instructions that came with the transformer. The first occasion I had to use it was while in the hotel in Vienna. That is where I learned that the voltage was 240-volt and 50-cycle. The instructions clearly stated to not allow it to be plugged into the outlet for more than an hour or it would become overheat and possibly damaged. Therefore, I plugged the transformer into the outlet and let the battery recharge for shorter periods.

When we boarded the ship the only outlet available was in the bathroom. There were two outlets available. One noted for use with an electric razor only—110-volt. The other outlet was for 240-volt appliances. I used the 240-volt outlet with the transformer for one hour time periods to recharge the camera batteries without a problem.

Alas, two of our shipmates were not so lucky. One plugged his charger into the 110-volt outlet and failed to pay attention to the time. Two hours later, when he entered the cabin, he found his charger smoking. The problem is the 50-cycle current. It burned it up. The other shipmate was less fortunate. He plugged the cord into his camera to recharge the battery. It also caused damage to the built-in charger and he now had a dysfunctional camera. I make it a practice to never use the camera to recharge the battery unless it is absolutely necessary.

INTERNET CAFÉ'S & KEYBOARDS

While in our hotel in Vienna I found a computer, that one could rent for Internet access. The rental rate for Internet access was three euros for fifteen minutes. This means \$4.95 per quarter hour or about twenty bucks an hour.

Because of the committees Crystal and I are involved in, we wanted to know what the latest information was. This is when we learned that attachments do not get transmitted overseas. This was very frustrating because we attempted twice later in different cities with the same result.

The interesting thing I learned on the first attempt was when I tried to send an e-mail to the sender that had the attachment. When I typed the message a lot of the letters were mixed up. For example, the S key would be displayed as a "&", the "P" key would display as an "X" and the "R" key would come up as a ">". The keyboard layout doesn't match that of ours!

When I got it cleaned up and attempted to send it I received an error message that I had been logged off meaning that I had spent five bucks for nothing. This wasn't unique to the hotel's computer. It was common at other sites as well. The result was that we were out of contact with anyone online for a month because things just don't interface as we expect them to.

I had bumped into the keyboard layout problem a couple of years earlier in England but it wasn't as complex as being in Germany. Imagine what it would be like in China or some other remote country. The connection speeds were a step back in time. While some sites boasted cable and broadband access, the speed was similar to 56KB modems. I should have realized what the speed differences were as almost every home had an antenna on the roof!

HOW DO YOU SPELL RELIEF?

What does one do when they get sick in a foreign country? You call your doctor, right? Nope! Our shipmate had quadruple bypass surgery a couple of years earlier. About half way through the trip, he got a sore throat and a severe cold. He failed to bring medication along to take care of this condition. This became a big problem for him.

Since the time differential was six hours, and he got sick on a weekend, he was unable to contact his doctor in the states. He sent a fax to his doctor's office to learn that the office staff turns off the machines when they leave work. Thus, for us it was noon and his doctor's office was already closed because it was 6:00pm.

While ashore he tried to make a phone call but his doctor's answering machine told him to call another number in the event of an emergency. The other number had a message to the effect, "the doctor is not in right now. Please leave a phone

number where he can contact you." Since we were 'at sea so to speak' there was no way for the doctor to call back.

After two days, the ship managed to contact his doctor who faxed a prescription to the ship via a satellite link while tied up in port. However, when he took it to the pharmacy, the pharmacist refuse to fill it because it was written in English and not from a doctor recognized as being in Germany. So, what's the point? When traveling abroad try to anticipate the unexpected for medications that may require a prescription.

In my case, I became ill during the second week having caught the 'cold' of the fellow trying to contact his doctor. My only alternative was to talk to a pharmacist for some 'over the counter' medication. It didn't work very well.

When I arrived home and found myself unable to sleep in a bed. The first night was spent dozing on the recliner. The next morning I met with my doctor and took the medication I had purchased with me.

He pulled out the instructions from the package and exclaimed, "Everything is written in German. Why don't they write in a generic language in English so that we could understand what they are telling us?" I replied, "Doc, we were in Germany. How many 'over the counter' medications in our country are written in German." He looked at me with a sly grin and realized the folly of what he had asked.

From now on, when we travel abroad we will take some of the 'over the counter' medications that we use from time to time with us. We found aspirin a bit difficult to find as it was 'blended' with other unpronounceable things. The rule to follow is the same as going to a cheap party—BYOB (Bring Your Own Bottle). In this case, BYPM (Bring Your Own Medicine).



How I Made a Movie

By Chuck Guion, Editor
Rockport Computer Users'
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www.rcug.net

Many of our club members saw Patty Beasley's movie that she made on Joe Files. She used Windows Movie Maker 2 (WMM2) to make it. I thought I would also create some movies. Patty gave me some hints on how she made her movie. One very helpful tip she gave me was to first create your movie in PowerPoint and save each slide as a JPG. You can add text, templates, etc. while you are in PowerPoint. Another way to make a movie is to use WMM 2.1. (You don't have to use PowerPoint; you can use Video Effects, Video Transitions, and add text within the program.)

If you haven't downloaded XP's Service Pack 2, then you should download and install it since WMM Version 2.1 is included. Open up WMM 2.1 and make a Collection (import all of your slides from PowerPoint into the Collection). Start a New Project and drag the slides into Storybook View. Import a music file (MP3) from Windows Media Player (download Version 10 from www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia and install it) and drag it to the far left in Timeline View. You can also use a microphone to narrate your movie. But you cannot narrate and play music at the same time.

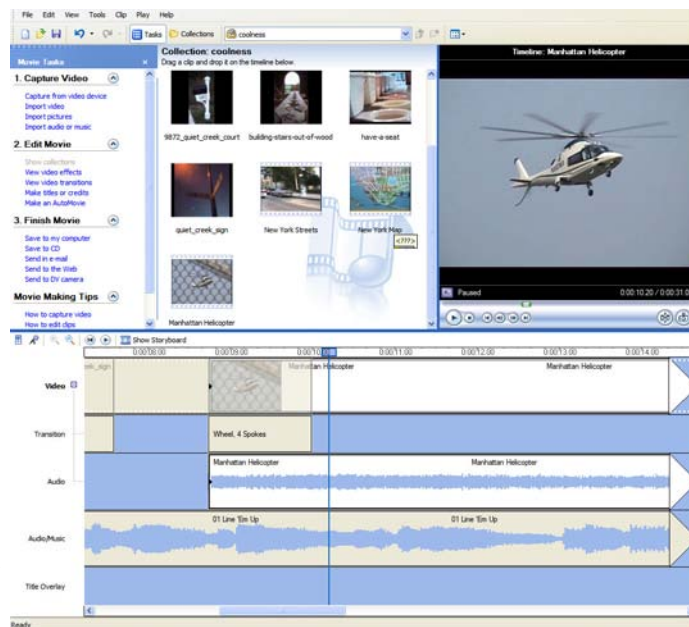
You can play the Storybook and Timeline and shorten your music by moving the corner arrow to the left and cutting it off. You can add Transitions and Video Effects in the Timeline View (in WMM 2.1). You can also lengthen the time your slide stays on the screen. If you want to take a break, you can give your project a name and save it.

When you are satisfied with your movie you can save it as a WMV file in My Videos or put it on a CD. The music files are large so you may want to save them on a CD.

You can bring video clips into WMM 2.1 and add them to your movie. You can also take slides from Digital Video Recorders and bring them into WMM 2.1 but you may have to buy a special video card to get your Analog and Digital recorders to work with WMM 2.1.

Windows Movie Maker has the usual help files but you might go to www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia for more help on using WMM 2.1.

I have made several movies for the CAUG DigiCam SIG and have also made some on architecture, boats, and birds. WMM 2.1 is a good way to make a family movie. Gather old pictures, cards, poems, etc., scan them, and bring them into WMM 2.1. You can also record your children and grandchildren's voices and put them in the movie. The possibilities are endless. Why don't you try making a movie? It's a lot of fun!



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The Latest on DVDs

By Bob Elgines, Colorado River Computer Club Editor, Lake Havasu, AZ

The DVD world is going crazy. The price range is from \$59 to \$130 well within most of our budgets. DVD blanks are down to 50 cents a piece, almost as cheap as CDs. The top four recorder manufacturers are Plextor, Toshiba, Pacific Digital, and Memorex.

Speed is up to 16X, which is max on the outer part of the disk, but only 8X blanks are readily available.

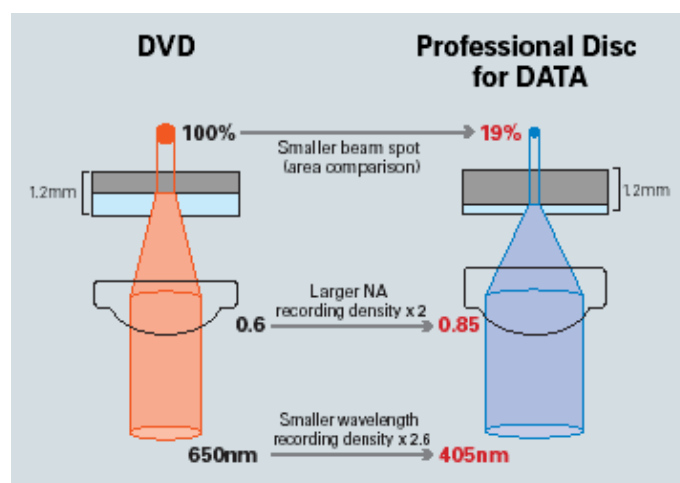
Dual layer (8.5 GB of data space) is labeled as the latest big deal, but is it really? These disks are hard to manufacture and are very expensive. The most important thing is, what will they play in? Well not much of anything. Most DVD players will not recognize the format and neither will your older recorders. So I don't look for this to do anyone much good even in the future.

What is in the future (next year)? The digital world has still been undecided on DVD-R and DVD+R formats, so most of your recorders will do both. Now we come to the future of introducing two new formats named "HD-DVD" and "Blu-ray". These new formats have been developed to use the new blue-laser, where has, they have been using the red-laser in our present recorders. Red laser single level DVDs have 4.7 GB of capacity where the Blue-laser single layer DVDs will have a capacity of 15 (HD-DVD format) to 25 GB (Blu-ray format) at present.

A HD (High Definition) two hour movie uses about 17.4 GB with out max compression. The compression schemes (MPEG-2, MPEG4, etc.) will be the same for both, so there will be no big difference in playback quality. Here we go again, new DVD players will be needed and this reminds us of the old video tape war on formats "Beta" and "VHS". Remember VHS won out due to more recording time and lower costs. Will this be true of the two blue-laser formats? Only time will tell.

These Blue-laser recorders and players will be coming out near the end of this year or the start of next year, but I think we are going to have to wait and see if they can decide on a format for the blue-laser.

By reducing the wavelength of the laser beam from red to violet, it is possible to make a narrower "beam spot", thus enabling higher recording densities. "Professional Disc for DATA" employs a blue laser with a wavelength of just 405nm, enabling a data density some 2.6 times greater than that of the red laser technology used for conventional optical media. Moreover, the lens (used for focusing the laser beam) has a numerical aperture of 0.85 — greater than that used for DVDs (NA: 0.6) and MO discs (NA: 0.575). The resulting narrow beam further doubles recording density. As a result, track pitch is just 0.32 μ m, making it possible to record as much as 23GB on one side of a disc. Below we can see a comparison between DVD and SONY's PDD technology:



Link to digital movies with Movielink

by Sherry Zorzi, APCUG <szorzi@apcug.net>

Advisor and Director of Cajun Clickers, Baton Rouge, LA
<www.clickers.org>



While Blockbuster and Netflix (www.netflix.com) battle it out for your entertainment dollar, a new online player just may sneak around them. Movielink (www.movielink.com) allows you to order and download recent movies on a pay-for-view basis.

The movies are downloaded to your PC for viewing there, or on a TV connected to the PC, or on your laptop. The cost is about \$5 for a recent release, but some offerings are as cheap as 99 cents. You have 30 days after download to watch the movie. You are renting the movie, though, for a 24-hour period which means that once you click "Play", you have only the next 24 hours to watch (and re-watch, if you like) the movie. You can buy additional viewing time at a reduced rate.

While visiting the Demonstration Digital Home at the Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas in January, I got a coupon for a free download from Movielink. I visited Movielink's website as soon as I got home and decided to give it a try. The selection of movies is pretty good and includes most of Blockbuster's Top Ten Rentals.

Before downloading a movie, you must register with Movielink. They are not overly intrusive, asking only for name, email address, sex, and age during the registration process. You will, of course, probably want to deselect the opportunity to receive a free email newsletter from Movielink.

Movielink installs Movielink Manager software onto your computer, which controls the download and playback of the movies you order. You should read the End User License Agreement carefully, since it does give Movielink and its partners (RealNetworks and Microsoft) the right to push upgrades and updates to you without asking permission. That might be a deal-breaker for some – indeed, it almost sent me running for the hills. But for the sake of you, the reader, I bit the bullet and signed on the virtual dotted line.

The download took about 25 minutes on my Cox cable internet connection and proceeded smoothly. It was several weeks before I had a chance to view my movie. When I clicked "Play", though, the media player would not load the movie so I went to their website for help. The live chat feature of Movielink's website worked beautifully. I was very quickly connected with a technician who reset my account and had me re-install the Movielink Manager software. Within minutes everything was working fine.

The video quality of the movie was excellent. Watching a movie on the typical PC, though, is much different from watching one on the typical TV. My computer screen is a 17 inch LCD flat screen. The image was beautiful but much smaller than my TV. I don't have a top of the line sound card nor great speakers on that particular computer either, so the audio was acceptable to me while not outstanding. Next time I'll probably download my movie to a different computer in my home – one that has a top-notch video card, a top-notch sound card, and an awesome Surroundsound speaker set that includes a huge subwoofer.

I'll probably rent from Movielink again. I'm intrigued by the possibilities of instant access to the movie of my choice without leaving home or waiting for it to be mailed to me. The service would be even more attractive to me if it offered a monthly subscription deal and if it allowed me to transfer my rental to the device of my choice, including my Pocket PC and other computers on my home network.

Movielink and other services like it may not overtake brick-and-mortar rental stores like Blockbuster or online CD rental services like Netflix overnight. But it's a worthy opponent and will become more and more of a threat as more homes connect their TVs to home entertainment PCs. Give it a try.

The Music Wars

By Wayne Steen, Q BITS contributing editor, Quad-Cities Computer Society, Bettendorf, Iowa

The music industry is at war with itself and its fans. Who ever thought that a rock and roll band would sue its own fans? Talk about the ultimate in corporate greed. The music industry is full of corporate greed. However, fear not my loyal readers help is on the way. Steve Jobs of Apple, Bill Gates of Microsoft, and Wal-Mart are coming to our rescue. I feel better already. Apple has already introduced iTunes and the iPod. Soon, Microsoft and Wal-Mart will come out with their own online music services.

Roxio has brought Napster back from the dead. Napster was once the largest illegal file-sharing service on the Internet. Roxio has now brought it back as a good file-sharing service that pays the record companies and artists for their music.

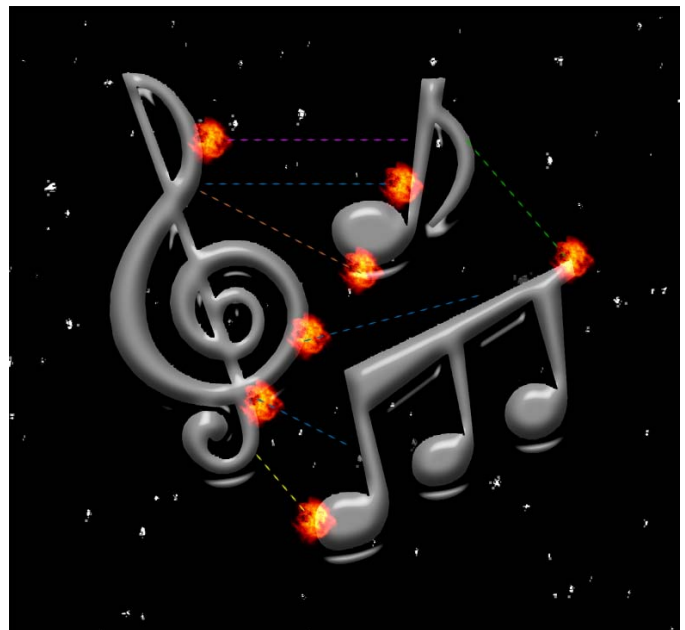
Real Networks has their own online music service and Music Match has their own service. My head is spinning round, round, round.

Apple

Steve Jobs and Apple are the first ones out of the gate in the online music services race. However, remember back in the 1980s when Apple was the top dog in the computer box wars? They eventually lost out to Bill Gates. Will history repeat itself or has Steve learned from his past mistakes?

iTunes is currently the world's largest online music services company. They have recently added the muscle of over 25,000,000 AOL customers to their arsenal. iTunes works on both Apple and Windows computers. You must have Windows 2000 or Windows XP on your PC in order to use iTunes.

The download is simple and without a hassle. All you have to do is go to <<http://www.apple.com>> and click on the iTunes link. All you have to do is enter your e-mail address and then download the iTunes software.



iTunes does not charge a monthly fee that all the other online music services charge. However, you can only listen to a 30-second clip from the song that you are interested in. To listen to the whole song you must buy the song for 99 cents.

You can buy as many songs as you want through the Apple Music store. You will have to enter your credit card with Apple music store in order to download music from iTunes.

You can burn songs onto an unlimited number of CDs for your personal use. You can listen to your songs on an unlimited number of iPods. (I will talk about iPods in a minute.) You can play your songs on up to three Macintosh computers or Windows PCs.

You can also set up an account for your children. Kids now have a legal way to download their favorite songs with music allowance accounts. You set up the account using your credit card and then set up a monthly allotment of how many songs your kids can buy. Once they reach the monthly limit (and they will reach that monthly limit), they cannot download any more songs.

Another nice new feature from iTunes is you can now purchase audio books. At the time of this writing, Harry Potter books were not available from iTunes.

Napster

Napster is a monthly service that you pay \$9.95 a month for downloading songs. You can download as many songs as you want to your computer. However, if you want to burn the songs to a CD or digital device such as the Dell Music Jukebox then you must pay 99 cents a song.

Real Networks and Music Match also use the Napster model. I like having the ability to download as many songs as I like (or how many songs my hard drive will handle) without having to pay 99 cents a song.

If you want to burn the songs to a CD or a portable digital device then the Apple model may be more to your liking.

Problems

iTunes will only burn to CDs and Apple's own iPod. The iPod is a 15 GB device that sells for \$299.00 and will carry almost 7,000 songs. Let me see, 7,000 times 99 cents equals about \$7,000.00. This is a very good moneymaker for Apple.

The Dell Digital Jukebox Music Player is very similar to the Apple iPod and costs \$249.00. The math is the same, about \$7,000.00 for 7,000 songs.

The problem is that iPod and Dell do not play nice with each other. If you use iTunes, then you are going to want to buy the iPod. If you use Real Network, Music Match or Napster then you are going to want to use the Dell Digital Jukebox Music Player.

The biggest problem is that not all famous artists are available for download with one of the online service providers. Therefore, you may only be able to listen to a favorite artist of yours on iTunes and another favorite artist of yours may only be available on Napster.

Once again, the consumer is on the short end of the stick with all of the big boys wanting to use their own standards. They are telling us, it is their ball, and you are going to play the game by their rules. We have danced to this song before!

Conclusion

Who will win the music wars? Let us do some calculations.

I remember being able to buy KISS records on sale at Music Land for \$3.99. Let us do some math. Twelve songs on a typical album divided into \$3.99 equals 33 cents. Today we pay 99 cents for a song or \$9.95 for the whole album.

However, that is far better than the \$18.99 suggested retail price of CDs that are currently on sale in stores. Let me see, \$18.99 divided by 12 equals \$1.58 a song. Ouch! I do not know who will win the music wars, but I do know who has lost. The music store retailers and the consumers have lost. I am against illegal file sharing, but I am also against record companies suing 12-year-old girls.

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How To Record Your Cassette Music to a Compact Disc

By Bob Elgines, CRCC Editor, elginesz@rraz.net

Most of the equipment you already have includes the Soundboard and a Cassette player. Next of course things needed are a recording program, such as Musicmatch Jukebox and a cable to connect your cassette player with your computer. This basic Jukebox software is available free at: www.musicmatch.com (go to JUKEBOX tab and click on "Free Jukebox download", it is over 24 MB in size) The cable is made up of 1/8" Phone Plugs (RS 274-284c) and a three wire shielded cable. This cable can be purchased or made on your own. (Some of the older cassette players will use a larger 1/4" Phone plug.)

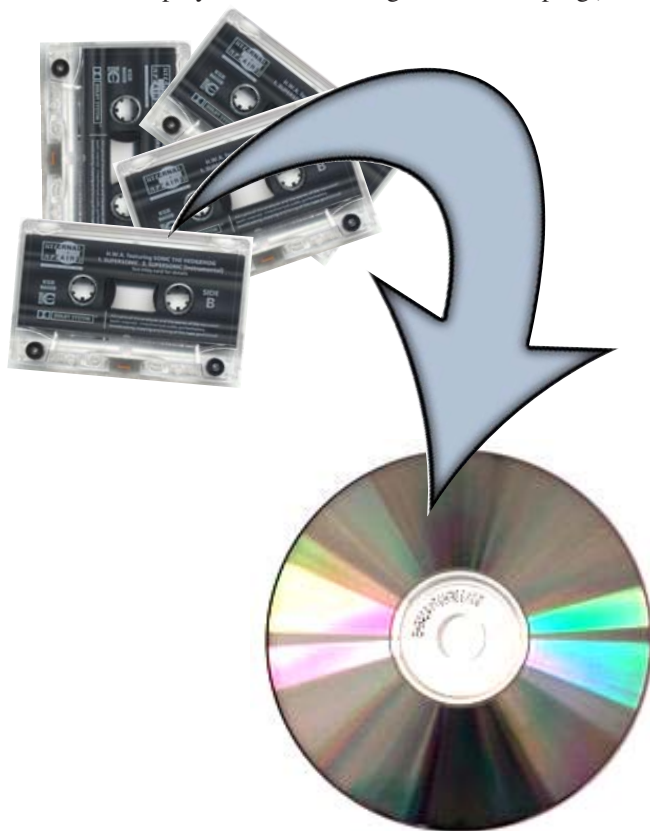
Now we are ready to setup your computer and programs. Connect your cable between the "Output" (might be labeled Headset) of your Cassette Player and the "Line in" of your computer Sound board.

Do a right click on your Speaker icon located on the right hand side of the task bar. Select (or left click) "Adjust Audio Properties", click on "Audio". Under "Sound Recording" click on "Volume". Select "Line in" and set the input level at approximately 20%, this may have to be changed later, so you can leave this on the screen if you wish.

Next activate Musicmatch Jukebox, then go to "Options"/ "Recorder" / "Settings". Set "Recording Format" to WAV, "Recording Source" to LINE IN. Now click on "Advance", set "Fadeout" to 1, and under "End of Record Notifications" uncheck "Play sound" & "Eject CD". Click OK

On the bottom left click the red "Record" button. Another window appears with a number "one" on the right. You can click on here and change the name now or do it later. If you are going to record the complete side of the cassette under one file then name it now, otherwise if you are going to record one track (or song) at a time then you can change the name later.

Now play your cassette to check out the input level for no distortion listening to it on your computer speakers. If it is too loud and there is distortion then reduce the input level or the volume out of the player. Rewind the cassette.



We are ready to roll, start your player and press the "Record" button on the lower left window. When the song is over press the "Stop" button, then press "Record" again because the next song will start within a second or two. The press "Stop", continue this until each song is recorded from the cassette.

Now we have them in the computer, let's name each one, but keep the names short. Use "Windows Explorer" and go to "My Documents" / "My Music" / "Artist" / "Album". Here you will find your recordings and you can rename them by doing a right click on each one. After you are finished, exit, go to your CD recording program such as "EZ CD Creator" or "Nero". Now you can grab all of the recordings you made and make an AUDIO CD. (Do not record any faster than 8X, because most players will not accept anything faster)

Another method can be used and that is by using MP3 sound files. If you convert from WAV to MP3 files, you can put up to 150 (or more) songs on a CD instead of just 15.


To convert the WAV files bring up your "Jukebox" program. Go to "File" / "Convert", then select your Source folder that contains your music files. Select "Source Data Type" and set to WAV, then click on "Select all". Next select your Destination folder and select your "Destination Data Type" setting it to MP3. Click on the start button and it will now make MP3 files out of your selected WAV files.

After you are finished, Exit, go to your CD recording program and record your MP3 files on a CD as data files (do not make an audio CD), this MP3-Data CD will now play in a DVD Player or computer capable of having over 150 songs.

News Brief

RealNetworks Launches Napster Challenger

Streaming-media giant RealNetworks has launched an updated version of its Rhapsody subscription music service to challenge competitors such as Apple Computer's iTunes and Napster To Go. The new Rhapsody, which offers subscribers access to more than 1 million songs, will come in three flavors, one of which is free and provides 25 song downloads each month.




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Tips for Adding Audio and Video (for Free) to Your User Group Web Site

By Phil Shapiro, member of the Capital PC User Group, Virginia Macintosh Users Group, Washington Apple Pi, Young Hackers and Scholars Libre Users Group

When people visit your user group web site, almost all of them want to know the answer to two questions:

Who are these people?
What do they care about?

You can try answering these questions with words and pictures. That sort of works. Or you can add audio and video to your user group web site, completely free of charge using the Internet Archive (<http://www.archive.org>), and bring your club to life in whole new ways.

I've been experimenting with this in the Virginia Macintosh Users Group and have learned some things worth passing along. You can view the video I uploaded at <http://www.archive.org/details/vmugtestimonials2>. Now I'll explain how I created and uploaded it.

A few years ago I carried my digital camcorder, tripod and some lighting to a VMUG meeting. We meet in the large library of a middle school, so I set up my camcorder in a side area of the library. During the meeting I discretely went around the room asking folks if they wanted to say a few words on camera in support of the club. This was entirely spontaneous and unrehearsed, so the club could best collect people's genuine sentiments.

It didn't take much time or effort to gather these short testimonials. I then edited these testimonials together in iMovie and created an MPEG-1 file from them via the Share option in the File menu of iMovie. (To create an MPEG-1 file you

need to have Roxio Toast, a commercial program, installed on your Mac.) It's useful to note that the file name suffix of MPEG-1 is .mpg

MPEG-1 files can be viewed by Macintosh, Windows and Linux users. These files are admittedly a bit on the large size in terms of megabytes per minute of video. Each minute of MPEG-1 video is 10 megabytes. But their universal viewability is a great attribute.

I uploaded this 9-minute (87 megabyte) file to the Internet Archive. The process of uploading video to the Internet Archive is fairly simple, but let me explain the steps anyway. First you need to create an account for yourself on the Internet Archive. It's free and takes just a few steps.

Then you need to upload your video file or files. I used the popular Fetch FTP (file transfer protocol) program for Macintosh computers. CyberDuck (free) works equally well. On the Windows side of things, SmartFTP is the best free FTP programs I know of.

After logging in to your Internet Archive account, the first step is to create a folder (subdirectory) for each video (or audio) file. The folder name needs to be almost identical to the file

name. So if you want to upload the file named `vmugtestimonials2.mpg` your folder name should be `vmugtestimonials2`. (without the period at the end). Next you open the folder you've created (by double clicking on it) and drop the file you want to upload into that folder. The upload process can take a while, even if you have a high speed Internet connection. A rough rule of thumb is that you can upload about 1 to 3 megabytes per minute with most DSL and cable modem accounts. Using a Verizon FIOS (fiber optic) account, you can upload about 12 to 15 megabytes/min.

After the file has been uploaded, you need to wait about 6 to 8 hours before the file is "released." (There are people at the Internet Archive that check to make sure the file was safely received at their side and is not inappropriate.)

The final step is to "Import" the file into the Internet Archive, giving it a detailed file description and including other relevant information, such as who produced it and what the duration of the file is.

You can also choose which Creative Commons license you would like for this file, or whether you'd like to donate your file to the public domain. While Creative Commons licenses are a wonderful invention, donating your file to the public domain might be the most sensible (and least complicated) way to proceed.

After you've imported your file into the Internet Archive, you need to wait just a bit longer (usually just a few hours -- or less), and then your file will be available for any and all to view -- in perpetuity. (Roughly until when the sun blows up.)

Here's the part you're going to like a lot. If you upload MPEG-1 files to the Internet Archive, and if the file has a suffix of `.mpg`, then the Internet Archive automatically creates 2 smaller file size versions of this video in MPEG-4 format. One of these smaller sizes is suitable for dial-up users -- although it will admittedly look and sound rather choppy.

The other MPEG-4 version of the file could be viewed by dial-up users with a lot of patience. It takes roughly 5 minutes for a dial-up user to receive one megabyte of downloads, so if your MPEG-4 file is 12 megabytes in file size, a dial-up user could view that file after waiting for about an hour.

Which brings up the point that you probably want to keep your video files less than 10 minutes in duration. Since the Internet Archive is free and gives unlimited storage, you can upload lots of 10 minute videos. The reason to keep files short is that sometimes you can run into synch (synchronization) issues where the audio of the video is not matched up with the lips of the people speaking in the video -- or of the other actions shown in the video. Synch problems seem to crop up most often in the dial-up MPEG-4 files, in my experience.

Suppose you didn't have easy access to a digital camcorder and you wanted to create some video testimonials for your computer user group. Is there any way of doing so? Sure. You can create video files using still digital photos accompanied by audio files. The tool I like best for this is iMovie, the free video editing software that ships with all new Macs. You can likely also use Windows Moviemaker 2, which ships for free with Windows XP computers.

In terms of capturing audio, you can use any laptop and the free Audacity audio recording and editing software. <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>.



Or you might want to use a portable digital recorder device. My podcasting friends tell me they like the digital recorders produced by Olympus. The advantage of a portable digital recorder is that you more easily capture that moment when someone has something positive to say at a user group meeting. Naturally, you want to be careful not to disrupt the flow of the meeting, so it might be best to take the person aside during a break -- or corner them after the meeting and ask them if they would mind repeating a statement -- they made in the meeting (or to offer an on-the-spot testimonial.)

Explain what you're going to be using the testimonials for. Most people will gladly give their approval, but you always need to respect the wishes of those who prefer not to have their voice or video used on the web.

Once you have placed your testimonials on the web you'll want to alert your local user group members via your email list, newsletter, or both. You can also alert other user groups to these testimonials via a blog I've set up at <http://usergrouptestimonials.blogspot.com>

Send me a link to the testimonials, along with the name of your user group, and I'll add that link as a posted entry on this blog.

We are most human when we're engaged in acts of helping one another. The user group community needs to seize all opportunities to make itself known to the larger community. In time, computer user groups will take on a larger, more central role in society -- perhaps as adjuncts of public libraries, who share the same knowledge-sharing ethic. While it may seem far off in the distance, there may even be a day when computer user groups receive some sort of government funding.

One way to make that happen is to get real serious about documenting the work your user group is doing -- in video and other multimedia forms -- on the web. This work needs to be done by more than a few people in each user group.

Phil Shapiro works as an independent Macintosh consultant and writer in the Washington DC-area. He can be reached at pshapiro@his.com and at <http://www.digitaldivide.net/profile/pshapiro>

His blog can be found at <http://www.digitaldivide.net/blog/pshapiro>

Other articles he has written can be found via his Del.icio.us site at <http://del.icio.us/pshapiro>.

Laptop Display Replacement

by Mike Borman

SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

I have owned three different Toshiba laptop computers and was always impressed with how rugged they were. A couple of them have been used to collect CCD images from my telescope on cold and dewy nights without a problem. We have also used Toshiba laptops where I work to program and monitor Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs) in industrial plants all across the tristate area without a problem. One even had water pouring down on it accidentally at one plant, and after letting it dry out a bit, was as good as new. So this past February when I decided I needed a new laptop, I once again chose a Toshiba, a Satellite A75. This one had a very nice 15.4" Trubrite TFT display.

Last month however, I discovered that my newest Toshiba laptop would not pass the drop test. I had been using it in the living room while watching TV, and had it resting on one of the arms of my recliner (which is wide enough to support the bottom of the laptop). Unfortunately, when I got up to get something out of the kitchen, the laptop slid off the arm of the recliner and fell a little over two feet to the carpeted floor. When I picked it up I noticed that the display had a crack in the upper right hand corner. I won't repeat the words I uttered!

I decided to take the computer back to Circuit City where I bought it, to see what my options were for fixing it. They told me that accidental breakage was not covered by the City Advantage plan they had sold me in February, and it was not covered by the Toshiba warranty either. Circuit City proposed sending it off to their Service Center in Louisville to see how much it would cost to replace the display. Unfortunately, they came back with an estimate of over \$1000 to fix it. A call to Toshiba informed me that replacing the screen would cost \$700 plus labor and shipping. Considering that I paid \$1400 for it new, either choice seemed a bit outrageous. I also found that it was not covered by my homeowner's insurance or personal articles policy.

I next decided to see if I could possibly replace the display myself. After searching on the Internet, I found a website called IDParts.com that had parts for most of the major brands of laptops. I gave them a call and asked them how much a replacement LCD display would cost for my Toshiba laptop. They said \$335. Since that was a lot better than paying Circuit City \$1000 or buying a new laptop, I went ahead and ordered one. It arrived in less than a week. Unfortunately when I opened the package I found a display more badly broken than the one I wanted to replace! More unmentionable words were uttered.

I called IDParts, and they agreed to take back the broken display and send me a new one. The second display arrived intact a couple days later.

My next task was to remove the existing LCD display. The IDParts website shows an example of a "typical" display replacement. It shows removing the little rubber pads that run around the perimeter of the display to reveal screws that hold



the display together. When I removed the rubber pads from my display however, there were only screws under the two at the bottom of the display. With some careful probing with a screwdriver I found that the top of the display just snapped together. After getting off the bezel I found that the display LCD was attached to a metal frame with several tiny Philips head screws. Before removing the screws, I had to detach (very carefully) a ribbon cable and a power cable. Then, doing all the steps above in reverse, I installed the new LCD display. My main worry was with reattaching the ribbon cable. It was difficult to line up the two halves of the connector and feel whether it was properly connected. The ribbon cable was just barely long enough to reach the connector on the new LCD. Fortunately I did it right and the new display works fine again!

Mike Borman is an engineer with Three I Engineering, Inc. in Evansville. He is an advisor and past president of the Evansville Astronomical Society and has won national awards for astrophotography and model rocket building. His Web site is at <http://members.sigecom.net/mborman/>

News Brief

Microsoft selects first small business specialist in San Antonio

New designation identifies Lentz Computer Services as expert in small business solutions and services

San Antonio, Texas September 1, 2005 Lentz Computer Services has been appointed the first Small Business Specialist in San Antonio by Microsoft Corporation. To attain this new designation, Lentz Computer Services has demonstrated expertise in planning and building solutions for small businesses. As part of the Small Business Specialist community, Lentz Computer Services will receive a rich set of benefits from Microsoft, including access to training specifically designed for the small-business industry, small-business marketing materials, special partner offers, and the ability to use the Small Business Specialist logo in marketing materials, which can help give the company a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

The Small Business Specialist Community, available as a competency-like designation as part of the Microsoft® Partner Program, was developed in response to input from customers and partners that expressed a need to build easier connections that enable small-business customers to quickly and easily identify technology partners best suited to support them.

Small businesses are looking for partner companies that understand their unique business needs, said Todd Cione, Texas Area District General Manager, Microsoft Small and Midmarket Solutions & Partner Group. With resources like the Small Business Specialist Community and the partner locator tool on the Microsoft Small Business Center Web site, it will be much easier for San Antonio's small businesses to identify local partners that are best able to address their specific needs. We are confident this offering will help Lentz Computer Services reach its full potential by creating more visibility, opportunity and demand in the local small-business segment.

Lentz Computer Services is extremely pleased with our status as a new Small Business Specialist, said Larry Lentz, Owner. This special designation allows Lentz Computer Services to effectively promote ourselves to customers as having proven expertise in delivering high-value, strategic solutions for small businesses. For San Antonio's customers, Small Business Specialist status

provides Lentz Computer Services with early insight to new products, services and programs from Microsoft, which can extend the value we bring to our clients.

As one of the requirements for attaining Small Business Specialist status, Lentz Computer Services had to pass Microsoft's Small Business Sales and Marketing Skills Assessment, designed to test the company's knowledge of the dynamics and dependencies of the small-business market, as well as the value to small business of several software solutions, including Windows® XP Professional, Microsoft Office 2003 and Windows Small Business Server 2003. In addition, at least one individual in the company had to pass a certification exam that measures the ability to design and implement solutions for the small and medium-sized business by using Windows Small Business Server 2003 and the Windows Server System.

The Small Business Specialist Community was announced earlier this summer at the Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference 2005. To enroll, partners can go to <https://partner.microsoft.com/smallbizspecreadiness>.



Senior Comp

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Computer Crimes

Susan Ives, Alamo PC

Apple Crunch by Frederic Vincent Huber

Paperback, Avon, 1981, \$2.95, 264 pages

A computer consultant and a young hacker, their lives ruined by sloppy glitches in New York City's municipal computer system, team up to get revenge on a corrupt system by stealing the city's budget data and holding it for ransom.

This is a lighthearted caper – if you like John Sandford's Kidd novels, this will be right up your alley. The charm of this book is in its relative antiquity: 1981! Remote terminals are described with awe and the city is struggling with

defining what constitutes a computer crime. The Big Apple Computer Club – a charming collection of Nerds not unlike Alamo PC – figures prominently in the plot. Out of print, but a copy is in the Learning Center library.

Interrupt by Toni Duggins

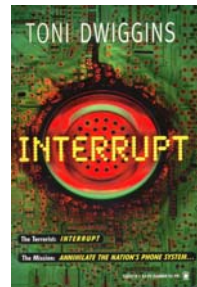
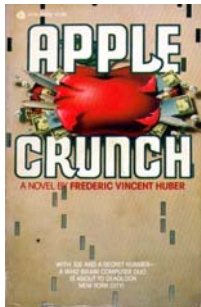
Paperback, Tor, 1993, \$4.99 319 pages

Computer engineer Andy Faulkner is stunned when 40,000 phones in the Silicon Valley – phones on his switch! – suddenly go dead and the glitch is tracked back to his deaf 11-year-old son's TDD device. Suspended from his job and unfairly framed for the outage and the murder of a coworker, he takes

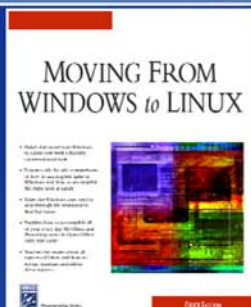
matters into his own hands when his son is kidnapped.

Lots of details about telephony, written during an era when PacBell was switching over from a manual to a digital system. Interesting plot twists computer code, compilers and the Stanford University telephony lab that will interest the geek set. Out of print, but a copy is in the Learning Center library.

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



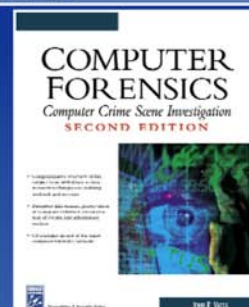
COMPUTER BOOKS THAT DELIVER



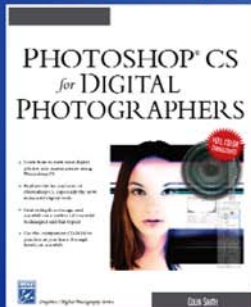
1-58450-280-0 \$44.95



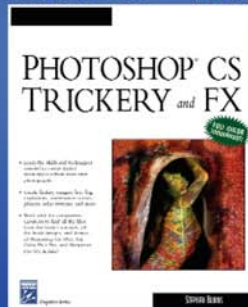
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Software Review

NetObjects Fusion 8

\$195.99

Published by Website Pros

Reviewed by Bill Hudson, Alamo PC

NetObjects Fusion 8 (NOF 8) is the latest edition of this full featured Web design application. NOF 8 combines page and site design features, graphics support, high end component generation like photo albums and e-commerce, and site publication and management into one package. I have used previous versions of this program during the four years I have been a professional Web designer.

A powerful program, NOF 8 has the following system requirements: 166MHz or faster x86-based PC (Pentium/AMD) ; 60 MB of available hard disk space; 64 MB of RAM minimum (128 MB recommended); Internet connection (56K minimum); and a new generation Web browser – such as Internet Explorer 6.

NOF 8 appears to be aimed at the mid-level Web designer. It combines an ease of use with code “protection” features that seem to target newcomers to the field. However, it also has many powerful capabilities required by more experienced Web professionals.

For my review of this program, I decided to see how quickly and how easily I could design and publish an entire Web site. I won't keep you in suspense. Opening the newly installed program, “designing” an eight page site, publishing it to a sub-folder on my company Web site with the program's built-in FTP capability, and then viewing it over the Internet, took twenty-eight minutes. True, other than the site name, page titles, and some personal contact information, all the content was “sample” material provided by NOF 8. Nonetheless, this is an impressive performance and illustrates a major feature of the program – its ease of use.

There are many standout features included with NOF 8. I particularly like the professionally designed site “templates” available with the program or over the Internet. Counting them would take longer than writing this article. There are, literally, hundreds of the nice looking, full featured templates immediately accessible through a “Style” button. Each template includes a full set of banners, multi-state buttons, menus and other graphics, all packaged in a variety of column and menu layouts. You can easily “preview” each style and then apply it with a simple click of your mouse. Don't like the new look? Just find another style, click again, and your site is totally revised. Cool!

Other standout features available in NOF 8 range from building “dynamic” Web sites to installing Photo Albums and even full featured “e-commerce” Web stores. For example, NOF 8 allowed me to connect to and display data from a Web-based database easily and quickly using their “Advanced Tools – Data List” connection wiz-

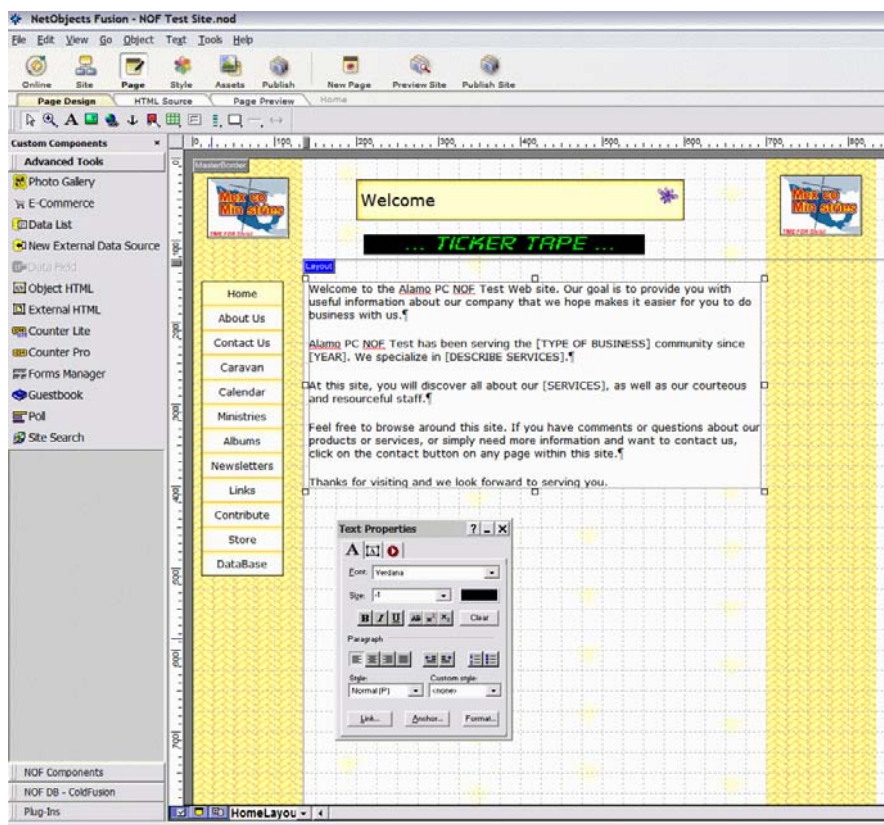


Fig. 1 shows the newly created site's Home page. It shows a "Properties" box, too. Clicking on any screen object brings up its properties, where you can modify the object. This pic also shows the scrolling text field at the top of the page and the "Advanced Tools" like the Photo Gallery and Data List tools, both mentioned in the review.

ard. I did find it more difficult to set up the ability to modify the database via my Web pages, a capability the program does have. However, given that you can always download, modify and then re-upload your updated database with an FTP program, I can honestly say that setting up a "dynamic" or database driven Web site with NOF 8 is a cinch.

As for other capabilities, I installed, published and modified Photo Albums based on collections of pictures I had on my hard drive. I installed and changed scrolling text banners on my published site. And I even set up an on-line "store," where I offered the contents of my home office for sale. The store included a wide range of catalogue and display options, including thumbnails with picture pop-ups (based on their Album functionality, I think), and it had numerous, pre-installed hookups to popular e-commerce support sites like PayPal. You can even set up a catalogue with email support for orders and manage all the payments yourself, without going through the commercial support sites.

NOF 8 is not perfect, of course. While it has a Help section with tutorial "movies" for key actions and many other Web resources are just a few clicks of a browser away, I did find some of instructions vague and incomplete. In fact, you have to pay about \$60 for the 600 page User Manual, which I presume has more complete guidance. I do find charging for a manual a bit tacky. Also, while NOF's layouts work very well if you just accept them, modifying them by moving page elements like menus or even borders can be tricky.

In fact, NOF definitely and deliberately limits the designer's ability to change a major site component, its code. While you can see a page's code using the "HTML Source" tab, you will see that it is all highlighted in grey and you cannot change it. If NOF were your only tool, this would be a major problem for a serious Web designer. However, once published, the page code is fully accessible to any Web editor, whether you use Notepad or Dreamweaver. It is clean code, too, well formed and easily understandable. A note of caution here, though, if you change the code with another editing program, it may affect NOF 8's ability to re-import that page for future modifications or updates.

At \$195.95, NOF 8 is not cheap and it has competitors. However, the choice of most Web design professionals is Dreamweaver 8 is \$399. Microsoft's

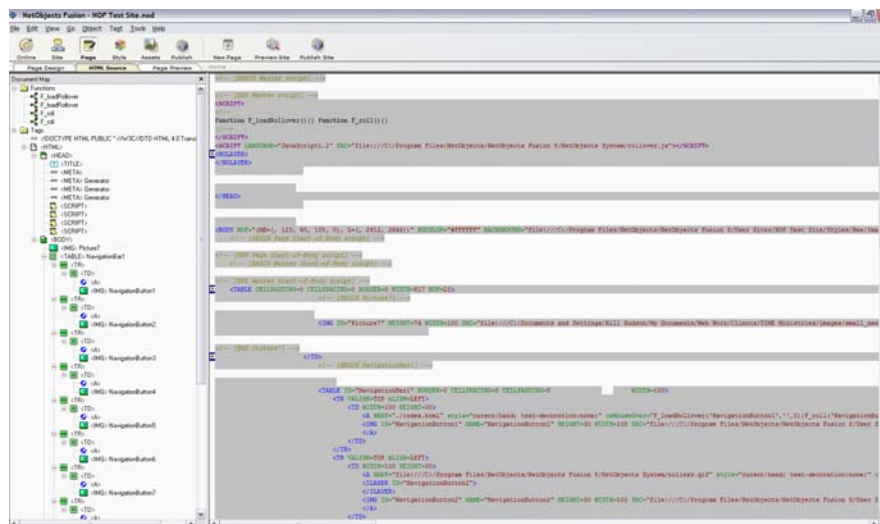


Fig. 2 shows the same page's code after clicking the "HTML Source" tab, just below the command icons at the top of the editors window. Note the code is "grayed out" and therefore not modifiable in NOF 8.



Fig. 3 shows the page after clicking the "Page Preview" tab. Not too exciting, but useful. Note, the Javascript text scroller won't show in this basic view; you have to "Publish Preview" the site to see the function work. No problem, though, since it can be a "local" publish, which means you don't have to be connected to a Web server.

Frontpage 2003 is about the same at \$199, but it generates non-standard code and has some hosting restrictions. Overall, I can definitely recommend NetObjects Fusion 8 for the Web design newcomer or as an additional program for professionals looking for template support or quick site generation whose code it readily modifiable. You can get NOF 8 through Website Pros at <http://www.netobjects.com/>.

I am a retired Air Force Colonel, who worked for six years as the Chief Information Officer for a startup software company in San Antonio, before "re-retiring" to build Web sites part time. My Web design company is Abby Consulting (www.abbyconsulting.com) and I specialize in building sites for small businesses and at no cost for non-profit organizations.

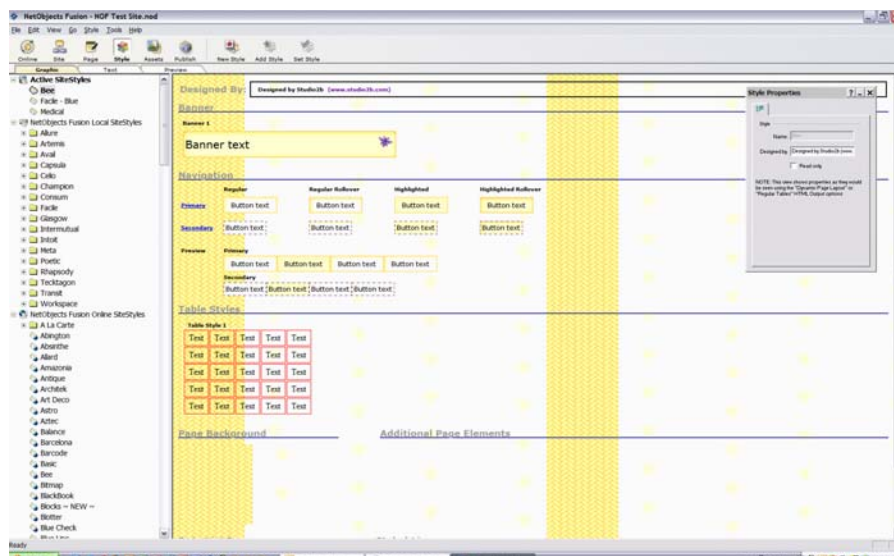


Fig. 4 shows the the "Style" editor with our chosen style featured and some (just a few) of the other, easily applied styles listed in the left column. Clicking on a style brings up a "preview" of how its elements look in the right window pane. If you like it, you just click to "apply" and your site looks immediately different.

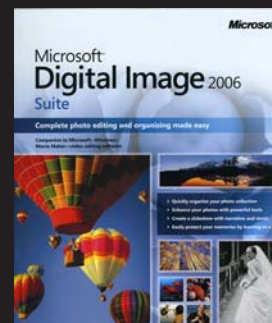
Software Review

Microsoft Digital Image 2006

\$99.99

Published by Microsoft

Reviewed by Joe M. Davis, Alamo PC



Microsoft Digital Image 2006 suite is an affordable, easy to use photography program. You can use it to edit and organize your photos.

It will crop, remove red eye, perform color corrections, clone, and sharpen the focus. Just to name a few.

It has five marquee tools and controls for each. The five marquee are the shape tool, the freehand tool, the edge finder tool, the magic wand tool, and the brush tool. Each one selects a part of the photo in its own unique way.

Once an area has been selected it can be copied and pasted somewhere else. For instance using the marquee tools it is easy to copy someone's open eyes from one photo and replace their closed eyes in a separate photo. This works well where you have taken several group shots and the body position is virtually the same.

Five tools with multiple shapes and intensity levels means you have wonderful control. There are times when I use several of the tools to accomplish one purpose. Another example is, after selecting an area, you can lighten or darken just that area.

The collage templates found in this program are time saving and easy to use. You select one of five templates. They are the seven photo template, the nine photo template, the twelve photo template, the sixteen photo template, and the twenty photo template. You can import and drop the photo you want into its place.

You can move it and resize it within its designated space. But it is automatically cropped when it crosses the border of another picture. That way one photo never crowds its neighbor. Once you fill up the designated spaces you save it for your purpose. Perhaps as the top picture of a family calendar.

It has special effects capabilities that are only limited by your imagination. One of my favorite functions is the photocopy special effects tool. This function makes a drawing of your photograph. It looks computer generated, but if you trace a copy on the light table, you will have a hand drawn picture. It works well with both portraits and historical sites.

It provides you with the critical proportions, and leaves you to do the fun part which is the shading, and coloring. To do the shading or coloring you simply look at your original photo.

(In the attached photos numbered 1-2-3-4 you can see the creative sequence that resulted in #4 photo. #1 is the original, #2 is the computer generated "photocopy", #3 is the tracing, and #4 is the freehand finish. #4 can now be used on stationary or the nice front of a greeting card.)

I have been a photo enthusiast for years, and made the switch to digital photography five years ago. This is a traumatic decision for anyone who learned valuable skills using film. It isn't easy giving up something you love and are good at. But I assure you that the rewards are greater than the losses.

To use this program requires less knowledge than Photoshop, or Paint Shop Pro. I have Paint Shop Pro installed on my computer, and I readily admit that it will do some things better than Microsoft 2006, but it is much harder to master. The same can be said for Photoshop. I started using Microsoft Digital Image Pro 9 five years ago, subsequently Pro 10, and now the latest version Microsoft Digital Image 2006. I have never ceased to be amazed at what it will do.

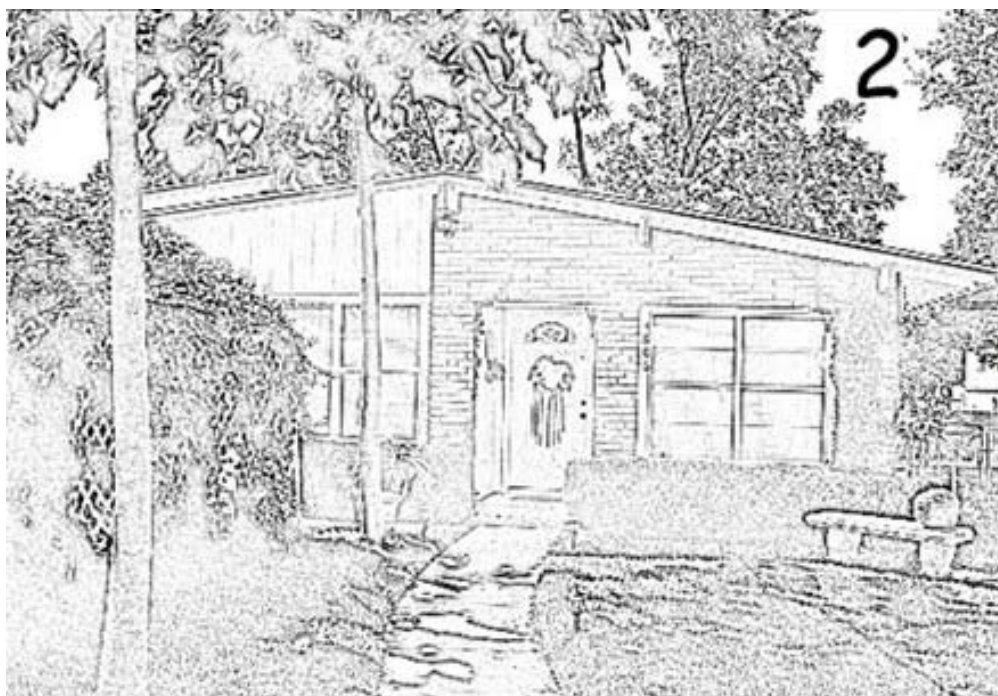
The sky is the limit when it comes to creating unique projects. I have taken Photoshop classes at the college level, and am versed in its capabilities. I almost purchased Photoshop once, but backed out. Looking back I am happy with that decision. Microsoft will do anything I want, and I demand a lot. I highly recommend it.

I have windows XP operating system , and I had no trouble installing Microsoft Digital Image 2006.

It sells between \$80 - \$100 on the internet, \$99.99 at Best Buy with a \$30 rebate, or \$48.87 at Sam's.

System requirements - To use Microsoft Digital Image Suite 2006, you need:

Multimedia PC with Pentium 700 MHz or faster processor -



Microsoft Windows 98 SE, Windows ME, Windows 2000, or Windows XP operating system -256 MB of available hard-disk space -

Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 software required and included. Up to an additional 60 MB of hard disk space may be required for the Internet Explorer upgrade. This installation will not replace your primary browser. -

Quad-speed CD-ROM drive or higher -

Super VGA monitor (800x600, 16-bit color or better) -

1 MB of Video RAM -

Microsoft Mouse or compatible pointing device. -

Syncing to devices and Photo Story 3.1 requires Windows Media Player 10

The part I like best is how easy it is to use.



Software Review

Snagit

\$39.59

Published by TechSmith

Reviewed by Susan Ives, Alamo PC



Making a screen capture is easy. Press the “print screen” key and whatever is showing on your computer screen will probably be copied to the Windows clipboard, stored in temporary memory. Open up a graphics program: Windows Paint, found under the Start-all programs-accessories button will do. Open a new graphic and then paste (edit-paste) the clipboard contents into the new graphic. Voila! Screen capture.

Easy, but boring.

We use screen captures every month in PC Alamo magazine. Alamo PC instructors also use them when they write manuals and teach classes.

The print screen solution has drawbacks. It's doesn't capture dynamic content such as the DirectX screens beloved by gamers. Print screen captures a screen: what you see is what you get. If the stuff you want is bigger than the screen, tough. If it's oddly shaped, tough.

If you want less than a screen – just a particular window, for example – you have to crop it in your graphics program. If you want to capture a drop-down menu you will get a cursor in the picture, whether you want it there or not.

I forget what I was trying to capture, but print screen wouldn't grab it. In desperation, I turned to the 30-day free trial of Snagit. WOW! What a program! Try it yourself by downloading it from <www.techsmith.com/products/snagit/>. If you make screen captures you must have this program. I liked it so much I bought it.

Snagit makes a screen capture of just about anything. You can capture the entire screen, just a window, a freehand region that you draw with your mouse, a graphic, a Direct-X application, ALL

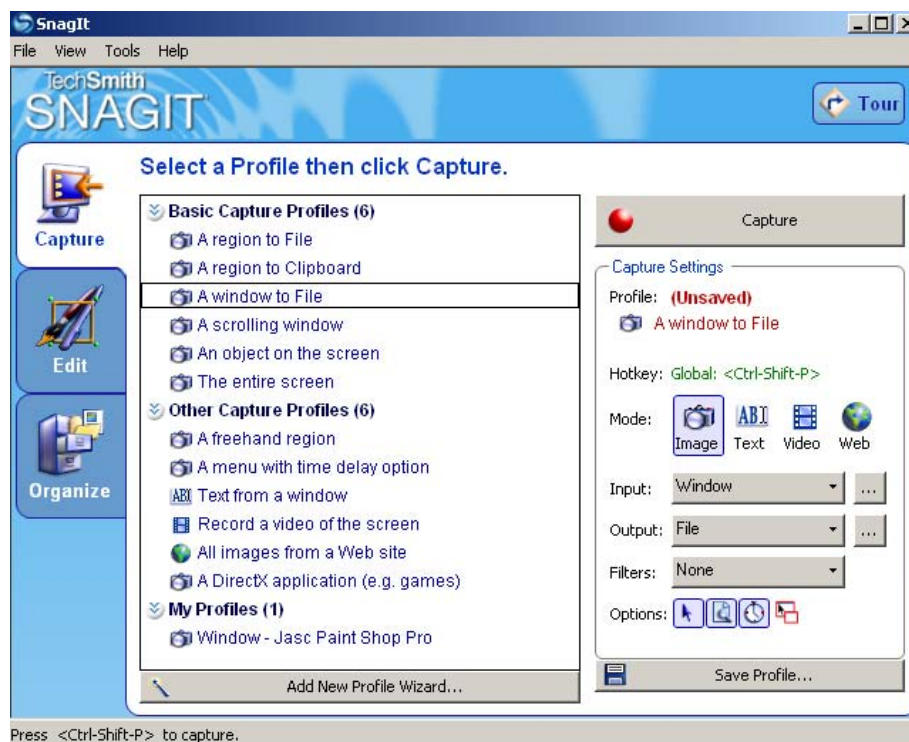


Figure 1

the graphics on a Web site, an icon, a cascading menu – dozens of options.

If the content you want extends beyond the bottom the screen, use the scrolling mode. Snagit will let you scroll the screen down as far as you want and capture it all.

Snagit can also capture text – yes, editable text! - from areas that cannot be copied and pasted, such as Windows error messages and the “my documents” folder contents. It can save text in a tab-delimited format that you can easily import into a spreadsheet.

You can capture the screen immediately, either by using an on screen button or a hotkey combination, or set it for a time delay while you get the screen looking exactly how you want it. It integrates itself with the Windows Office Suite (Word, Excel, Outlook, Publisher, etc.) so you can capture straight from your application.

Figure 1 is a screen capture of the Snagit screen capture screen (try saying that three times fast!) so you can see what the interface looks like and get an idea of some of the options.

The same company that makes Snagit also makes a program called Camtasia, which makes little AVI movies of the activity on your screen. Snagit includes a stripped-

down version of this program. I made a :57 second video of the steps you take to view a copy of the PC Alamode online. Just as advertised, it made a video: 18MB of my cursor dancing around the screen. This would be perfect for a class presentation or training CD, but if I wanted to put the video online I would want to get Camtasia, which compresses the video to a manageable size.

There are scads of built-in editing tools. You can do the obvious, such as crop, flip, rotate and re-size. There are color enhancement tools: replace one color with another, change the bit depth, make a halftone or turn it to grayscale. There are a slew of filters: posterize, find edges, emboss, for example. This makes it possible to do all of the editing in SnagIt instead of having to open another graphics program.

I would have paid the \$40 just to get the edge effects.

I like a screen capture to have a black border around it: This is a 99-step procedure in Adobe Photoshop. In SnagIt, I can do it with the press of a button.

Other edge effects include torn, wavy or sharktooth edges on 1-4 sides; beveled or faded edges, drop shadow; and watermark. Perspective and sheer will tilt the capture – make it fly!

You can also block off one small section of a capture – an icon, for example – magnify it so that it is larger than normal, and either blur or fade the rest of the screen.

Figure 2 is a screen capture of the Alamo PC Web site with the “torn edge” edge effect applied.

Once you have your screen captures, what can you do with them? Obviously, you can save the screen capture in one of 15 file formats, including TIF, JPG, GIF, PNG, PSD. You can send it immediately to your e-mail program, to AOL Instant Messenger, your printer or a file transfer (FTP) program for posting to a Website. You can copy it to the Windows clipboard or send it straight to your favorite graphics program.

You can send it to multiple outputs at once with one click: save it to a file, ftp it to a Web site and e-mail it, for example.

There is a batch conversion utility that lets you change the file format of a bunch of graphics all at once. These do not have to be graphics created in SnagIt.

SnagIt can even make Web pages! It will create a Web gallery, which consists of

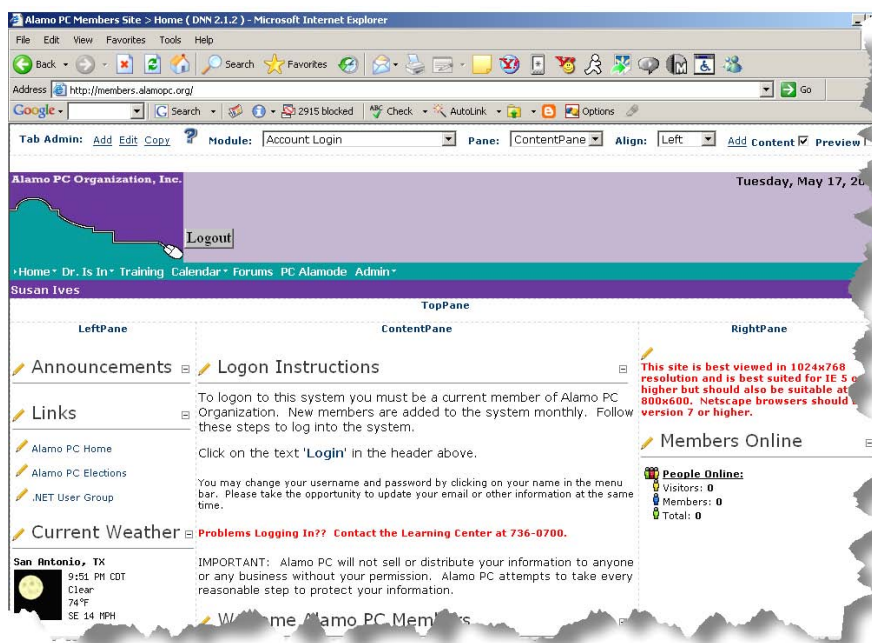


Figure 2

thumbnails linked to full-size captures or photos. Like the batch conversion utility, this feature works with all of the graphics on your computer, not just the ones created by SnagIt. It's all automated: no Web development skills needed.

The help file is excellent. There is also a short video tutorial and additional help on advanced topics on the program's Web site.

This is an awesome program. If you ever need screen captures, this beats printscreen hands down.

The easiest way to get it is to order it directly from TechSmith, <www.techsmith.com>. It costs \$39.95 for a download and the same for a boxed copy, except you will also pay shipping. Multi user licenses are available at a considerable discount. If you prefer to order by phone, call them toll-free at: 888.750.0685.

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. November 19th; 2 pm - 5 pm

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

Software Review

Word 2003 Personal Trainer

\$49.99

Published by Acronis, Inc

Reviewed by Vade Forrester, Alamo PC

So—how long has it been since you backed up your hard drive? That long? OK, I'll buy an argument that you have all your software discs and can restore your operating system and software from those. But how long has it been since you backed up your data? You know, the files you've spent years creating: the financial records for your home and business, the irreplaceable photos of your children and grandchildren, etc. That long, huh? Well, I won't tell you that Acronis True Image 8.0 will make backups effortless, but they will make them easy.

When I first heard about Acronis True Image 8.0, I thought it was just another backup program, but it's more than that. So what does it do? To quote from the excellent manual:

"...to create exact hard disk images, including all operating systems, applications and configuration files, software updates, personal settings and all of your data. If failures occur that block access to information or affect system operation, or if you accidentally delete necessary files, you'll be able to restore the system and lost data easily.

You won't have to select files and folders for backup, as many backup applications require. Instead, you will store all your disk data. As a result, Acronis True Image is simpler and faster than competitive applications.

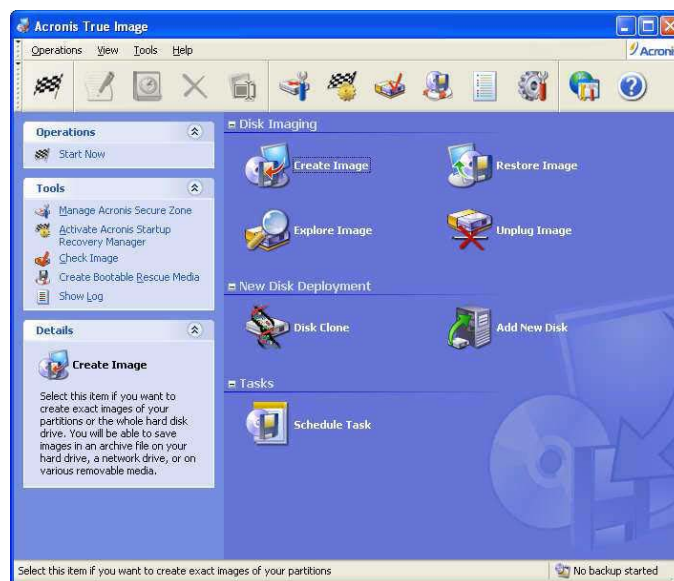
You can store images on almost any PC storage device: local hard drives, network drives or a variety of IDE, SCSI, FireWire (IEEE-1394), USB (1.0, 1.1 and 2.0) and PC card (formerly called PCMCIA) removable media drives, including CD-R(RW), DVD-recordable, magneto-optical, Iomega Zip and Jazz drives.

You can restore the partition or lost data from an image any time. You can also connect an image as a virtual drive, browse its contents and extract selected files to the hard disk.

The unique technology developed by Acronis and implemented in Acronis True Image allows you to create exact, sector-by-sector disk images and restore their content directly from Windows without the reboots typical for similar products.

If you are going to install a new hard disk drive, Acronis True Image will help you transfer information from the old one in minutes, including operating systems, applications, documents and personal settings."

If you're familiar with other backup programs, you'll recognize that the above features make accessing data from backups, and especially transferring backed-up data to other drives, very easy. At least that's the theory. Let's see how it worked in practice.



I downloaded the program and installed it, inserting the "magic" key to activate the program. I first installed it on my laptop computer. When I started the program, I got the main screen shown in Figure 1. I connected a backup drive (I use an external hard drive with USB 2.0 connections, which lets me share it among several computers) and waited for the USB connection to recognize the additional drive. Then I clicked the Create Image icon and a Wizard stepped me through the backup process. I first selected a drive to back up (the C: drive). Then I selected the drive to backup to and specified a file name for the backup file. I answered a few other questions and then Acronis True Image 8.0 was off and running. Thirty minutes after installing the software, I had a full 7 GB backup of my laptop's hard drive. I discovered that Acronis True Image 8.0's backup files have a .tib file extension.

One of the unusual features of Acronis True Image 8.0 is the ability to click on Explore Image and mount the image as a virtual hard drive, which you can browse to see the contents. If you look at Windows Explorer, you'll see a new drive letter with a two-color icon for the virtual drive. When you browse the virtual drive, you'll find the folder structure is somewhat different, but if you hunt around, you'll find your files are all there. Once you locate the files you want, just select them and copy them back to your "real" hard drive. The only drawback was that the rather slow laptop took what seemed like a long time to create the virtual hard drive. When I installed the software on my new, three-times-as-fast desktop PC, it ran much faster, but still took a couple of minutes to create the virtual

drive. Once created, however, the drive seemed to work as fast as a physical drive.

A feature that's missing from the Windows XP Home Edition version of the Microsoft Backup program is a way to restore the backup image to a new drive. Acronis True Image 8.0 enables you to make a bootable restore disc that lets you boot from floppy or CD drives and restore your disc image to a hard drive – without first installing the operating system and backup program. I installed the backup files on a CD, since my new computer doesn't have a floppy disk drive! In order for the restore disc to work, your PC must be set to boot from the CD drive. Of course, if you use floppies (five are needed), the PC should already be set to boot from a floppy.

The remaining two functions on the main screen really set Acronis True Image 8.0 apart from typical backup program. They are meant to be used while your hard drive is working fine, not when it fails. The first function, Disk Clone, actually copies your entire hard drive to another drive. This includes everything on your hard drive – the operating system, programs, and data. This could be a good way to do multiple disk copies, I suppose, although it wouldn't be legal. An automatic clone process just duplicates everything on your hard drive, making it bootable if the original drive was bootable. When would this be useful? When you fill up your hard drive and need to replace it with a bigger one. Cloning your hard drive means you won't have to reinstall anything; the cloning process leaves you with an exact duplicate of what you had on your hard drive, just on a bigger drive. Cool! A manual cloning process lets you fiddle with partition sizes and other factors. To use either cloning process, you must connect both the original hard drive, and the new, larger drive.

The next-to-last choice on the main menu, Add New Disk, doesn't really involve replicating data or applications. It just helps you set up a new hard drive you may add to your system. Finally, the Schedule Task menu choice lets you schedule different backup tasks at different intervals. You could, for example, back up your data files daily, and your application and operating system files weekly.

Acronis True Image 8.0 is one of the most versatile and complete backup programs I've used, and also one of the easiest. I mentioned I loaded the program and used it to make a backup of my laptop computer without cracking a book, and within 30 minutes of downloading the program. It's that easy. The manual is very complete but is a very easy read.

Highly recommended!

Contact information:

Acronis, Inc
395 Oyster Point Blvd, Suite 213
South San Francisco, CA 94080
USA

Web site:

<http://www.acronis.com>

E-mail:

info@acronis.com

Phone:

+1 877 669-9749
(Corporate Sales, East Coast)
+1 650 875-7593
(Corporate Sales, West Coast)

Fax: +1 650 745-2132

E-mail:

info@acronis.com (General Enquiry)
sales@acronis.com (Sales Inquiry)

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1 Block off Loop 410 East

Book Review

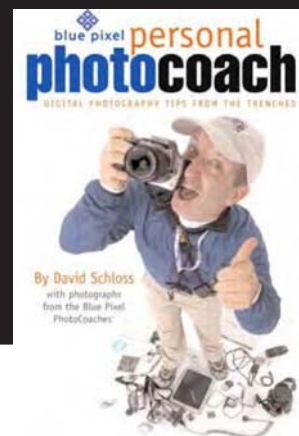
Blue Pixel PersonalPhoto Coach

by David Schloss

\$24.99

Published by Peachpit Press

Reviewed by Steven M. Breitbart, North Orange County Computer Club



More than 22 million people bought a digital camera in 2004. This is not the total; as this review is being written there are still about 3 weeks left in 2004. If any of those 22 million people - or anyone who is planning to buy a digital camera needs a primer on photography, then this book is a good starting point. The mission of Blue Pixel <<http://www.bluepixel.net>> is "to have leading digital photographers teach their craft from an unbiased real-world perspective."

The author, David Schloss, is their Editorial Director. Their approach is how to get and use a digital camera, but you don't need to become a geek. After all, only non-geeks get to go to Fiji for a photo assignment.

Personal Photo Coach is not just about digital photography; a lot of the information presented applies to photography in general. The basics of photography are covered in a simplified, but complete way. There are lots of tips, parenthetical comments and anecdotes from the author and other professional photographers speaking to the reader in a friendly and sometimes comedic style. These are among the best parts of the book because they show that even professional photographers have problems that can be overcome.

Many good quality color photos are used to illustrate the techniques being discussed. In fact, the book repeats some items when needed so you don't have to find it in some other section. They describe the benefits and problems with digital photography as compared with film. While the digital photographer does not have to deal with trays full of chemicals, we do need to be concerned with the shutter lag of a digital camera and that a hard disk crash could wipe out all of our photos. The digital photographer can change the ISO setting for each photograph and can add keywords and other information to each photograph. Especially well done and interesting were the explanations of the digital imaging sensor and the difference between screen resolution and printer resolution.

In a book that seems to be targeted at novices in digital photography, errors can cause some confusion. There were a few errors, so I appreciated the email address provided to report errors to the publisher. I am happy to report that my input was acknowledged in one day. The worst error was defining pixel as "pixel element" instead of "picture element." Sometimes the wording used seemed a bit peculiar. For example, they state "As the amount of available light decreases by half, the shutter speed needs to get slower by double" instead of

"As the amount of available light decreases by half, the exposure time must be doubled."

However, the subjects are covered with enough thoroughness that the errors are not critical.

This book is an excellent primer for people who want to know more about photography and the use of a modern digital camera. It is worth the list price of \$24.99, but you can get a discount if you become member of Peachpit Press and order this book (or any other) directly from them. Other sources offer discounts as well. Copyright 2005. By David Schloss; Peachpit Press, Berkeley, California, 304 pages; \$24.99; ISBN 0-321-30528-0.

Mark your calendar for the annual

Alamo PC Open House


November 20th, 1 to 5 p.m.
Alamo PC
Computer Learning Center
Crossroads Mall

Food! Fun! Friends!

And best of all, it's free!
If you haven't seen our facility yet,
Come on by to ooh and aah!
Help to recognize and thank our volunteers.

Feed the cookie monster!

If you can, bring a plate
of cookies to the Learning Center
by 4 p.m. November 19th
Alamo PC runs on mega-bites of cookies!



November 2005

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | 1 Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon (Class 4 of 6) Photoshoph 7 1 - 6 P.M. (Sr. Comp. prr class 2 of 6) Intro to Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. (pr) Small Business ServerCertification 6 - 9 P.M. (pr) Excel 2000 7 - 9 P.M. | 2 (Sr. Comp. prr class 1 of 6) World Wide Web & E-mail 1 - 3 P.M. | 3 Sr. Comp. Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon (pr) class 1 of 4 (pr) Photoshoph 7 Personal Calendars 1 - 6 P.M. (ar) HGST 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. Net 7 - 9 P.M. | 4 (ar) SBS 2003 8 - 10 A.M. Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon (pr) class 5 of 6) Photoshoph 7 1 - 6 P.M. (pr) PC Almanac Magazine Adobe PDF 7 - 9 P.M. | 5 (ar) MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M. |
| 6 (Sr. Comp. prr class 1 of 6) Intro to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M. | 7 (Sr. Comp. prr class 1 of 6) Intro to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. Genealogy 7 - 9 P.M. | 8 Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon (Class 6 of 6) Photoshoph 7 1 - 6 P.M. (Sr. Comp. prr class 1 of 6) Intro to Windows II 10 - Noon (Sr. Comp. prr class 3 of 6) Intro to Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. BOD 6:30 P.M. (pr) Excel 2000 7 - 9 P.M. | 9 Power Internet 10 A.M. - Noon (Sr. Comp. prr class 2 of 6) World Wide Web & E-mail 1 - 3 P.M. Jumpstart Your Home Page 5:30 - 7 P.M. | 10 Sr. Comp. Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon (pr) class 2 of 4 (pr) Photoshoph 7 Personal Calendars 1 - 6 P.M. | 11 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon (pr) class 6 of 6) Photoshoph 7 1 - 6 P.M. | 12 (pr) Photo Editing 8 - 10 A.M. (ar) MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon (pr) Photo Editing 10 A.M. - Noon Commodore 1 - 4 P.M. |
| 13 (pr) class 1 of 2) Windows XP 2 - 6 P.M. | 14 (Sr. Comp. prr class 2 of 6) Intro to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. General Meeting Crossroads 7 - 9 P.M. Convention Center Presenters' Smart Computing Magazine | 15 Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon (Class 6 of 6) Photoshoph 7 1 - 6 P.M. (Sr. Comp. prr class 2 of 6) Intro to Windows II 10 - Noon (Sr. Comp. prr class 4 of 6) Intro to Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. (pr) Small Business ServerCertification 6 - 9 P.M. (pr) Excel 2000 7 - 9 P.M. | 16 (Sr. Comp. prr class 3 of 6) World Wide Web & E-mail 1 - 3 P.M. (ar) WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M. | 17 Sr. Comp. Practice Lab 9:00 A.M. - Noon Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon (pr) class 3 of 4 (pr) Photoshoph 7 Personal Calendars 1 - 6 P.M. Sr. Comp. Staff Meeting 1:30 -3:30 P.M. | 18 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon (pr) class 7 of 6) Photoshoph 7 1 - 6 P.M. | 19 (ar) MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon (pr) Surf & Search the Internet 2 - 6 P.M. C++ 2:30 - 4:30 P.M. |
| 20 Open House and Volunteer Recognition 1 - 6 P.M. | 21 (Sr. Comp. prr class 3 of 6) Intro to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. | 22 Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon (Class 7 of 6) Photoshoph 7 1 - 6 P.M. (Sr. Comp. prr class 3 of 6) Intro to Windows II 10 - Noon (Sr. Comp. prr class 6 of 6) Intro to Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. (pr) Small Business ServerCertification 6 - 9 P.M. (pr) Excel 2000 7 - 9 P.M. | 23 Rescheduled to Wed Nov 16 (ar) WordPerfect 7 - 9 P.M. | 24 Happy Thanksgiving we are closed! Enjoy  No classes today! | 25 Dr. is In 9:00 A.M. - Noon (pr) class 8 of 6) Photoshoph 7 1 - 6 P.M. | 26 (ar) MCSE (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon Desk Staff Meeting 1:30 -3:30 P.M. |
| 27 (pr) class 2 of 2) Windows XP 2 - 6 P.M. | 28 (Sr. Comp. prr class 4 of 6) Intro to Windows 1 - 3 P.M. CorelDRAW 6 - 8 P.M. | 29 Digital Camera & Photography 9 A.M. - Noon (Class 8 of 6) Photoshoph 7 1 - 6 P.M. (Sr. Comp. prr class 4 of 6) Intro to Windows II 10 - Noon (Sr. Comp. prr class 6 of 6) Intro to Windows XP 1:30 - 3:30 P.M. (pr) Small Business ServerCertification 6 - 9 P.M. (pr) Excel 2000 7 - 9 P.M. | 30 (Sr. Comp. prr class 4 of 6) World Wide Web & E-mail 1 - 3 P.M. | Calendar is subject to change, Please call the Learning Center 736-0700 or visit the online calendar listing at < http://alamopc.org/calendar.html > | | |
| Alamo PC Organization | | | | | | |

Alamo PC Organization

Calendar is subject to change, Please call the Learning Center 736-0700 or visit the online calendar listing at <<http://alamopc.org/calendar.html>>



The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

Advanced Access Study Group

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

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

When: Fourth Thursday, 7-9pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★★

C/C++ Study Group

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

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

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

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

When: First and Third Saturday, 2:30 pm

Where: Learning Center.

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

Commodore Users of SA

Contact: Diana Jones
830-303-1220

When: Second Saturday, 1-4 pm

Where: Learning Center.

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

Genealogy Study Group

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

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

When: First Monday, 7-9 pm

Where: Learning Center.

Pre-registration: No
Technical Rating ★ - ★★

HGSI Study Group

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

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

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

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

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

.NET Study Group

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
Technical Rating ★★★★★

Small Business Server Study Group

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

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

For more information, please contact group chair, Larry Lentz at Larry@LentzComputer.net, or visit the group web site at <http://www.LentzComputer.net/SBS.>

Small Business Server Certification Study Group

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

Contact: Ed or Therese Weitz for information and registration.

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

When: Tuesdays, 6-9 pm

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

Where: Learning Center

Technical Rating ★★★★★

STUDY GROUPS (cont.)

Power Internet Study Group

Current Internet users can learn more. Each month a different Internet application will be discussed, such as 64 bit computers, SATA HDD technology, 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

Brush up on your computer skills. Students learn about the parts of the computer, acquire keyboard and mouse skills, 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: ★

APCO Retro (Antique Computer Users Group)

We're initially only going to meet on-

FREE CLASSES

line, 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@yahoogroups.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@absolutepowercomputing.com>

When: Anytime

Where: Cyberspace

Pre-registration: Must sign-up on

<APCORETRO@yahoogroups.com>

Technical Rating: ★ - ★★★

CorelDRAW I Class

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

Contact: Steve Tech

<stephentechnr@yahoo.com>

210-675-2880

When: 4th Monday, 6-8pm

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: No

Technical Rating ★★

Digital Camera & Photography

Learn how use your digital camera, plus all the tips and tricks to get better pictures when you take them. The workshop will have two parts. Part one starts with using your camera and field trips to interesting local spots to learn photography techniques. Part two deals with editing your images using Microsoft Digital Image 2006 and, extra tips and tricks about matting and framing plus interesting uses for your photos.

When: 8 weeks, Tuesday and Thursday each week, starting the first week of November 2005; 9 to noon

Contact: Joe M. Davis

Where: Learning Center plus field trips

Pre-registration: YES Call Learning

Center at 210-736-0080

Technical rating: ★-★★

eBay - Bid with Confidence: An Introduction to Internet Auctions

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

Contact: Learning Center 736-0080

<learncenter@alamopc.org>

When: 7-9pm on Wednesdays.

4, 11, 18 and 25 January 2006

Where: Learning Center, Room 1

Pre-registration: Yes

Technical Rating: ★

Excel 2000 Class

Learn Excel 2000's basic functionality, menus, toolbars, icons and shortcut keys. 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. 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

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. Two classes, one at 8 a.m., another at 10 a.m.

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

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

Pre-registration: Yes - Learning Center

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.

Contact: Learning Center 736-0700

When: Dates and time to be announced

Where: Learning Center

Pre-registration: Yes

Technical Rating: ★

Surf and Search

A new beginners' class to explore the Internet. Learn 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. Students should have familiarity with the Windows Operating System.

When: Saturday, Nov. 19th; 2 pm - 5 pm

Where: Alamo PC Organization Computer Learning Center

Tuition fee: Free with membership
Technical Rating:

Class Leader: William Hudson (Please note: William Hudson is Not the same person as Bill Hudson who teaches Senior Comp courses)

Pre-registration is required. Call the Alamo PC Computer Learning Center at (210) 736-0080, or (210) 736-0700

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. 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:

November - each Thursday 1pm-5pm

Calendar Class; learn to make personal calendars for friends & family; bring photos; fee \$20.00; registration and completion of Photoshop 7 or Elements 2 class required.

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>

2006 - Thursdays from 1 to 5 p.m. will offer Photoshop 7 instruction class "B" with different lessons and text during January - February teaching the basic tools, palettes and procedures for Photoshop 7. Registration is required and a fee of \$90.00 for first time participants or \$20.00 for those who have previously taken the class.

2006 - Fridays in January - February from 1 - 5 P.M. will offer Elements 2 instruction classes for a fee of \$90.00 for first time participants or \$20.00 for repeats. Registration is required and you must be a member of Alamo PC.

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 Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

Technical Content Ratings

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

FEE-BASED CLASSES (cont.)

Senior Comp Classes - \$

Introductory classes for people 45 and older. New classes begin approximately every two months. Classes are held at the Computer Learning Center and meet for two hours, once a week for six weeks. Pre-registration is required. Senior Comp Classes are backed by eight years of proven success!

Senior Comp Basic Intro. To Windows

The Basic Introduction To Windows class is designed for people who do not have a computer yet or have just gotten one and don't know how to "turn it on". SOME of the material found in the Introduction To Windows Class will be covered but at a MUCH slower pace and with lots more "hands on" practice. Students will learn the basics of using the computer and some word processing. Taking the next course, Introduction To Windows I, will still be necessary for students who want to be productive with their computers, but the students will be better able to understand what the Introduction To Windows Instructor is teaching. Internet and email will NOT be covered in this course.

When: 6 weeks, Wednesdays Oct 12, 19, 26, Nov 2, 9, 16; 10 am to 12 pm

Instructors: Andy Roca, Donna Dudley

Where: Learning Center

Fees: The First Class is \$60.00. To repeat this class or if going from Basic Introduction To Windows, to Introduction To Windows I or from either beginning class to Introduction To Windows II the fee is \$40.00.

Pre-registration - YES Call Learning Center at 210-736-0080

Technical Rating: ★

Senior Comp Intro. To Windows I

Our Introduction To Windows I course covers the fundamentals of using a computer, from turning it on to working with Microsoft Windows 98 and Windows XP. In this class you will learn how to: Open, Close, Save, Delete, Copy, and Move files; work with Files and Folders; customize your Desktop Layout; and to Resize and Move program windows. You will also be introduced to several "free" programs already on your computer, including: Wordpad - for basic word processing; Paint - for basic graphics work; Computer Solitaire and other games; and a Calculator.

When: 6 weeks, Tuesdays Oct 25, Nov 1, 8, 15, 22, 29; 1:30 to 3:30 pm

Instructor: Audrey Henkin

When: 6 weeks, Mondays Nov 7, 14, 21, 28, Dec 5, 12; 1 to 3 pm

Instructor: Don Robinson

Where: Learning Center

Fees: The First Class is \$60.00. To repeat this class or if going from Basic Introduction To Windows, to Introduction To Windows I or from either beginning class to Introduction To Windows II the fee is \$40.00.

Pre-registration - YES Call Learning Center at 210-736-0080

Technical Rating: ★

Senior Comp Intro. To Windows II

This course takes students beyond the basic computing information we present in our Beginning Windows course. We cover some Word Processing, Task Bars, Windows Explorer, and Finding Files. The student will also learn about E-Mail, and the Internet. The Internet information focuses on how to get on the Internet, how to search it for the information you want, and how to download program updates. The E-mail information focuses on sending email and working with email attachments. The course features "hands on" exercises in class. The course uses advanced sections of the same textbook employed in the Introduction To Windows Classes.

When: 6 weeks, Tuesdays Nov 8, 15, 22, 29, Dec 6, 13; 10 am to 12 pm

Instructor: Bill Hudson

Where: Learning Center

Fees: The First Class is \$60.00. To repeat this class or if going from Basic Introduction To Windows, to Introduction To Windows I or from either beginning class to Introduction To Windows II the fee is \$40.00.

Pre-registration - YES Call Learning Center at 210-736-0080

Technical Rating: ★★

Senior Comp Internet And E-Mail

The Internet and E-mail course will cover basic techniques needed to effectively and enjoyably "surf the net." Students will learn how to find information on the net, download files, applications and graphics, and how to purchase items from "e-commerce" sites. Depending on student interest, the class will learn about important Internet issues like privacy, credit card security, and information reliability. Depending on time constraints, students may also cover more advanced topics like using the Internet for long distance communication, "Web Cams," and enjoying streaming audio and video.

When: 6 weeks, Wednesdays Nov 2, 9, 16, 30, Dec 7, 14; 1 to 3 pm

Instructor: Don Robinson

Where: Learning Center

Fees: The first class is \$60.00. To repeat the Internet and Email Class the fee is \$40.00

Pre-registration - YES Call Learning Center at 210-736-0080

Technical Rating: ★★

COMPUTER CLINIC

The Doctor Is In

Each Friday morning, volunteer "Computer Doctors" share their time at the Computer Learning Center to handle technical hardware and software questions and solve problems. They attempt to troubleshoot hardware and sort out software problems on site. If the problem is beyond their means, the member is referred to one of the repair shops that advertise with Alamo PC. The repair shop does charge for the problem. We do the work at the Computer Learning Center as a member-to-member benefit, with donations requested.

What to bring with you:

- Your Alamo PC membership card
 - Your computer and all connecting cables, cords, software drivers or programs related to the problem area. You do not need to bring your monitor, mouse, or keyboard unless you are having a specific problem with those items. Make sure you have the keycode for all of your software.
 - If you are having problems with your scanner, printer, or something that hooks up to your computer; bring that item in addition to your computer etc. plus all connecting cables and software (don't forget the keycode for your software)
 - If you are having a problem with SBC Broadband (DSL) in addition to your computer etc. bring your SBC or Broadband modem, power supply and cables. We will also need your user name and password for this and any other internet related problems.
- When:** Every Friday 9 am to noon
- Where:** Alamo PC Organization Computer Learning Center
- Prerequisites:** Bring your hardware and all connecting cables, cords, software drivers or programs related to the problem area
- Tuition fee:** Donations for this service are requested, the funds are used to purchase testing and other equipment to use at the Dr Is In sessions.
- Technical Rating:** ★

Help Numbers

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

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: <joecool@satx.rr.com>

For Sale 100Gig hard drive, 512Mg RAM, Flat screen monitor, Speakers (with subwoofer), DVD drive, CD/DVD writer (separate drive) \$700, negotiable. <richardstrout@hotmail.com>

For Sale View Sonic Professional Series P75f+ Flat Screen CRT 17" monitor. Purchased June 1, 2004. Hot key to boost brightness levels for intense, vivid colors with video, DVD, graphics and gaming. Toggle back to normal brightness for text. Ultra-fine 0.25mm aperture grille pitch. \$99 call Sandy 372-9985 or <sknight@satx.rr.com>

For Sale Hewlett Packard Laser Jet 1100se black and white printer with extra unopened Laser Jet Toner Cartridge. Used occasionally for 3 months. No problems. \$65 total. Contact Doris at 494-2402



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

Alamo PC logo

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

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at 736-0700

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

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

Monthly Meetings

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

Award-Winning Magazine

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

Special Interest Groups and Classes

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



Internet (www.alamopc.org)

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

Alamo PC SeniorComp

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

Expert Help

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

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

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

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



Membership Application -- Apply for your number today!

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

FIRST: _____ MI _____ LAST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____

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

EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

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

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

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

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

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

PCA JAN05

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

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

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



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

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

If 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.

